

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA/Dignity Act)

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing, and bias behaviors are unsafe and do not reflect respect for others as defined by the Code of Conduct and the New York State Dignity for All Students Act. DASA states that no student will be subjected to harassment, bullying, or intimidation by employees or students on school property or at any school function; nor will any student be subjected to discrimination based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, physical appearance, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, or gender by school employees or students on school property or at any school function.

If you or someone you know is a target of one of these behaviors, you can report it using the online Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying Reporting Form available on the District website at www.yonkerspublicschools.org/dasa, in your schools main office, or from the DASA Coordinator. Tell a staff member who will respond quickly and will provide a practical and private safe place to report.

Levels of Inappropriate Student Behavior

All students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. The best discipline is self-discipline. Students must learn to assume responsibility for their own behavior. Schools should require cooperative intervention of the parent/guardian for all inappropriate behavior.

- LEVEL 1:** Involves minor inappropriate behavior that can be addressed by teachers and any other school personnel.
- LEVEL 2:** Involves inappropriate behavior which interferes with orderly educational process and can be addressed by teachers and other school personnel.
- LEVEL 3:** involves inappropriate behaviors that seriously impact school and classroom safety and order which may result in a suspension. Level 3 infractions require intervention of the parent/guardian, teacher and school administration.
- LEVEL 4:** Involves behavior that presents an imminent threat of serious harm to the school community, or seriously affects the safety of others in the school and/or the educational process. Level 4 infractions require intervention of the parent/guardain, teacher and school administration, resulting in an automatic suspension and may warrant police interventions.

For more details about Levels of Behavior Concerns, Violations and Responses: Interventions and Consequences, please review the complete Code of Conduct pages 21 to 30.

Teacher Removal of a Student from the Classroom

A student’s behavior can affect a teacher’s ability to teach and can make it difficult for other students in the classroom to learn. Teachers should do their best to attempt to redirect inappropriate behavior through the use of interventions other than removal. However, if the student’s behavior jeopardizes safety in the classroom or if, after other interventions have reasonably been exhausted, the student’s behavior is substantially disruptive to the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher’s authority over the classroom, the Code of Conduct and New York State law allow for student removal from the classroom.

Additional information about Teacher Removal of a Student from the Classroom is available in the complete Code of Conduct on pages 31 to 33.

Suspension from School

Suspension from school is a severe assigned consequence which may be imposed only upon students who are insubordinate, disorderly, violent, or disruptive, or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety, morals, health, or welfare of others. While the Board retains its authority to suspend students, the Superintendent and building principals have primary responsibility for the suspension of students. All suspensions from school shall be imposed in accordance with the requirements of applicable laws and this Code.

Additional infor mation about Suspension from School is available in the complete Code of Conduct on pages 34 to 44.

Alternative Instruction and Re-Entry

The Yonkers Public Schools is committed to supporting students continued instruction during any period of removal or suspension. The District will take immediate steps to provide a student who is of compulsory education age and is removed or suspended from class or school with alternative instruction as required by applicable law.

The alternative instruction will:

- be substantially equivalent to the instruction received by the student prior to the suspension or removal,
- afford the student continuity in learning, and
- provide the student with an opportunity to complete his or her required coursework.

It is the responsibility of the student to complete any alternative instruction assignments and/or attend the alternative instruction program and perform to the best of his or her ability.

Additional information about Alternative Instruction and Re-Entry is available in the complete Code of Conduct on page 45.

The entire community is encouraged to review the complete Code of Conduct available on the District website: www.yonkerspublicschool.org in the Students tab.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Rev. Steve Lopez, President
- Judith Ramos Meier, Vice President
- Andrea Brown, Kevin Cacace, Dr. Rosalba Corrado Del Vecchio
- John Jacono, Pasquale Mondesando, Edgar Santana, Dr. Nader J. Sayegh
- Dr. Edwin M. Quezada, Superintendent of Schools

September 2018



CODE OF CONDUCT



HIGHLIGHTS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS THAT CREATE SUCCESSFUL, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

Board of Education Policy 5300 Adopted October 2017

Yonkers Board of Education Policy 5300 sets and enforces high standards of conduct for every stakeholder in the Yonkers Public Schools. In 2017, the Trustees adopted a new Code of Conduct that emphasizes developing strong relationships that support appropriate behavior and create positive school climate.

The Code of Conduct describes the responsible behaviors expected of students, parents/guardians, staff and visitors to Yonkers Public Schools. Everyone has rights as well as responsibilities, and it is important that students and families fully understand that these rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. By following these expectations, we ensure that all students can receive the quality education they deserve without disruptions.

The Board of Education knows that the majority of Yonkers students conduct themselves in a respectful, civil manner and that our students are committed to maintaining the safety and order of our schools. That commitment is the key to the success of the Code of Conduct and to the success of every student.

This brochure provides a summary of some important information from the Code of Conduct. The entire school community is strongly encourage to read the complete Code of Conduct which is available on the District website: www.yonkerspublicschools.org in the Students tab.

Where and When the Code of Conduct Applies

The Yonkers Public Schools Code of Conduct applies to incidents that occur as follows:

- in school and on school property during school hours;
- before and after school, while on school property;
- while traveling in vehicles funded by the Yonkers Public Schools;
- at all school-sponsored events, regardless of location;
- harassment, bullying, cyberbullying and/or discrimination off school property could create a risk or threat of substantial disruption within the school environment.

The Code of Conduct protects all students and parents/guardians by giving them the right to:

- Enjoy the basic civil rights recognized and protected by law.
- Be treated fairly and respectfully in a welcoming and safe school environment.
- Receive information and prompt notification of inappropriate or disruptive behavior.
- An opportunity to be heard in disciplinary actions and have a parent/guardian present during conferences and hearings.
- Bring complaints and/or appeals to the Yonkers Public Schools staff without fear of retaliation.

The Code of Conduct promotes discipline that helps:

- Engage every student, every day by providing effective instruction, setting high expectations and creating opportunities to participate in positive activities.
- Repair and heal broken relationships through Restorative Practices.
- Teach and model positive and respectful behavior by all adults.
- Hold individuals accountable for their behavior through restorative and solutions-oriented approaches after considering the whole student as well as the totality of the circumstances.
- Maximize time that students are in school and learning.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Cooperate and treat others with respect.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal conduct and character.
- Actively participate in their learning.
- Respect the property of others.
- Help to maintain a safe school community.

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to:

- Be familiar with the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Actively participate in their child's learning.
- Partner with school staff to address academic and/or behavioral concerns.
- Talk with their child about expected academic performance and behavior.

Rights and Responsibilities for students, parents/guardians, school administrators, teachers and pupil support personnel, civil service employees, district administrators, superintendent of schools and Board of Education Trustees are detailed in the complete Code of Conduct on pages 3 to 9.

Dress Code

All students are expected to dress appropriately for school and at school-sponsored functions. Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that student dress (including jewelry) and appearance is safe and appropriate, and does not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. School personnel should help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

Dress code enforcement is detailed in the complete Code of Conduct on page 16. School Uniform Policy information is available on page 17.

Restorative Practices

The Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Yonkers Public Schools strive to provide all students with a school environment that values the diverse family cultures, languages, interests, viewpoints, and performance levels of all students; is committed to using restorative practices and programing that promotes social-emotional learning to foster interpersonal and intergroup relationships, support self-discipline, and strive to prevent, reduce, and/or change

inappropriate behaviors; and recognize that in utilizing restorative practices and programing, school personnel must recognize that students are an essential asset to and resource in establishing and sustaining safe and supportive schools and be mindful of the need to believe in students, even when they may have engaged in inappropriate behavior. It is of the utmost importance that school personnel, parents, and students alike invest in relationships that develop trust and fairness in an effort to foster an inclusive school culture. A restorative approach to discipline changes the fundamental questions asked following a behavioral incident. Instead of asking who is to blame and how to punish those engaged in the behavior, the following four Restorative Questions are asked: What happened? Who was affected or harmed by the behavior? What impact has this incident had on you and others? What needs to be done to make things right?

Additional information about Restorative Practices is available in the complete Code of Conduct on pages 20 and 21.

Creating a Positive School Climate

The Board of Education recognizes that all members of the school community have the capacity to grow and learn. Each school is expected to foster a positive school climate and culture, promote academic excellence and social emotional development, encourage and maintain respectful relationships, and provide a supportive environment so that all students have the opportunity to succeed both academically and social-emotionally. Additionally, schools are expected to use a progressive discipline approach which combines prevention, intervention, and restorative practices within a safe, inclusive, and accepting environment.

Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework

The Yonkers Public Schools uses a Districtwide, three-tiered Response to Intervention (RtI) framework of behavioral supports to provide early, systematic, and appropriately intensive assistance to students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally. The goal of RtI is to address problematic behavior before it escalates, reduce the use of disciplinary responses including out-of-school suspensions, assist in the early identification of students with learning and/ or behavioral needs, and prevent unnecessary referrals to the Committee on Special Education. RtI strives to achieve these goals by:

- fostering resiliency;
- helping students understand and follow school rules and procedures;
- teaching students the skills they need to meet behavior expectations;
- helping students develop age-appropriate social emotional skills;
- supporting character development.

Every reasonable effort should be made to correct student inappropriate behavior through interventions and other school-based resources with the least severe disciplinary responses.

Additional information about Response to Intervention (RtI) is available in the complete Code of Conduct on pages 17 to 19.