

Code of Conduct

Purpose:

First and foremost, the BHCS Code of Conduct is intended to provide a framework for learning and practicing positive, socially acceptable behaviors. It is also intended to help students, parents, and staff identify and deal constructively with behaviors that are inconsistent with the philosophy and Code of Conduct of our school, that jeopardize the physical or emotional well-being of other students or staff, that disrupt the learning process, or that interfere with the staff's efforts to maintain a positive school climate.

Philosophy:

The board believes that it is the duty of schools and families to assist students to become self-disciplined, responsible citizens who feel connected to the school through positive relationships with adults and other children and who feel positive about themselves. While the policy provides for a system of consequences, the board believes that punishments alone will not be an effective means of changing behavior. Students must be taught appropriate behaviors, have opportunities to practice them, be reinforced positively when conducting themselves appropriately, and be worked with in a constructive way when their behaviors miss the mark.

However, if it becomes clear, after repeated applications of the disciplinary measures outlined in this policy, a student is not learning appropriate behaviors, his/her continued attendance at the school will be contingent upon the student and his/her family successfully participating in alternative interventions as outlined below. The right to participate in the school program is accompanied by the responsibility to conduct oneself consistently with the school's Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct:

The school's "Declaration of Interdependence" (developed in 1994 by students, staff and parents) provides an essential code for student conduct:

" We believe that each citizen of our school has certain individual rights as well as responsibilities to other members of our community, including:

- the right to be safe; the responsibility to ensure others' safety;
- the right to learn; the responsibility to let others learn;
- the right to express opinions; the responsibility to express opinions constructively and to listen to others' opinions;
- the right to be treated with respect; the responsibility to treat others respectfully;
- the right to privacy; the responsibility to respect the privacy of others;
- the right to be trusted; the responsibility to be honest and trustworthy;
- the right to be a unique individual; and the responsibility to respect individual differences."

Beyond this essential framework of rights and responsibilities, students must conduct themselves in accord with all state and federal laws, in particular those which prohibit the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, which prohibit bringing dangerous weapons to school, or which prohibit sexual harassment or discrimination based on gender, race or ethnicity, color, national origin, religious beliefs, marital status, age, or handicap. Students must not steal or vandalize school or personal property. (1320.2; 2132; 3100; 4000; 4300; 5103; 5103A; 5602; 5902; 6305; 6601.1)

Essential Principles and Beliefs:

- All behavior is purposeful and is chosen to meet the needs of an individual.
- Schools must provide opportunities for students to develop decision-making skills that enable them to meet their own needs while also respecting the needs of others.
- Standards for behavior must be explicitly taught, frequently reviewed, and clearly communicated to students and their parents.
- Disruptive behavior will not be allowed to interfere with the learning of others.
- Positive reinforcers are more powerful in shaping or changing behavior than punishments.
- Discipline should lead to a change in behavior and increased confidence in the child that he/she can make more effective choices in the future.
- Disciplinary actions should be administered in a way that preserves positive relationships between adults and children.
- How we discipline children is a major factor in how children view themselves in the world.
- Consequences should be immediate whenever possible.
- Consequences need to be nonviolent, logical, and related to the student's behavior.
- Consequences should require the student to reflect on his/her own behavior and, whenever practical, practice desired alternative behaviors.
- Disciplinary responses should be developmentally appropriate and consistently applied throughout the school.
- Student behavior will be better if a positive school climate is maintained for all students.

Responsibilities of Administration:

The principal will:

- Ensure that the discipline policy is communicated to all parents, students, and staff;
- Ensure that teachers, the athletic director, coaches, bus drivers, playground supervisors, and lunchroom monitors develop specific guidelines for appropriate behaviors in all school settings, including extracurricular events;
- Ensure that the system of consequences outlined below is administered consistently and equitably, but also with creativity and relevance to each situation;
- Inform the superintendent of schools in a timely manner of serious behavioral concerns, incidents that require students to be removed from school, and those that may be brought to the school board for expulsion hearings;
- Ensure that accurate records are maintained in the office regarding serious infraction of this policy and that meetings of the Climate Committee are scheduled as outlined below;
- Oversee school-wide efforts to maintain a positive, teaching approach to school discipline, review with the instructional staff classroom practices that support this overall goal, and arrange for ongoing professional development as needed; and
- Maintain close working relationships with outside agencies that deliver supportive and/or crisis intervention services to students and their families so that the school works in harmony with other intervention conducted on behalf of BHCS students. (1320.2; 2133; 3100; 4101.2; 4106A-X; 4113; 5010; 5800; 5801)

Responsibilities of Teachers:

Teachers will;

- Maintain positive relationships with students and parents and a positive climate for learning in the classroom;
- Provide flexible teaching practices, reflective of the diversity of individual characteristics, learning styles, and ability levels present in the classroom;
- Communicate clearly and frequently with students and parents about classroom expectations and problems as they occur;

- Explicitly teach positive behaviors and attitudes (such as respect, kindness, inclusiveness, and appreciation of diversity), frequently review them with students, and positively reinforce students as they demonstrate them;
- Teach students the necessity to report unsafe, illegal, or harassing activities;
- Participate in developing specific guidelines for appropriate behaviors in all school settings;
- Listen carefully to and honor the knowledge that parents have about their children;
- Work effectively with the administration and other members of the staff to ensure that the system of consequences is administered consistently and in the positive spirit of this policy;
- Bring to the attention of the principal all serious behavioral incidents and issues;
- Have the right to ask the administration to remove all disruptive students from their classroom; and
- Critically reflect on and seek professional development to improve skills as needed in positively managing student behavior. (5101; Teachers' Negotiated Contract)

Responsibilities of Parents:

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child or children attend school and that school is notified of any absences and/or physical or emotional health issues that might impact a child's experience at school;
- Review the school's discipline policy and Code of Conduct with their child or children;
- Stay informed about school and support the learning of their child or children by trusting and respecting the professionalism of the staff, and
- Work constructively with classroom teachers, the principal, and others to discuss behavioral concerns and to seek improvements when they are necessary. (5300; 5301; 5503; 5600; 6601; 6602)

Responsibilities of Students:

Students will:

- Become familiar with the school's discipline policy and Code of Conduct and conduct themselves in accordance with all school rules and guidelines;
- Come to school ready to learn, allow others to learn, and allow teachers to teach;
- Bring to the attention of their classroom teacher all serious behavioral incidents or concerns that occur on the bus, at school, or at school-sponsored events; and
- Work constructively with classroom teachers, the principal, and others to become positive, self-disciplined members of the school community.

Climate Committee:

The school principal shall form a Climate Committee composed of the following members: a minimum of three teachers from at least three teams or wings of the school and the principal. The Climate Committee members should be appointed to serve a full school year, but if a member needs to resign during the year, he/she should be replaced by an individual from the same team.

The Climate Committee shall meet regularly to review school-wide efforts to establish and maintain a positive school climate; to assess the school's efforts to teach positive behaviors; to critique the implementation of the school discipline policy; and to give feedback to the faculty and the administration.

System of Consequences:

The system of consequences is intended to help children learn appropriate behaviors.

While some consequences may take the form of punishment, the overall goal of the consequence is that the student should learn to manage his/her own behavior more effectively. Staff members administering consequences should bear in mind the overall goal of preserving positive relationships throughout the application of the discipline policy.

The system of consequences is built on the assumption that whenever possible the consequence should be logically connected to the behavioral infraction. If a student has destroyed or damaged property, for example, paying for or fixing the property or otherwise making restitution should be included as a consequence. If a student has spoken disrespectfully to someone, he/she should be required to apologize and in some way demonstrate respect for the other person. Whenever practical, as school staff are assigning consequences, students should be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate positive, responsible, and/or socially acceptable behavior and to be positively reinforced for doing so.

The following list of behaviors and possible consequences is intended to provide a framework for teachers and the principal as they review each incident. The list of possible consequences should be used creatively and flexibly as the nature and severity of each incident is assessed.

Behaviors and Possible Consequences

Serious disrespect of others:

- examples: defiance of an adult (verbal or physical); refusing to complete assigned tasks; rudely talking back; profanity; bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or teasing; or interfering with the learning environment;
- possible consequences: (always include notification of parent) written apology to teacher or student ; community service; removal from class until student agrees to treat others respectfully; remain after school until work is completed; write list of alternative ways of expressing disagreement or ways of expressing anger; take part in social skills training; work with Civil Rights Team; in-school or out-of-school suspension, or expulsion from school as defined in policy or state statutes.

This school will not tolerate the use of hate language and the violation of the civil rights of students or adults; neither will bullying or intentional and hurtful teasing be allowed. Civil rights violations include harassment of others for race, religion, country of origin, or sexual orientation.

At BHCS there is no tolerance for hate language, gestures, or looks implying the harassment of others. What this means is that any harassment, bullying, or use of hate language may be considered grounds for being sent home from school immediately. If sent home, a student's parents will be called and the student will go home for the remainder of the day; if a parent cannot be located, the student will remain on inschool suspension for the remainder of the day. Determination on these issues will be made by the principal.

Furthermore, students have an obligation to alert their friends and acquaintances when they hear comments which are harassing in nature or hurting by intent. They have an obligation to tell someone that they don't want to be called names or to hear students call others inappropriate names. They also have an obligation to tell an adult if they are the victim of bullying or harassment, or if they witness or over hear others being harassed. This is a school where we expect children and adults to be treated with respect, where we will treat others with respect, and where all of us can feel safe and accepted.

Physical aggression towards a student or adult:

- examples: threatening to hurt someone, hurting someone by fighting, hitting, etc.
- possible consequences: (always include notification of parent) removal from class, playground, or school; written apology to student; write list of positive things about the person threatened or hurt; participation in social skills training; loss of privilege of free association; in-school or out-of-school suspension, or expulsion from school as defined in policy or state statutes; and/or referral to law enforcement.

Violation of major school safety regulations:

- examples: leaving school grounds without permission, endangering physical safety of self or others, creating a fire or other serious safety hazard, making a bomb threat.
- possible consequences: (always include notification of parent) removal from school; written report of reasons for safety rules; loss of privilege of movement throughout school; make posters or presentations to younger students; community service to school; research fire safety; mandatory visit to fire station for meeting with fire chief; in-school or out-of-school suspension, or expulsion from school as defined in policy or state statutes; and/or referral to law enforcement. Students who make bomb threats will be subject to disciplinary procedures which may include mandatory 10-day suspension, expulsion hearing, and report to law enforcement authorities, depending on the circumstances and the age and developmental level of the student involved. Making a bomb threat is a violation of the Maine Criminal Code and may result in incarceration or fine.

Illegal or antisocial behavior:

- examples: stealing, substance abuse; vandalism.
- possible consequences; (always include notification of parent) restitution, community service; research reasons to avoid drugs; review drug/alcohol abuse materials; or repair damage; in-school or out-of-school suspension, or expulsion from school as defined in policy or state statutes; and/or referral to law enforcement. (2133; 5103; 5103.A; 5601; 5601.1; 5800; 5801; 5802; 5802.1; 5901; 6601.1; 6305)

If a special education student is repeatedly removed from a classroom as a disruptive student, a P.E.T. will be held to review the appropriateness of the student's I.E.P.

Since it is more effective to administer consequences as quickly as possible after an inappropriate behavior occurs, teachers should attempt to discuss the behavior with the student immediately. If dealing with the behavior immediately is not possible, the teacher and the student should meet to discuss the behavior and appropriate consequences at the next available recess, during the lunch break, or immediately after school. If the teacher needs to have the student remain after school, the parent(s) will be notified so that transportation can be arranged. Serious infractions of the Code of Conduct should be documented and filed in the office.

Students may be suspended from school and expulsion proceedings may result for extreme or dangerous situations including the behaviors detailed above. Parents will be notified by the principal. The child will be released to the parents at times when it may be in the best interests of the students or others for him/her not to remain in the school setting. Terms for return to school will be determined by the principal with notification to the parents at time of suspension.

The teachers and the principal are always encouraged to explore all possible means for helping students learn appropriate behaviors through the use of individual student contracts, behavior plans, and enlisting parent support through early communication with the home. While it is intended to give a framework for chronic

offenders so that all students can have a safe and enjoyable learning environment, this policy is not intended to limit the teacher, parents, or the school administration from handling discipline situations with flexibility and creativity.

(Discipline forms, reports to parents, communications to teachers: All references to “blue slip” or “yellow slip” will be deleted.)

Adopted: Blue Hill School Committee - July 2, 2002
Amended: Blue Hill School Committee - June 11, 2003

Code of Conduct Climate Committee Procedure

The Climate Committee is established through policy #5902A of the Blue Hill Consolidated School. Its job is to meet on a regular basis to review efforts to establish and maintain a positive school climate; to assess the school's efforts to teach positive behaviors; to critique the implementation of the school discipline policy; and to give feedback to the faculty and administration.

In addition:

The Climate Committee shall also meet as needed at the request of the principal to review cases where repeated applications of the system of consequences outlined in policy #5902A have not resulted in changed behavior and to make recommendations about alternative interventions. After three incidents that have required documentation on a Discipline Report Form, a student may be referred to the Climate Committee. If a student's behavior is extremely serious, however, the principal may refer the student to the Climate Committee at any time, regardless of the number of incidents in which a student has been engaged. The principal retains the authority, by Maine statute, to suspend any child for serious offenses for up to ten days without calling the Climate Committee.

The principal with or without the advice of the Climate Committee has the option at any time of referring a student to the School Committee for expulsion.

When a case is referred to the Climate Committee, the parent and student will be notified and required to appear at the Climate Committee meeting. The principal may ask additional people to be present at the meeting, such as the child's classroom teacher(s), specialists, the school counselor. The purpose of the meeting will be to evaluate why the student's behavior has not changed and to develop a plan designed to bring about improved behavior.

If the parent/child fails to appear, the Climate Committee will conduct its meeting and possibly assign consequences to the student. Notification of Climate Committee decisions will be sent to parents, classroom teachers, and specialists.

Among the interventions the Climate Committee could consider, but should not be limited to, are:

- referral to the Student Assistance Team; (6604)
- referral to the PET process; (6601)
- referral for counseling and/or psychological evaluation; (6605)
- referral to school or community-based social skill development programs;
- short or longer term suspension from school (up to 10 days for each infraction); (5800)
- and/or home-based programming with tutoring. (5800; 5801; 6601.1)

Parents and students should understand that, after a case has been referred to and reviewed by the Climate Committee and interventions such as those listed above have been implemented, improved conduct should result. The student and his/her parents may be asked to reappear before the Climate Committee after the interventions recommended by the Climate Committee have been acted upon. The purpose of this follow-up meeting will be to determine if the student's behavior has improved and to discuss whether further interventions are necessary. If a student's behavior does not improve after repeated disciplinary actions and referral to the Climate Committee, expulsion, alternative in-school programming, or out-of school placement will be recommended.

Approved: Blue Hill School Committee 7/2/02

School System Commitment to Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

The Blue Hill School Committee believes that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of the school unit's educational mission. The School Committee recognizes that ethics, constructive attitudes, responsible behavior, and "character" are important if a student is to leave school as a "Responsible and Involved Citizen," as described in the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results. The School Committee also recognizes the Maine law requires the adoption of a district-wide student code of conduct consistent with statewide standards for student behavior developed by the Commissioner of the Department of Education in compliance with 20-A MRSA 254(11).

The School Committee seeks to create and maintain a school climate in which ethical and responsible behavior can flourish. The School Committee believes that instilling a sense of ethics and responsibility in students requires setting positive expectations for student behavior as well as establishing disciplinary consequences for behavior that violates School Committee policy or school rules. Further, the School Committee believes that in order to teach ethical and responsible behavior, adults who interact with students must strive to model and reinforce ethical and responsible behavior. To that end, the School Committee supports an active partnership between schools and parents.

Recognizing that collaboratively identified core values are the foundation for a school culture that encourages and reinforces ethical and responsible student behavior, the School Committee is committed to the establishment and implementation of a process for identifying shared values and setting and enforcing standards for behavior, including prescription of consequences for unacceptable behavior. The process for identifying such shared values will invite and include the participation of School Committee members, school administrators, staff, parents, students and the community. Core values will be reviewed periodically, with opportunity for public participation. The School Committee will direct the Superintendent/designee to develop a process to assess school system progress toward achievement of an ethical and responsible school culture.

Following the identification of core values, the School Committee, with input from administrators, staff, parents, students and members of the community, will adopt a Student Code of Conduct consistent with statewide standards for student behavior, that shall, as required by law:

- A. Define unacceptable student behavior;
- B. Establish standards of student responsibility for behavior;
- C. Prescribe consequences for violation of the Student Code of Conduct, including first-time violations, when appropriate;
- D. Describe appropriate procedures for referring students in need of special services to those services;
- E. Establish criteria to determine when further assessment of a current individual education plan is necessary, based on removal of the student from class;
- F. Establish policies and procedures concerning the removal of disruptive or violent students from a classroom or a school bus, as well as student disciplinary and placement decisions, when appropriate; and
- G. Establish guidelines and criteria concerning the appropriate circumstances when the Superintendent/designee may provide information to the local police or other appropriate law enforcement authorities regarding an offense that involves violence committed by any person on school grounds or other school property.

The Student Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically by the School Committee, with input from administrators, staff, parents, students and members of the community.

Students, parents, staff and the community will be informed of the Student Code of Conduct through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent/designee.

Ethics and Curriculum

The School Committee encourages integration of ethics into content areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. The School Committee also encourages schools (or: school administrators and staff) to provide students with meaningful opportunities to apply values and ethical and responsible behavior through activities such as problem solving, peer mediation and student government/leadership development.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA && 254, 1001 (15)

Adopted: Blue Hill School Committee - April 10, 2002