

Student Code of Conduct Overview and Framework (Revised)

Montgomery County Board of Education
May 8, 2025

What we know about kids...

1. Kids will make mistakes
2. Kids will engage in behaviors that are unsafe, inappropriate, and/or unsavory

And that's okay! It's our job as a community to teach them a better way.

What we **ALSO** know about kids...

3. Kids thrive when there are clear expectations and reasonable, well-defined boundaries.
4. Kids thrive when there are incentives for positive behavior and not just consequences.

The Goals of Student Conduct

1. Maintain student, staff, and campus **safety**

2. **Teach** and **support** self-control and behaviors that are appropriate for school and future success in life

Orderly, safe learning environments (BOE Policy JGA)

Raising, Supporting Expectations

MCPS is updating the *Student Code of Conduct* and our support strategies for the 2025–2026 school year to re-establish higher expectations for student behavior.

- Restore **safety and positive student discipline** as a priority; emphasizing how students learn from behaviors/decisions.
- **Clearly communicate expectations** for student conduct.
- **Increase student accountability** for serious violations of student code of conduct.
- **Elevate restorative justice** as key rehabilitative strategy following consequences and align with state requirements for restorative justice.
- **Enhance partnership with parents/families** to hold mandatory readmission conferences as a requirement of returning to school from an out-of-school suspension.

School and Classroom Environment

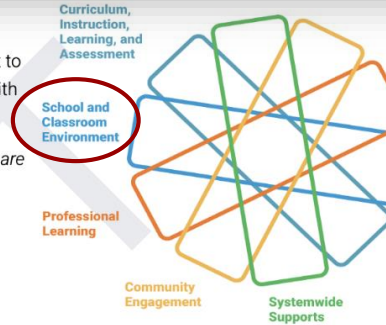
Equitable Teaching and Learning Framework Structure:

The framework is designed as a guide. Creating equitable learning environments necessitates we commit to a shared understanding of what we are all working toward in our respective roles in the school system. With that in mind the equitable teaching and learning framework is organized in three levels:

Core Components: The core components are the big areas of focus that when all attended to will ensure we are providing equitable teaching and learning for every learner every day.

Commitments: The explicit MCPS commitment that details what the core component looks like in practice.

Condition: The specific details that should be in place to achieve the commitment.



- When students feel welcomed, included, and respected, they are less likely to engage in inappropriate behavior.
- When students have a trusted adult, they are much more likely to confide in that adult when in school.
- School environments rooted in care, equity, and trust help to prevent discipline issues.
- Students respond to positive incentives such as celebrations, pizza parties, recognition, and tickets to events (i.e. homecoming).

School and Classroom Environment

Research demonstrates that how young people experience their learning – what, how, and where they are taught – substantially impacts their ability to learn and grow. This core component focuses on creating meaningful relationships and learning spaces as the central work of an equitable school.

School and Community Input

FIVE MAIN THEMES AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SURVEY

1. Support for Educators:



- **Survey respondents** asked that we ensure educators and schools have necessary supports.
- **Survey suggestions:**
 - Regular and on-time training and professional development opportunities.
 - Ensure adequate classroom resources.
 - Fair evaluation and support systems for educators.

2. Student Behavior:



- **Survey respondents** asked that action be taken to manage problematic student conduct, and create a safe and stable learning environment.
- **Survey suggestions:**
 - Implement clear and consistent behavior management policies.
 - Increase support for students with behavioral challenges.
 - Foster a positive school climate through restorative practices.

3. Administrative Burdens:



- **Survey respondents** ask that MCPS reduce unnecessary administrative tasks that detract from teaching and learning.
- **Survey suggestions:**
 - Streamline administrative processes.
 - Reduce paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles.

4. Inclusivity and Equity:



- **Survey respondents** ask that MCPS continue to promote and implement inclusivity and equity work.
- **Survey suggestions:**
 - Address disparities in educational outcomes among different student groups.
 - Ensure equitable access to advanced coursework and extracurricular activities.
 - Promote a culturally responsive and antiracist curriculum.

5. Transparency, Trust and Improved Communication:



- **Survey respondents** ask that MCPS improve communication frequency and increase transparency with parents, staff and the broader community.
- **Survey suggestions:**
 - Increase the frequency and clarity of communications from the district.
 - Encourage open dialogue between school administrators and families.
 - Provide regular updates on school policies and decisions.

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Topics Receiving Negative Comments:

- Issues with student behavior.
- Cell phones, which are a distraction for students.
- Administrative burdens for educators.
- A lack of transparency and frequency of communication with students and families.

"We must be the best at getting better."
#MCPSforward

- Districtwide Community Survey
- 5 Superintendent Listening Sessions
- More than 20 School-Based Community Meetings

Defining “Levels” of Consequence

LEVEL 1

Classroom teacher-based

Example:

Excessive disruptive talking in class -

Teacher redirection in writing to parents or restorative approaches.

LEVEL 2

Classroom teacher-based with consultation and supporting resources

Example:

Rude comment made to another student with the intent to harm -

Teacher-assigned detention and restorative approaches.

LEVEL 3

Principal-based (or designee)

Examples:

Repeated classroom disruptions after teacher intervention -

Administrative assigned in-school intervention and restorative circle.

OR

Principal-assigned suspension and restorative approaches

LEVEL 4

Principal-based (or designee)

Examples:

Students Fighting – Inappropriate use of technology:

Sending, posting, or sharing personal or private information/fights

Principal-assigned 4 days of out-of-school suspension and restorative circle.

Selling Drugs -

Assistant Principal - assigned 6 days of out-of-school suspension and restorative approaches.

LEVEL 5

Superintendent Level (or designee, such as the Director of Student Conduct)

Examples:

Possession of a Firearm -

Principal-assigned 10 days of out-of-school suspension and recommendation for alternative placement or expulsion.

Disciplinary panel will review placement with the student and family.

Examples of 2025–2026 Revisions

Infraction	Current Range of Response	Proposed Range of Response SY 2025–2026
Drugs – Possession	3–4	3–5
Drugs – Distribution	3–5	4–5
Theft (\$500 or more)	1–5	3–5
Bomb Threats	1–5	4–5
Bullying/Harassment	2–5	3–5
Attack on Student (Secondary)	1–5	3–5
Attack on Staff	1–5	4–5 (secondary) 3–4 (elementary)

Student and Family Support Post Incident

**Mandatory
Re-Entry Plan
and Intake
Meeting**

**Automatic
Referral to the
Student
Well-Being
Team or Social
Worker**

**Check-In and
Trusted Adult
Support
During the
Critical
One-Week
Window**

Specialized Supports for Student Depending on Violation

Substance Use Disorder referral to school-based or external partner
Restorative Conferences with a trusted adult to rebuild trust and relationships
Conflict Resolution or Peer Mediation provided by CRCMC or trained staff/students
Community Service/ Restitution that is in alignment with repairing the harm caused
Mentor assigned based upon demonstrated need and availability

Next Steps for 2025–2026 Changes

Professional Learning for Staff: All school-based staff will receive training on the updated *Student Code of Conduct*, including restorative practices and tiered behavior responses, as part of their required annual compliance modules. In June, all administrators will have training on the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Student Orientation and Classroom Lessons: Schools will embed discussions on the new behavior expectations into student orientation sessions and ongoing advisory periods, ensuring students understand their rights, responsibilities, and consequences.

Parent/Guardian and Community Communication: Updated Codes will be shared with families through multiple platforms—printed guides, school newsletters, websites, and information sessions—to support a shared understanding and reinforce the partnership in student success.

Ongoing Feedback and Monitoring: Cross Functional Teams will support implementation, gather feedback, and continuously guide the school community in aligning behavior interventions with equity and restorative approaches. The team will support leaders with Restorative Justice practices.

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