

3240 Student Behavior and Disciplinary Responses

It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that meaningful learning and educational excellence occur in environments that are safe, positive, consistent, and predictable. These environments rely on trusting relationships between family, student, and staff, that are built with cultural humility, safety, respect, honesty, accountability, and an eye towards equity.

Seattle Public Schools recognizes:

- Every student has the right to the high-quality instruction, supports, and interventions that they need to graduate high school on time and prepared for the future;
- Racial disproportionality persists in disciplinary responses in the District;
- Students are impacted when they are removed from their learning environment;
- Situations involving discipline may be complex and require staff to understand underlying factors that are influencing student behaviors; and
- Mitigating and aggravating factors should influence the disciplinary decision-making process.

Seattle Public Schools is committed to furthering cultural intelligence that respects and values the diversity across the District in schools and classrooms. This commitment serves to influence decisions in promoting fair and equitable treatment for all and eliminating racial predictability and disproportionality in all aspects of education and its administration.

Disciplinary Responses

The foundation of Seattle Public Schools' discipline policy is one of prevention and measurement of progress. This policy is grounded in the establishment of a positive school climate based on shared behavioral expectations and a common language for talking about expected behavior. The shared behavioral expectations are reaffirmed through an inclusive process that involves students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, volunteers, and other staff (within a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework). If divergence from shared expectations occur, behaviors will be addressed with a continuum of responses.

School discipline is guided by the following principles:

- Effective and engaging instruction and behavior management are foundational to reducing student behavioral violations.

- Skilled instructional planning and behavior management will prevent unwanted behavior before it occurs.
- Effective supports, intervention, and restoration occurs after behavioral violations, allowing students the opportunity to learn from mistakes and contribute to, and be supported by, their school community.
- School safety is established and strengthened when school staff build trusting relationships with students and are actively involved in forming healthy, safe, engaging, supportive, and inclusive school environments resulting in improved academic achievement.
- Staff promoting high standards of conduct by teaching, modeling, and monitoring behavior.
- Staff consistently and fairly correct behavioral violations in a manner that is consistent with the Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools and state law.
- School discipline maximizes time spent learning and minimizes classroom exclusions due to behavioral violations.
- Early involvement of parents/guardians in efforts to support students in meeting behavioral expectations occurs.

“Discipline” means any action taken by staff in response to student behavioral violations, including exclusionary as well as positive and supportive forms of disciplinary responses. In accordance with Seattle School Board Resolution No. 2014/15-35, this policy eliminates out of school suspensions for students in kindergarten through fifth grade for disruptive conduct, rule-breaking, and disobedience. Further, in accordance with RCW 28A.600.015(4), the District will not impose long-term suspension or expulsion as a form of discretionary discipline for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Discipline procedures and strategies will focus on reducing, if not eliminating, loss of instructional time and out-of-school responses for student behavioral violations.

It is the further policy of the Seattle School Board that shared behavioral expectations will be maintained not only in the classroom but on school property at all times. Therefore, it is expected that every student and staff will follow the policies, rules, and regulations of Seattle Public Schools during the school day, during any school-sponsored activity held on or off school property, and on school-provided transportation.

Student Rights

The District will observe students’ fundamental rights and will administer discipline in a manner that does not:

1. Unlawfully discriminate against a student on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal;

2. Deprive a student of the student's constitutional right to freedom of speech and press, the constitutional right to peaceably assemble and to petition the government and its representatives for a redress of grievances, the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion and to have the student's school free from sectarian control or influence, subject to reasonable limitations upon the time, place, and manner of exercising the right;
3. Deprive a student of the student's constitutional right to be secure in the student's person, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures;
4. Unlawfully interfere in a student's pursuit of an education while in the custody of the school district; or
5. Deprive a student of the student's right to an equal educational opportunity, in whole or in part, without due process of law.

The District's student discipline policy and procedure are designed to provide students with a safe, healthy, and educationally sound environment. Students are expected to be aware of, and comply with, this policy and procedure, including behavioral expectations that respect the rights, person, and property of others.

Written Rules

The *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* will be made available to all students, their parents, school staff, and the Board, in a language they can understand. Reasonable student and parent/guardian access to this document will be provided in print and will also be available on the District website. The Seattle School Board directs the Superintendent to annually distribute written rules regarding pupil conduct, rights, and discipline in the form of a *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* document. A condensed *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* flyer will be provided to all students and their parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year and when students newly enroll in Seattle Public Schools, and will be posted in an easily visible place within each school.

Revisions to the Basic Rules required by state law will be approved by the Board. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to make administrative revisions to the *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* as needed.

Discipline and all rules included in the *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* will be in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), its implementing regulations, and other federal laws.

Further, it is the policy of the Seattle School Board that student discipline rules and procedures will follow the substantive and procedural due process guarantees established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, WAC 392-400.

The Seattle School Board authorizes the Superintendent to permit schools to adopt written school rules that are consistent with federal and state laws, this policy, and all policies of Seattle Public Schools. The process of developing school rules should include an opportunity for input from students and parents/guardians of the school. Schools will

annually provide their school rules, developed as stated above, to all school staff, students, and parents/guardians in student handbooks or through reasonable electronic access, in a language they can understand. Schools will ensure staff are knowledgeable of their school rules.

The District will ensure District employees and contractors are knowledgeable of this student discipline policy and the *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools*. Schools are encouraged to provide discipline training developed under RCW 28A.415.410 to support implementation of this policy and procedure to all school staff as feasible.

Review

The District will periodically review and further develop this policy and the *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* with the participation of school personnel, students, parents/guardians, and the community. As part of this development and review process, the District will use disaggregated data collected under RCW 28A.300.042 to monitor the impact of student discipline practices as well as to improve fairness and equity in the administration of student discipline.

Superintendent Procedure:

Policy Cross References:

- 0030 – Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity
- 3132 – Non-Standard School Assignments
- 3141 – Nonresident Students
- 3143 – Notification and Dissemination of Information About Student Offenses and Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm
- 3201 – Discipline Appeal Council
- 3207 – Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying of Students
- 3208 – Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited
- 3210 – Nondiscrimination, Acts of Hostility and Defamation
- 3220 – Student Expression in School Sponsored Media
- 3224 – Student Dress
- 3225 – School-Based Threat Assessment
- 3244 – Prohibition of Corporal Punishment
- 3246 – Restraint, Isolation and Other Uses of Physical Crisis Intervention
- 3248 – Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Prohibition for Students
- 3433 – Gangs and Hate Groups
- 4215 – Tobacco-Free Environment

- 4218 – Language Access
- 4311 – School Safety and Security Services Program
- 6660 – Vandalism to Transportation Facilities

Previous Policies:

- 3200 – Written Rules of Student Conduct
- D70.00 – Student Conduct
- D71.00 – Student Discipline
- D82.00 – Intervention for Violent Exceptional Misconduct Prior to Readmittance to Regular Schools

Legal References:

- RCW 4.24.190 Action against parent for willful injury to property by minor — Monetary limitation — Common law liability preserved.
- RCW 9A.16.020 Use of force — When lawful.
- Chapter 9.41 RCW Firearms and dangerous weapons.
- RCW 9.91.160 Personal protection spray devices.
- RCW 28A.210.310 Prohibition on use of tobacco products on school property.
- RCW 28A.300.042 Collection and submittal of student-level data—Student data-related reports—Disaggregation of data by subgroups—Modification of statewide student data systems.
- RCW 28A.320.128 Notice and disclosure policies – Threats of violence—Student conduct – Immunity for good faith notice – Penalty.
- RCW 28A.400.110 Principal to assure appropriate student discipline — Building discipline standards — Classes to improve classroom management skills.
- RCW 28A.415.410 Training to support discipline policies under chapter 28A.600 RCW.
- Chapter 28A.600 RCW Students.
- RCW 28A.635.060 Defacing or injuring school property—Liability of pupil, parent, or guardian—Withholding diplomas—Suspension and restitution—Community service program as alternative—Publication of information on withheld diplomas—Student rights protected.
- RCW 28A.635.090 Interference by force or violence – Penalty.
- RCW 28A.635.100 Intimidating any administrator, teacher, classified employee, or student by threat of force or violence unlawful—Penalty.
- WAC 392-190-048 Access to course offerings—Student discipline.
- Chapter 392-400 WAC Student Discipline.
- 20 U.S.C. 7101 et seq. Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.
- The Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act and its state and federal implementing legislations.

Management Resources:

- *WSSDA Policy Alert*, April 2019
- *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools*
- *Condensed Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools* Flyer
- Discipline department website: <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/discipline-and-behavior/>

Last Board Review:

Revisions:

- March 12, 2025 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)
- August 28, 2024
- August 22, 2023 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)
- October 10, 2014
- July 2, 2014
- December 6, 2017

Adopted by the Board:

- August 15, 2012