

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

It is essential for schools to maintain a safe and orderly environment that supports student learning and achievement. Good discipline allows the schools to discharge their primary responsibility to educate students and promote good citizenship. All students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with School Board policies, school rules, and applicable state and federal laws. Disciplinary action may be taken against students who violate policies, rules, or laws, and/or whose conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

The School Board expects the following principles to guide the development and implementation of school rules and disciplinary procedures:

- A. Discipline should emphasize positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, as well as appropriate consequences for misbehavior. The focus should be on providing a school environment where students are engaged in constructive learning and interactions with others.
- B. Expectations for student behavior should be clear and communicated to school staff, students, and parents.
- C. Consequences for misbehavior should be in proportion to the offense, fair, and consistently enforced.
- D. Parents/guardians should be actively involved in the process of preventing and resolving disciplinary problems at school.

Physical activity shall not be used as punishment or discipline. Physical activity (including physical education) may not be withheld as a form of punishment or discipline. Teachers are authorized to provide alternative physical activities for students behaving inappropriately during physical activities, such as physical education and recess.

Access to the total food service program (i.e. school breakfast, school lunch, school snack, and fresh fruit and vegetable program) shall not be denied as a form of punishment or discipline.

Physical force and corporal punishment shall not be used as disciplinary methods. State law provides that “a teacher or other person entrusted with the care or supervision of a person for special or limited purposes may not be held civilly liable for the use of a reasonable degree of force against the person who creates a disturbance if the teacher or other person reasonably believes it is necessary to a) control the disturbing behavior; or b) remove the person from the scene of the disturbance.” (20-A MRSA § 4009)

Teachers are authorized to make and enforce rules for effective classroom management and to foster appropriate student behavior, subject to the direction and approval by the principal/designee. School-wide rules shall be developed by the building principal with appropriate input from school staff, students, and parents, and subject to approval by the Superintendent.

Principals shall provide for the suspension or other serious disciplinary action against students in accordance with School Board policies, administrative procedures, and Maine law. Parents and students will be informed of the school rules and regulations at the beginning of the school year. All students will be under the jurisdiction of these rules.

The teacher has the responsibility to maintain a suitable environment for learning, and the administrators have the responsibility for maintaining and facilitating the educational programs. The teacher has the authority to send a student from class to an appropriate school official. The principal is authorized by statute to suspend students for up to a maximum of ten days for infractions of school rules. Rules and regulations will be published and reviewed with students at the beginning of each school year and will be posted in prominent locations in the schools. Copies will be made available to students and parents on request.

Students with disabilities shall be disciplined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws/regulations.

Legal Reference: 17-A MRSA § 106
20-A MRSA § 4009
Ch. 125.23, B, 5, 1 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Cross Reference: AC – Nondiscrimination
ACAA – Harassment
JICH – Weapons, Violence, and School Safety
JKD – Student Suspension

Portland Public Schools

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