

2025-26 CODE OF BEHAVIOR



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Student Voice Bill of Rights

The Student Voice Bill of Rights is a document created by PWCS students communicating to the School Board, PWCS administration, and parents, the student body's collective views of their needs and expectations that being met would allow them to achieve academically, to feel safe, and to participate as stakeholders in the school community. The Student Voice Bill of Rights is aspirational and is not intended to create any legally enforceable rights beyond those set forth by federal and state law, PWCS policies and regulations, or other provisions of the Code of Behavior.

Prince William County Public Schools' (PWCS) purpose is to serve as trusted partners in education with the community of Prince William County, preparing our students to be critical thinkers, visionaries, and collaborators while implementing inclusive and equitable practices to establish expectations of excellence for our school communities. Promoting and protecting student rights are essential to accomplishing our purpose of creating safe and supportive school communities where students can and are encouraged to flourish.

All students have rights. A right is freedom or protection extended to a person, defining what is owed to them by the systems and people around them.

These rights belong to all students, regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital or parental status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. People's rights belong to them and cannot be threatened, violated, or taken away without due process.

The PWCS Student Voice Bill of Rights aims to protect students and inform them of their rights. Informing students of their rights will protect them from possible abuse and violation of their person. Student rights are human rights. To acknowledge the PWCS Student Bill of Rights is to clarify and understand the value of students.

Numerous stakeholder perspectives were represented in the creation of this document, which is intended to grow and evolve alongside changes in policy and the sentiments of both students and society.

Article I: Access to High-Quality Education

All students have the right to a high-quality education that is tailored to their individual needs and prepares them for life beyond high school.

- 1.1 - All students have the right to be taught by high-quality, certified educators who respect different learning styles and learn within environments that support their individual learning needs.
 - 1.1.a - Students have the right to supplemental academic resources that support their learning beyond the traditional classroom environment.
 - 1.1.a.1 - Students have the right to access safe and adequate school transportation, which may include after-school transportation.
 - 1.1.a.2 - Students have the right to access supplemental academic support ⁱ during the school day.
 - 1.1.b - Students have the right to be informed of and have access to available virtual education opportunities.ⁱⁱ
- 1.2 - All students have the right to high-quality ⁱⁱⁱ in-school counseling resources.
 - 1.2.a - Students have the right to be informed of the available counseling resources.
 - 1.2.b - Students have the right to college and career support during their entire K-12 career. ^{iv}
 - 1.2.c - Resources ^v should be individualized based on the needs, interests, and readiness level of each student. Students need to be informed about the specific pathways ^{vi} they should take to be able to achieve success postsecondary.
- 1.3 - All schools will have access to the same high-quality resources regardless of external or internal factors.
 - 1.3.a - Students have the right to equal access to academic and specialty programs.

- 1.3.b - Students and families will be informed of all academic and specialty programs with regular communication beginning in elementary school.
- 1.3.c - Students have the right to attend schools with established career pathways, to include extracurriculars.
- 1.3.d - Students, regardless of background, affiliation, or other identifying factors, have the right to pursue advanced classes and specialty programs that will help them in their postsecondary life.
- 1.3.e - If schools are unable to provide specific courses, there should be a centralized program ^{vii} that provides additional courses.
- 1.3.f - Students have the right to comprehensive support in language development.

Article II: Modern Technology

All students deserve access to a curriculum that prepares students for a technologically advancing world.

- 2.1 - All students have the right to access updated technology to facilitate learning in both school and at home, including Wi-Fi and PWCS-issued devices.
- 2.2 - All students have the right to access a balanced approach ^{viii} to technology in the classroom.
- 2.3 - All students have the right to access online material required by their curricula.
- 2.4 - Online access will be scaled by age so students can access the materials required by their curricula.
 - 2.4.a - Students can request access to sites to support their learning. ^{ix}

Article III: Civic Participation and Decision-Making

All students have the right to be active in their school environment to develop the skills and understandings necessary to become active citizens.

- 3.1 - All students have the right to access, be informed of, and properly understand countywide and school-based initiatives that impact student learning and experiences within the school.
 - 3.1.a - Students have the right to transparent information regarding policies that impact student learning.
- 3.2 - All students have the right to have their perspective considered on major policy decisions impacting their lives as students. ^x
- 3.3 - All students have the right to be informed of and have access to civic participation opportunities and volunteer opportunities within their schools.
- 3.4 - All students have the right to protest and participate in peaceful activism. ^{xi}
- 3.5 - All students have the right to information to support and encourage voter registration.
- 3.6 - All students have the right to advocate for themselves regarding their education and to make suggestions to their administration to enhance their individual education.
 - 3.6.a - Students have communication channels both within and outside of their school buildings to share their perspectives.
 - 3.6.b - Students should not fear the consequences for expressing their ideas unless their propositions are or have the potential to be harmful, disruptive, and/or illegal.

Article IV: Diversity & Inclusion

All students deserve a high-quality and equitable learning environment regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital or parental status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law.

- 4.1 - All students have the right to have a respectful school environment.
 - 4.1.a - Students have the right to be informed of the nondiscrimination policy. ^{xii}
 - 4.1.b - Students have the right to a process ^{xiii} to challenge and rectify discrepancies in inclusion such as discriminatory practices.
 - 4.1.c - Students have the right to accommodations for religious practices as determined by their parents, school administrators, and PWCS policy.
 - 4.1.d - Students have the right to access a safe restroom ^{xiv} and locker room.
 - 4.1.e - Students have the right to request accommodations that satisfy their needs.

- 4.1.f - Students have the right to access athletic uniforms that reasonably align with their personal beliefs and practices if they do not interfere with safety guidelines.
- 4.2 - All students have the right to be informed of their ability to participate in student organizations, advanced classes, and extracurricular activities regardless of accommodations, language, etc.
- 4.3 - All students have the right to access confidential communication with teachers, counselors, and administrators in a safe environment in compliance with PWCS policy and federal and state laws.

Article V: Positive School Climate

All students deserve to feel mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally safe in school.

- 5.1 - All students have the right to be informed of available mental health support and resources.^{xv}
 - 5.1.a - Students will have access to mental health excused absences^{xvi} that are not related to an official mental health diagnosis.
 - 5.1.b - Students, parents, and families will be made aware of student support services through visible advertising.
 - 5.1.c - Students will have a clear understanding of what is available, where they can access support, who they can speak to about support, the various methods through which support will be provided, and be informed about why mental health resources are important to their lives as students.
- 5.2 - All students have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying, and to file a complaint^{xvii} if they feel that they are subject to this behavior.

Article VI: Free Expression

All students have the right to express themselves within an educational context if it adheres to their First Amendment rights.

- 6.1 - All students in all schools have the right to wear clothing they choose as long as it conforms to the PWCS dress code as outlined in the Code of Behavior and does not pose a safety or health concern.
- 6.2 - All students will be able to respectfully talk, celebrate, and learn about any culture without repercussions.

Article VII: Due Process

All schools have systems and structures in place to both model and monitor student behavior. All students have the right to understand existing rules in their school and the opportunity to address unfair treatment.^{xviii}

- 7.1 - All students deserve to be physically, emotionally, and mentally safe within their schools.
 - 7.1a - Students have the right to report unfair treatment to a trusted adult in the building.
- 7.2 - All students have the right to have their perspective considered on school and division codes of behavior.^{xix}
- 7.3 - All students have the right to be informed in a meaningful way of school and countywide rules and the disciplinary consequences that will occur if the Code of Behavior is violated.
 - 7.3a - Students will have the right to advocate for themselves or be advocated for during any disciplinary decision.
 - 7.3b - Students will experience standardized processes with search and seizure^{xx} according to PWCS policy and regulations.

Footnotes

ⁱ This could include, but is not limited to, in-person and online tutoring resources, etc.

ⁱⁱ Virtual education refers to programs such as Virtual Prince William and Virtual Virginia.

ⁱⁱⁱ High-quality is defined as well-trained and accessible.

^{iv} This support should be age-appropriate. For example, this could include enhanced career exploration at the elementary level.

- ^v This includes resources provided by professional school counselors, as well as other supplemental resources each school might provide to best support students.
- ^{vi} This might include helping inform students about career options in middle school so they know what specialty programs could support postsecondary choices, prerequisites for colleges, etc.
- ^{vii} This could include, but is not limited to, a virtual program that ensures access to advanced and/or specialty courses.
- ^{viii} Balanced approach determined by the teacher based on best practices in the course; however, students acknowledge that they would like a balance of both virtual and paper-based learning experiences.
- ^{ix} Student requests will be considered within an official approval process. If sites or resources are deemed inappropriate or unsafe, students will be provided with an explanation as to why their request is denied.
- ^x Some ways for students to share their perspective include sharing their perspective at Student Voice Committee sessions, Principal Advisory Council, speaking with Student Representatives to the School Board and/or Student Senate members, attending school faculty meetings to share their perspective, and/or attending PWCS School Board meetings to share their perspective during Citizen Comment Time.
- ^{xi} Students must comply with any PWCS policy and regulation, including Policy 724, Policy 730, and Regulation 724-1.
- ^{xii} More information regarding PWCS policy and procedures related to discrimination and harassment can be found in the [Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment](#) section of the Code of Behavior.
- ^{xiii} Students can report complaints directly to an administrator, or use the online reporting system. More information about this process can be found in the [Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment](#) section of the Code of Behavior.
- ^{xiv} Safe restrooms include, but are not limited to, gender-neutral restrooms.
- ^{xv} Resources related to current mental health support and services can be found on the [PWCS Mental Health Supports](#) webpage.
- ^{xvi} [Code of Virginia § 22.1-254](#) allows for any student who is absent from school due to their mental or behavioral health to be granted an excused absence. PWCS follows these provisions in its guidance for excused absences.
- ^{xvii} Students can report complaints directly to an administrator, or use the online reporting system. More information about this process can be found in the [Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment](#) section of the Code of Behavior.
- ^{xviii} Unfair treatment refers to discrimination, bullying, harassment, etc. occurring within the system of due process.
- ^{xix} Students might have the opportunity to share their perspective within school-based Student Voice Committees, within the PWCS Student Senate, or sharing their perspective during Citizen Comment Time.
- ^{xx} Search and seizure is a legal procedure where security searches a person and/or their property for evidence of their potential violation.

Resources, Policies and Regulations

Resources, Policies and Regulations

Relevant PWCS Policies and Regulations

- [Policy 681](#) and [Regulation 681-1](#), "Nontraditional Education Programs"
- [Policy 702](#), "Teacher Removal of Students from Class"
- [Policy 715](#), "Notice of Student's School Status Required as Condition of Enrollment," and [Regulation 715-5](#), "Disclosure of Child's Disciplinary and Criminal History Prior to Enrollment"
- [Policy 730](#), "Student Conduct and Responsibilities"
- [Policy 731](#) and [Regulation 731-1](#), "Appeal of Student Matters"
- [Policy 733](#), "Bullying and Harassment of Students"
- [Regulation 733-1](#), "Bullying of Students," and [Attachment I](#), "Bullying of Students"
- [Policy 735](#) and [Regulation 735-1](#), "Prohibited Substances"
- [Policy 738](#), "Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students"
- [Regulation 738-1](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct"
- [Regulation 738-2](#), "Title IX – Equal Access to Education Programs and Activities"
- [Regulation 738-3](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment"
- [Regulation 738-4](#), "Nondiscrimination Against Students on the Basis of Disability"
- [Regulation 738-5](#), "Treatment of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students"
- [Policy 743](#) and [Regulation 743-1](#), "Student Discipline"
- [Policy 744](#) and [Regulation 744-1](#), "Short-Term Suspension of Students"
- [Policy 745](#), "Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students, Readmissions, and Exclusion/Admission," [Regulation 745-1](#), "Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students," [Regulation 745-2](#), "Discipline of Students with Disabilities," [Regulation 745-3](#), "Discipline of Summer School Students," [Regulation 745-4](#), "School Board Disciplinary Committee Procedures for Student Expulsion Appeal Hearings," [Regulation 745-5](#), "Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions," and [Regulation 745-6](#), "Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board"
- [Policy 747](#) and [Regulation 747-1](#), "Student Management and Alternative Programs Department"
- [Policy 775](#) and [Regulation 775-1](#), "Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects"
- [Exclusionary Discipline](#)

Resources on the PWCS Website

- [Attendance Support and Resources](#)
- [Cell Phone and Wireless Communication Device Usage Guidelines](#)
- [Further Disciplinary Action Process](#)
- [When Your Student Needs Assistance](#)
- [Bullying Prevention](#)
- [Crisis Resources](#)
- [Depression and Anxiety](#)
- [Dropout Preventions](#)
- [Online Bullying Reporting Form](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Substance Abuse Prevention](#)

Introduction

Purpose

The Prince William School Board (School Board) expects a high standard of student conduct in an effort to ensure that education is provided in an atmosphere conducive to learning, free of disruption and threat to person or property, and supportive of individual rights. The School Board has adopted the Code of Behavior to establish rules and expectations for student behavior. The Code of Behavior describes prohibited behavior and the discipline process throughout the school division.

Introduction

The Virginia Constitution confers upon a local school board the authority to supervise the operation of the public schools under the school board's control. This authority includes the power to supervise and discipline students.

The Prince William County School Board seeks to protect the right of all its students to an education commensurate with their abilities, interests, values, and goals by providing safeguards for the health, safety, and rights of the individual student and school employee, and for the protection of school property.

However, the task of training and educating youth must be shared by all members of the school community – students, professional teaching staff, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and parent(s) – who all bear the responsibility to equitably support the rules of the school and the integrity of the educational process.

It is the duty of the parent to prepare the child to assume responsibility in the school environment, this includes responsibility for learning and exhibiting conduct that does not infringe upon the safety and rights of another. The school has the right to expect reasonable and self-disciplined behavior from each student. Since self-discipline cannot be imposed from without, the students must be permitted a degree of freedom of choice and action to develop their individual talents and abilities.

[Code of Virginia § 22.1-78](#) states: "A school board may adopt bylaws and regulations ... including but not limited to the proper discipline of students, including their conduct going to and returning from school." The School Board's rules governing student conduct are summarized in the Code of Behavior" (COB) and are also addressed in the School Board's policies and Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) regulations.

For good cause, the Superintendent may approve a deviation from the procedures outlined in the COB in its present form, so long as the basic rights of students, parent(s), the community at large, and/or school personnel are not violated. Good cause means protecting all students' health, safety, welfare, and educational opportunities in the school system.

Note: "Parent(s)," as used throughout, means biological parent(s), adoptive parent(s), or legal guardian(s). For purposes of this publication, references to "School Board" should be understood to indicate the Prince William County School Board.

School Jurisdiction

- When conduct by a student occurring off school grounds or school property has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the school division; impacts the integrity of the educational process; threatens the safety and welfare of students, staff, or school property; occurs when the student is under the school's authority; or otherwise invades the rights of students or staff.
- School is defined as any location or property at which instruction is being conducted or may be made available to pupils. Locations or properties may include, but are not limited to, any property or facilities owned or operated by or under the control of the School Board or on its behalf or by its agent, regional facilities jointly operated by or on behalf of two or more school divisions or under the control of their agent, and classrooms or instructional settings provided by colleges or universities in connection with instruction to pupils.
- Students may be disciplined for violations of the provisions of this COB, PWCS policies and regulations governing student conduct, and for behavior that is incompatible with a K-12 environment. Such as:
 - During regular school attendance and whenever present on school property or virtually. At school activities on property owned by the School Board, including School Age Child Care (SACC).
 - When going to and from school and bus stops.

- On school buses and at bus stops.
- In cases involving off-site, school-sponsored activities such as field trips, sporting events, and club activities.

PWCS Vision 2025 Launching Thriving Futures Strategic Plan

PWCS envisions every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. Toward this end, our mission includes a commitment to inclusive practices and equity with an expectation of excellence from every student and every employee each day. Additionally, we are committed to highlighting our core values within our division and school communities. As we aspire to ensure all students experience a positive climate and culture within their respective school communities, we will focus on our students' resiliency, well-being, equity, and inclusivity.

Through the divisionwide use of Restorative Practices, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and developing Educator Cultural Competency aligned with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) standards, PWCS will provide a learning environment that fosters connectedness, promotes a sense of belonging, and encourages social and emotional wellness for all students.

In case of conflict between this document and PWCS policies and regulations, state or federal law, the latter shall control. The COB may be updated throughout the school year to reflect changes in state or federal law, related School Board policies and regulations, or names of responsible offices. The version of the COB published on the PWCS website is the official version.

Reporting Concerning Behavior

Reporting Student Concerns

"Say Something" Anonymous Reporting System

Students, faculty, staff, and parents share the responsibility for an orderly and safe school environment.

Information about drugs, weapons, threats to self or others, or other factors that may be harmful to the school environment should be reported to a trusted adult or through the "Say Something" Anonymous Reporting System. "Say Something" is designed specifically for students in grades 6-12 and staff to report any serious or potentially violent concerns of unsafe behavior or threats of harm to self or others. Say Something is a youth violence prevention program from the national nonprofit organization Sandy Hook Promise and is provided and sustained at no cost to PWCS.

"Tipsters" can send reports on anything from school threats they have seen or overheard to personal crises, including sexual harassment, self-harm, and depression. The system enables school administrators and law enforcement to create effective interventions and intervene upon at-risk individuals to help prevent violence, suicide, bullying, self-harm, and other forms of threatening behavior.

All tips submitted receive an immediate response from one of the highly skilled crisis counselors at the Sandy Hook Promise National Crisis Center; this person then determines the necessary support steps. When credible tips are received that are life-threatening and/or involve an imminent threat, the crisis center will immediately contact local 911 dispatch and involve law enforcement, then notify central office staff and school-based representatives, even after hours.

See a warning sign or threat, use the following suggestions for reporting such information:

- Submit an anonymous tip by calling 1-844-5-SAYNOW or visiting www.SaySomething.net.
- Download the free app from the App Store or Google Play Store, where tips can be submitted instantly; once downloaded, it will ask for a 4-digit code you select and remember.
- Use this QR Code to access the website.



- Call 911 in cases of immediate emergency.

Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment

Students who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed are encouraged to report the matter with one of the following options:

- Speak to a school administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal).
- Contact the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance Department at 571-374-6839.
- [Report discrimination or harassment online.](#)
- Or use the QR code below.



Bullying

Each school is committed to creating an environment in which students are free from bullying. Students, parents, and school personnel are strongly encouraged to report incidents of bullying in the following ways:

- Speak to a school administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal). A school administrator will take appropriate steps to respond quickly and decisively to student reports of bullying.
- Students or parents can [report bullying incidents online](#).
- Or use the QR code below.



Relevant PWCS Policies and Regulations

- [Policy 738](#), "Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students"
- [Regulation 738-1](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct"
- [Regulation 738-2](#), "Title IX – Equal Access to Education Programs and Activities"
- [Regulation 738-3](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment"
- [Regulation 738-4](#), "Nondiscrimination Against Students on the Basis of Disability"
- [Regulation 738-5](#), "Treatment of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students"
- [Policy 733](#), "Bullying and Harassment of Students"
- [Regulation 733-1](#), "Bullying of Students"
- [Attachment I](#), "Bullying of Students"

Student Rights and Expectations

Right to Be Free from Bullying, Discrimination, and Harassment

Bullying

PWCS is committed to creating an environment in which students are free from bullying. Bullying is any aggressive and unwanted behavior intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and the victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyberbullying. It does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict. Students who believe they have been bullied are strongly encouraged to report such conduct to the school administration. The school administrator will take appropriate steps to respond quickly and decisively to student reports of bullying. Students or parents can [report incidents of bullying online](#).

Cyberbullying and any mistreatment or bullying behavior that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or that prevents a student from going to or from school safely violates the COB and will be investigated and responded to by school officials. However, not all mistreatment or bullying behavior constitutes discrimination or discriminatory harassment.

All complaints will be followed by an investigation. Those accused and the parent(s) of the students involved will be informed of complaints, witnesses will be interviewed, and all information will remain confidential except for that which must be shared as part of the investigation.

School administrators must notify parents of any student involved in an incident of alleged bullying as soon as practically possible, but no later than 24 hours after learning of the allegation of bullying.

[Policy 733](#), "Bullying and Harassment of Students," and [Regulation 733-1](#), "Bullying of Students."

PWCS Nondiscrimination Statement

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) does not discriminate in the provision of educational programs, services, and activities, nor tolerate bullying or harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital or parental status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. PWCS is committed to promptly and effectively addressing harassment.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when one or more individuals are treated differently or not given fair consideration or the same opportunity as others because of their race, color, religion, national origin (including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital status or parental status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. Discrimination against students or staff is strictly prohibited. Students who believe they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance Department at DEIC@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839.

[Policy 738](#), "Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students."

Complaints of discrimination or harassment involving students shall be resolved as provided in [Regulation 738-3](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment."

Harassment

Harassment is a persistent pattern of unwelcome conduct based on protected class (race, color, religion, national origin, ethnic characteristics, shared ancestry, age, sex, disability), or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law. Harassment includes:

Demeaning and Intimidating Behavior: Discriminatory harassment involves actions that demean, intimidate, or harm an individual or group. These behaviors could result in an intimidating, hostile, and/or offensive environment. Such conduct can interfere with a student's education.

Various Expressions: Discriminatory harassment can manifest in different ways, including physical actions, verbal communication, nonverbal cues, electronic messages, or written content.

Targeting Based on Belief: Importantly, discriminatory harassment may target an individual even if they do not actually possess any characteristic that serves as the basis for the harassment. The key factor is that the harassment is based on the belief that the individual possesses such characteristics.

Students who believe that they have been subject to discrimination or harassment are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance Department at DEIC@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839.

[Policy 738](#), "Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students."

Complaints of discrimination or harassment involving students shall be resolved as provided in [Regulation 738-3](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment."

Sex-Based Harassment and Sex-Based Misconduct

Discrimination under Title IX prohibits harassment of students based on sex. Essentially, Title IX ensures that no person in the United States can be excluded from participation, denied benefits, or subjected to discrimination on the basis of sex under any education program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. It plays a crucial role in promoting equal opportunities and fairness across educational institutions. Title IX is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- A PWCS employee conditioning the provision of a PWCS aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in sexual conduct.
- Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a student equal access to a PWCS educational program or activity.
- Dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Not all allegations of sex-based misconduct are considered discrimination or sexual harassment under Title IX but may still constitute a violation of the PWCS Code of Behavior.

[Policy 738](#), "Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students."

For more information on nondiscrimination and harassment of students, see PWCS [Regulation 738-1](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct."

[Report discrimination or harassment online.](#)

Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment

Students who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance Department at DEIC@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839. The initial report may be verbal, in writing, or through the use of this QR Code:



[Report discrimination or harassment online.](#)

Preventing Discrimination and Harassment

School officials will act to stop and prevent discrimination and harassment. Students can help stop and prevent discrimination and harassment by speaking up and:

- Asking for help from a parent, teacher, counselor, school administrator, or other trusted adult.
- Reporting the misconduct to a school administrator, a trusted adult at school, or the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance Department.

Relevant PWCS Policies and Regulations

- [Policy 738](#), "Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students"
- [Regulation 738-1](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct"
- [Regulation 738-2](#), "Title IX – Equal Access to Education Programs and Activities"
- [Regulation 738-3](#), "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment"
- [Regulation 738-4](#), "Nondiscrimination Against Students on the Basis of Disability"
- [Regulation 738-5](#), "Treatment of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students"

Notice of Security Measures

Monitoring of PWCS Computer Systems and Network

Pursuant to PWCS [Regulation 295-1](#), "Computer Systems and Network Services - PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy," employees, students, and users of PWCS guest networks have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers or internet services, nor does the use of PWCS computers or related venues create a public forum under the freedom of speech provisions of the federal and state constitutions. The division retains the right to monitor all computer and internet activity by employees and students; and any information or communications transmitted on PWCS computer systems and network services may be intercepted, recorded, read, copied, and disclosed by and to authorized personnel for official purposes, including administrative and criminal investigations. Use of PWCS computers, networks, and internet systems is a privilege, not a right, and can be withdrawn by the division at any time.

Safety Screening Technology

PWCS utilizes safety screening technology at middle and high schools, including traditional and nontraditional schools. Currently, there are no plans for implementation at elementary schools. Students are expected to utilize designated entrances only. Entering or assisting others to enter nonauthorized entries is a violation of the Code of Behavior and can lead to suspension or a recommendation for further disciplinary action. For additional information on the use of safety screening technology, visit the [Safety Screening Technology](#) webpage on the PWCS website.

Video Security

Please be aware that security cameras are in all PWCS buildings and will be used to promote the safety and security of all PWCS students, staff, and property.

Student Expectations

Student Expectations

Students, staff, and parents share responsibility for an orderly and safe school environment. Information about drugs, weapons, or other factors that may be harmful to others or the school environment must be reported. Any attempted or actual retaliation for the reporting of COB violations shall be addressed by corrective action, up to and including expulsion.

Students who have knowledge of drugs, weapons, violence, or other behaviors that may be harmful to others or to the school environment may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to report such information to school authorities.

Students who discover something in their possession that is not permitted at school must report it to an administrator or other staff members immediately. School staff responsible for initiating follow-up action shall consider that the student voluntarily brought this to the staff's attention. Students should contact an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult immediately if they have information about, or believe that they have been, victims of misconduct that violates the COB.

Attendance Policy

Under Virginia law, students are responsible for attending school every day that school is in session. [Regulation 724-1](#), "Attendance, Absences, Excuses, and Tardies," contains the specific information related to student attendance as summarized here. Absences, tardies, and/or early dismissals must have documented parental and/or school personnel approval. Within five days of the absence from school, the parent shall provide documentation to the appropriate school staff to excuse the absence. Classwork for excused absences may be made up according to Regulation 724-1.

The student or parent is responsible for obtaining assignments. Students arriving late to school should follow the school's procedures for checking in.

Student Dress and Grooming

Students are urged to dress for success each school day. Their overall appearance, while on school grounds or virtually, should be based on the health and safety of an inclusive school community. It is understood that student dress may reflect outdoor weather conditions throughout the school year; however, students should refrain from wearing any item of clothing that may cause a distraction or disruption to the educational process or compromise the physical and emotional health and safety of the student or others. Students whose appearance disrupts instruction may be asked to change clothing.

The PWCS student dress and grooming guidelines are created to ensure equity in student expression and staff enforcement and are not intended to discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. The dress and grooming standards apply equally to all students regardless of gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

Students are permitted to wear any religiously or ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle.

Permitted head coverings and hairstyles include, but are not limited to:

- Braids
- Cornrows
- Headwraps
- Hijabs
- Locs
- Yarmulkes

Prohibited items of clothing include:

Clothing items which:

- Reveal or expose undergarments.

- Fit in a manner as to reveal or expose undergarments.
- Contain vulgar, discriminatory, lewd, patently offensive, or obscene language or images.
- Contain threats or gang symbols.
- Promote violence or the illegal use of weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and/or associated paraphernalia.
- Cause or may foreseeably cause a disruption to the learning environment.
- Are accessories that could be regarded as or used as a weapon.
- Headwear that covers one's entire head or face, unless the headwear is:
 - Worn as part of one's religion.
 - Worn for medical reasons.
 - Worn for personal prevention practices like in the case of infectious diseases.
 - Worn for an approved school event.
 - Worn as an expression of one's cultural or ethnic background.

No PWCS employee may enforce the Student Dress and Grooming provisions by direct physical contact with the student or the student's attire. No student shall be required to undress in front of any individual to comply with these provisions.

Consequences and Possible Responses to Student Behavior

Disciplinary Penalties

Disciplinary Penalties

A principal or designee may use any of the following penalties to maintain order and discipline within the school environment.

1. **Warning and Counseling** – Warning and counseling should be used where appropriate to assist a student to understand that his/her conduct interferes with his/her educational process, threatens the rights of others, or is contrary to school policy or regulations, and needs to be corrected.
2. **Lunch Detention** – A student will be directed to eat lunch in a separate setting as identified by school staff.
3. **After-School Detention** – A student may be detained for a reasonable period of time before or after scheduled classes and may be required during this time to engage in such activities that may reasonably contribute to better behavior. The parent of the student to be detained shall be notified by the school. The student who has been assigned detention time shall promptly inform his/her parents. The parent will be responsible for transporting the student. Except in certain circumstances, a student shall be given at least one day's notice if he/she has been assigned detention time.
4. **Special Assignments** – A student may be given special assignments as a corrective measure. This may include, but not be limited to, reasonable assignments for general assistance at the school facility.
5. **Class Restriction** – A student may be removed from their regular schedule of classes and assigned to another location.
6. **Suspension from Extracurricular Activities** – A student's privilege to participate in all or certain extracurricular activities may be suspended for a fixed period of time or until certain specified conditions have been fulfilled. Suspension from extracurricular activities may be imposed in conjunction with other penalties. Students who have been charged with a criminal offense may be suspended from participation for a period of time or until certain conditions have been fulfilled. Any and all sanctions are at the discretion of the school principal.
7. **School Probation** – Being placed on probation is notification that a student's behavior has been unacceptable and must be improved. A student may be placed on probation for a period not to exceed 45 school days by the principal following a conference with the student's parent in which the terms and conditions of the probation are explained. The principal shall also notify the parent in writing when a probation is imposed, including the reasons for the probation and its date of termination.
8. **In-School Assistance** – In-school assistance is a disciplinary measure that assigns students to a restrictive and highly controlled school-based setting other than the regular classroom where students are isolated and must complete all assigned work.
9. **Short-Term Suspension** – (10 days or less) A student may be suspended from school for certain violations [of the Code of Behavior](#). Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from regular school attendance and activities by the principal or designee for a period of time not to exceed 10 days. While the suspension is in effect, the student is denied attendance at any and all programs of PWCS. Except as provided in Code of Virginia §§ [22.1-277\(B\)](#), [22.1-277.07](#), or [22.1-277.08](#), no student in preschool through grade three may be suspended for more than three school days, unless 1) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others or 2) the School Board or the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education.
10. **Referral to Law-Enforcement Officials** – Violations of law will be handled by referring the case to law-enforcement officers in addition to the use of other disciplinary measures.
11. **Removal from Class** – A disruptive student may be removed from class according to the requirements of the [Code of Virginia § 22.1-276.2](#).

Further Disciplinary Action

A principal may refer a student to the Student Hearings Department (SHD), the Superintendent's designee for disciplinary matters, for consideration of one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

1. **School Probation** – Being placed on probation is notification that a student's behavior has been unacceptable and must be improved. A student may be placed on probation up to one school year by the Student Hearings Department or Superintendent's designee following a hearing with the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in which the terms and conditions of the probation are explained. For reasonable cause, a student may be required to take an alcohol or drug screening at the request of school authorities. The Superintendent or designee shall also notify the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in writing when a probation is imposed, including the reasons for the probation and its date of termination.
2. **Long-Term Suspension** – Long-term suspension is the exclusion of a student from regular school attendance and activities by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee for a period of 11-45 school days. While the suspension is in effect, the student is denied entry to all programs of PWCS. A student on long-term suspension may be readmitted to school on a conditional entry basis (as per regulations) following the completion of the suspension.

A long-term suspension may extend beyond a 45-school-day period but shall not exceed 365 calendar days if: 1) the offense is one described in Code of Virginia §§ [22.1-277.07](#) or [22.1-277.08](#) or involves serious bodily injury or 2) a committee of the School Board or the division Superintendent or Superintendent's designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education. For the purposes of Code of Virginia §§ [22.1-277](#) and [22.1-277.05](#), the Virginia Department of Education has defined "aggravating circumstances" to mean:

1. That a student engaged in misconduct which caused serious harm (including but not limited to physical, emotional, and psychological harm) to another person(s) or posed a credible threat of serious harm to another person(s), as determined by a threat assessment.
2. That a student's presence in the school poses an ongoing and unreasonable risk to the safety of the school, its students, staff, or others in the school.
3. That a student engaged in a serious offense that is:
 - A. Persistent (repeated similar behaviors are documented on the student's disciplinary record).
 - B. Unresponsive to targeted interventions as documented through an established intervention process.

Except as provided in Code of Virginia §§ [22.1-277\(B\)](#), [22.1-277.07](#), or [22.1-277.08](#), no student in preschool through grade three shall be suspended for more than three school days unless 1) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others or 2) the local school board or the superintendent or his designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education.

3. **Assignment To A Nontraditional Education Program** - "A school board may require any student who has been (i) charged with an offense relating to the Commonwealth's laws, or with a violation of school board policies on weapons, alcohol or drugs, or intentional injury to another person; (ii) found guilty or not innocent of an offense relating to the Commonwealth's laws on weapons, alcohol, or drugs, or of a crime that resulted in or could have resulted in injury to others, or for which the disposition ordered by a court is required to be disclosed to the superintendent of the school division pursuant to the Code of Virginia, [Section 16.1-305.1](#); (iii) found to have committed a serious offense or repeated offenses in violation of school board policies; (iv) suspended due to Code of Virginia, [Section 22.1-277.05](#); or (v) expelled pursuant to Code of Virginia, [Sections 22.1-277.06](#), [22.1-277.07](#), or [Section 22.1-277.08](#), or subsection B of [Section 22.1-277](#), to attend a nontraditional education program. A school board may require such students to attend such programs regardless of where the crime occurred..." ([Code of Virginia § 2.1-277.2:1](#)). Pursuant to disciplinary authority of the School Board, the Superintendent, or designee, may require students to attend a nontraditional education program consistent with the provisions of [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.2:1](#) and such decision shall be final unless altered by the School Board upon timely written petition.
4. **Expulsion** – A student's privilege to attend school may be terminated by the School Board in accordance with the due process procedures described below. Expulsion is an action by the school board which terminates the student from regular school attendance. Expulsion denies attendance at any and all programs of PWCS. Expulsion is an action by the school board which terminates the student from regular school attendance for 365 calendar days or longer.

Except as provided in Code of Virginia §§ [22.1-277\(B\)](#), [22.1-277.07](#), or [22.1-277.08](#), no student in preschool

through grade three shall be expelled from school unless 1) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others or 2) the local school board or the superintendent or his designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education.

Additional information on referrals for Further Disciplinary Action can be found on the [Further Disciplinary Action Hearing Process](#) webpage on the PWCS website.

Tiered Responses to Student Behavior

Tiered responses to student behavior are part of a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework that includes instructional, preventive, and proactive strategies. When students do not meet behavioral expectations, they receive interventions and supports to address the root causes of the behavior and learn acceptable replacement behaviors. Through the use of restorative practices, students will acquire an understanding of respect for self and others and skills to become good citizens. Interventions and responses that include the use of restorative practices **do not replace consequences** for violations of the "Code of Behavior." When a specific student's behavior does not change following an intervention or the behavior increases in frequency, intensity, or duration, a problem-solving approach identifies alternative interventions and responses.

Level 1 Responses

Level 1 responses are intended to prevent further behavioral issues while keeping the student in school.

Examples of School/Classroom Interventions and Disciplinary Responses:

Level 1 Interventions

- Parent or guardian contact.
- Class meeting.
- Confiscation of disruptive communication and entertainment devices.
- Focus on prevention of tobacco and vaping use.
- Re-teaching or modeling of desired behavior.
- Recognize and reward appropriate behavior.
- Administrator and student conference and/or administrator/student/teacher conference.
- Written reflection or letter of apology.
- Peer mediation or conflict resolution.
- Behavior progress chart.
- Community service (appropriate to correct the behavior).
- Administrator, teacher, parent or guardian conference.
- Referral to Threat Assessment Team.

Level 1 Disciplinary Responses

- Restitution.
- Seat change.
- Loss or temporary suspension of school privileges.
- Confiscation.
- Detention (before school, at lunch, after school).

Level 2 Responses

Administrative responses and interventions at this level are designed to prevent further behavior issues and keep the student in school. Depending upon the severity of the behavior, short-term removal of the student from the classroom may be appropriate.

In-school suspension (1-2 days) with behavioral instruction and academic support.

Examples of Administrative Interventions and Disciplinary Responses:

Level 2 Interventions

- Student conference.
- Restorative Practices Conference and/or Circle (formal).
- Administrator, teacher, counselor, student conference (includes re-teaching of expected behavior).
- Administrator, teacher, parent or guardian conference.
- Check-in and check-out.
- Mentor.
- Mediation or conflict resolution.
- Referral to support services (e.g., School Counselor, Behavior Interventionist, Mentor Program, and Problem-Solving Team (for example, MTSS), Substance Use and Intervention Program).
- Referral to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team.
- Referral to Threat Assessment Team.
- Community service (appropriate to correct the behavior).
- Referral for community-based services.

Level 2 Disciplinary Responses

- Schedule change.
- Detention (before school, at lunch, or after school).
- Saturday school.
- Restitution.
- Confiscation.
- Loss or temporary suspension of school privileges.
- In-school suspension with behavioral interventions and/or restorative practices (1-3 days).

Level 3 Responses

Depending upon the severity, chronic nature of the behavior, and/or safety concerns, Level 3 behaviors may result in the student's short-term removal from school.

Examples of Extended Suspension and Disciplinary Responses:

Level 3 Interventions

- Administrator/teacher/parent/guardian conference.
- Behavior contract (developed with and signed by the student, parent or guardian, and school officials).
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
- Referral to Threat Assessment Team.
- Referral to an appropriate community-based agency, mental health service, substance abuse counseling service, etc.

Level 3 Disciplinary Responses

- Detention(s).
- In-school suspension with restorative practices (three or more days, not to exceed five days).
- Revocation of privileges.
- Restitution.
- Referral to alternative education programs.
- Short-term out-of-school suspension (1-3 days for elementary students, [1-5 days](#) for secondary students) with a restorative circle or conference upon return.
- Referral to law enforcement if required by local policy.

Level 4 Responses

Some Level 4 behaviors require a report to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee (Student Hearings Department - SHD) as outlined in the [Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.3:1](#). A referral to SHD does not automatically result in a long-term suspension, change of placement, or expulsion. After a review of the incident in context, SHD may return students to the comprehensive setting with additional supports and/or responses to be implemented.

Level 4 Behavioral Interventions (in addition to those listed in Levels 1-3)

- Parent-administrator-teacher-student behavior contract.
- Referral for community-based services.
- Threat Assessment as indicated by the behavior.
- Schedule change.
- Restitution via written contract.

Level 4 Disciplinary Responses

- Referral to law enforcement for behaviors that may constitute a felony or that are required by local policy.
- Long-term revocation of privileges.
- Short-term out-of-school suspension (1-3 days for preschool to grade three students, 4-10 days for fourth- to sixth-grade students, or 5-10 days for seventh- to twelfth-grade students).
- Recommendation for a long-term suspension as determined by local policy or by Code (11 to 45 days as defined in [Code of Virginia § 22.1-276.01](#)).

Level 5 Responses

Level 5 responses are reserved for those behaviors that require a referral to the Student Hearings Department (SHD). For preschool to grade three students, any suspension beyond three days must meet the criteria for aggravating circumstances and be approved by the Superintendent's designee (Level Associate Superintendent). A referral to the Superintendent's designee or SHD may not automatically result in an expulsion, alternative placement, school reassignment, or long-term suspension. Appropriate behavioral interventions and instructional supports should accompany any removals from the student's regular school setting by the Superintendent or designee.

Required School-Based Administrative Responses to Level 5 Behaviors

- Threat Assessment as indicated by the behavior.
- Referral to law enforcement for behaviors that may constitute a felony or that are required by local policy.
- Referral to the Student Hearings Department for further disciplinary action.
- Long-term suspension (11-45 days) as defined in the [Code of Virginia § 22.1-276.01](#).
- Alternative placement.
- Expulsion.

These interventions and responses aim to teach appropriate and alternative behavior so students can learn and demonstrate safe and respectful behavior. The examples above are not all-inclusive nor required to be exhaustive. In every case, the staff should consider revisions to plans supporting students with individual student needs (Student Support Plan, Child Find, IEP, or 504).

Acts for Which Students May Be Disciplined

Acts For Which Students May Be Disciplined

A basic element of effective prevention of misconduct is the setting of divisionwide school rules which are implemented consistently. Students may be disciplined for conduct incompatible with a K-12 educational environment, for conduct specifically in violation of Prince William County School Board policies and regulations, certain provisions of state and federal law, those offenses summarized below, or other conduct that has a negative impact on the operation of the school; the health, safety, or security of students, staff, or school property; or the educational opportunities of other students. Equitable and consistent implementation of rules and regulations shall occur across school sites and within all student groups.

The principal has the authority to set the appropriate consequences for infractions, which may range from counseling to a referral for further disciplinary action (long-term suspension, placement in a nontraditional setting, or recommendation for expulsion) by the Student Hearings Department, or the School Board depending on the severity of the infraction. The student's age and grade level, the circumstances surrounding the infraction, and other relevant factors will be considered when determining the appropriate corrective measure.

In making certain disciplinary decisions, PWCS takes into account the presence of aggravating circumstances. As defined by the VDOE, aggravating circumstances include:

- Misconduct that caused serious harm (including but not limited to physical, emotional, and psychological harm) to another person(s) or posed a credible threat of serious harm to another person(s), as determined by a behavioral threat assessment.
- The student's presence in the school poses an ongoing and unreasonable risk to the safety of the school, its students, staff, or others in the school.
- The student engaged in a serious offense that was persistent and unresponsive to targeted interventions as documented through an established intervention process. The Code of Virginia requires that the above also include consideration of the student's disciplinary history.

Please see the [Tiered Responses to Student Misconduct](#) for guidance on possible interventions and disciplinary consequences for violations of the COB.

Defined Student Misconduct and Corresponding Student Behavior and Administrative Response (SBAR) Codes

The [Virginia Department of Education](#) (VDOE) provides guidelines for school division response to certain student misconduct and codes that allow reporting of misconduct. These guidelines are voluntary and PWCS generally follows VDOE guidance. However, in some instances PWCS may impose more serious consequences for certain offenses considered particularly serious. In the categories below, any violation of the Code of Behavior marked with an asterisk (*) indicates that available disciplinary responses are higher than the minimum VDOE recommendation. For example, due to the seriousness of the conduct, PWCS considers the following offenses to be of particular concern, and therefore consideration of expulsion (Level 5) is mandatory:

1. The possession, use, or distribution of prohibited substances as set forth in [Regulation 735-1](#), "Prohibited Substances;"
2. The possession of weapons, as set forth in [Regulation 775-1](#), "Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects;"
3. Physical assaults, battery, on a school staff member; and
4. Group assaults.

When viewing the tables that follow:

- An "X" denotes options that are available for consideration of disciplinary consequences.

Alcohol Use and Possession

See [Prohibited Substances](#).

Arson

The [Code of Virginia § 18.2-79](#) prohibits the burning or destroying of any school. The destruction may be in whole or in part – only a slight burning is necessary to violate this section of the Code of Virginia. Incidents that rise to the level of arson of a school must be turned over to law enforcement for investigation.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO9	Fire: Attempting to set, aiding in setting, or setting a fire	PK-2		X	X	X		No
		3-5			X	X		
		6-12			X	X		
BSC12	Fire related: Possessing items that could be used to set or cause a fire or produce large amounts of smoke	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			

Assault and Battery

The assault and battery, or intentional verbal and/or physical abuse by a student on another student or staff member is strictly prohibited. An assault is a threat of bodily injury. Battery is when a person intentionally causes harmful or offensive contact with another person. Battery includes but is not limited to biting, hitting, kicking, punching, or any other form of physical aggression including contact. Note: Behavior that is developmentally expected should not be labeled as assault or battery.

The assault and/or battery (as defined here) of any school division employee, including substitutes, is strictly prohibited. This includes any intentional physical contact that is harmful or offensive. Assaults or batteries on staff require a mandatory referral to the Student Hearings Department for consideration of expulsion.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO1	Assault: Intending to cause physical injury to another person	PK-2		X	X			No
		3-5			X			
		6-12			X	X*		
BESO2	Assault and battery: Causing physical injury to another person	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12				X	X	
BESO4	Striking staff: The use of force against a staff member when no injury is caused	PK-2		X	X	X	X*	No
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12					X*	
BSC17	Shoving, pushing, striking, biting another student with no visible injury	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			

Attendance – Tardies, Truancy, and Chronic Absenteeism

Violating state law and school division policy relating to attendance is forbidden. The failure to attend school without a legitimate excuse (e.g., illness, doctor appointment, funeral in the immediate family, administrative approval) or the failure to report to school/class on time or for a portion of the day without a legitimate excuse is forbidden. Please see [Policy 724](#), “Student Attendance, Absences, Excuses, and Tardies,” and [Regulation 724-1](#), “Attendance, Absences, Excuses, and Tardies.”

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	LEGAL NOTES
BAP4	Unexcused tardiness to class	PK-2	X					No ISA, OSS, or Class Restriction can be assigned for this violation
		3-5	X					
		6-12	X	X				
BAP5	Unexcused tardiness to school	PK-2	X					No ISA, OSS, or Class Restriction can be assigned for this violation
		3-5	X					
		6-12	X	X				
BSC24	Leaving school grounds without permission	PK-2	X					No
		3-5		X*	X*			
		6-12		X	X*			
BSO5	Failure to attend assigned disciplinary setting	PK-2	X	X	X*			No
		3-5	X	X	X*			
		6-12		X	X			
BSO15	Student is not going to class as assigned	PK-2	X	X				No ISA, OSS, or Class Restriction can be assigned for this violation
		3-5		X				
		6-12		X				
BSO16	Student is in an unauthorized area of campus	PK-2		X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			

Automobile violations, Abuse of Car, Vehicle Privileges

Cars and other vehicles may be brought onto school grounds only with permission of the administration and must be operated safely in compliance with school rules and state and local laws. Driving or parking in restricted areas may result in disciplinary action. The owner and/or operator of any car or other vehicle that is located on or operated on school property consents, by virtue of such operation and/or location of the car or vehicle on school property, to the search of such a vehicle when reasonable suspicion exists that prohibited items as described in [Regulation 737-1](#), "Searches and Seizures," may be inside it. Violators are subject to corrective action at school, which may include loss of driving privileges on school grounds, out-of-school suspension, further disciplinary action, and applicable legal penalties.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC13	Engaging in reckless behavior that creates a risk of injury to self or others	9-12		X	X	X*		No

Bomb Threat

Any student who makes a threat to bomb a school building or who communicates by any means, knowing the information to be false, the existence of a bomb or burning of a school shall be suspended and referred to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee for review and possible further referral to the School Board for expulsion. Actual possession of a bomb falls under PD14 and is mandatory expulsion. ([Code of Virginia § 18.2-83](#))

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO17	Bomb threat – Making a bomb threat	PK-2		X	X	X	X*	Yes
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12			X	X	X*	

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Students, either individually, or as part of a group, shall not harass or bully others either in person or by the use of any electronic communication technology, including computer systems, telephones, or instant messaging systems.

Bullying and retaliation for reports of bullying will not be tolerated in PWCS. Students who experience or witness acts of bullying should immediately report the incidents to school personnel so that the events may be investigated. Consequences will be administered to all students involved in substantiated acts of bullying. While bullying without physical injury is classified differently, once it results in physical harm, it is considered assault and battery. Students are strongly encouraged to report bullying. All allegations of bullying will be documented and investigated.

“Bullying” means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. “Bullying” includes cyberbullying which is the willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. “Bullying” does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict. ([Code of Virginia § 22.1-276.01](#))

- [Policy 733](#), “Bullying and Harassment of Students”
 - [Regulation 733-1](#), “Bullying of Students” [Attachment I](#), “Bullying of Students”

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
RB1	Bullying with no physical injury	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12			X			
RB2	Cyberbullying	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X	X*		
BSC6	Bullying Behavior without physical injury that continues after intervention <i>Bullying that leads to physical injury should be classified as Assault and Battery.</i>	PK-2	X	X	X	X		No
		3-5		X	X	X		
		6-12		X	X	X		
BSC7	Cyberbullying that continues after intervention <i>Cyberbullying that relates a threat to the safety of students and staff should be treated with a higher level of intervention and consequences.</i>	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	
RB9	Using slurs based upon the actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, weight, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability <i>*The PWCS nondiscrimination statement applies to this code.</i>	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12			X	X*		

Cell Phones

See [Unauthorized Possession or Use of Cell Phones](#).

Cheating, including Plagiarism

Students shall not cheat, participate in any form of plagiarism (which includes, but is not limited to, self-plagiarism or recycling one’s own work), assist or encourage others to do so, or willfully disregard student expectations. Copyright infringement and plagiarism will be counseled, may lose credit for the assignment, and may be referred to the school administrator for disciplinary action. The school administrator will notify the parent/legal guardian of the action and the reason for the action.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BAP3	Scholastic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism)	PK-2	X					No
		3-5	X	X*	X*			

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
		6-12		X	X*			

Disruptive Behavior (Disobedience and Disrespect)

Any physical or verbal disturbance which interrupts or interferes with teaching and the orderly conduct of school activities, is prohibited.

Students are required to obey school rules and submit in a respectful manner to the authority and directions of teachers and other school personnel. No student may assist another student in the breaking of a school rule. The following behaviors that substantially disrupt the orderly learning environment include but are not limited to:

- Unwillingness to submit to authority or refusal to respond to a reasonable request.
- Cursing or using offensive language, including remarks intended to demean a person's race, religion, sex, national origin, disabling condition or intellectual ability. This includes actions or displays of an obscene nature, the wearing of clothing or adornments which themselves convey sexually suggestive messages, or any materials that are obscene or sexually suggestive.
- Cursing, violent, and/or abusive language towards another student and/or school personnel.
- Students shall not engage in conduct that is or is intended to be disruptive of any school activity, function, or process of the school, is dangerous to the health or safety of students or others, or results in destruction of property. Excessive and disruptive noise, activity, or possession of items including but not limited to: toys, laser pointers, skateboards, radios, and unauthorized photographs and video recordings which disrupt the peaceful and normal operation of the school and/or which threaten the student's own safety, or the safety and activities of others is forbidden. Violations may be cited for actions in any part of the building, on school grounds, on the school bus or at other school activities.
- Public Displays of Affection (PDA) – Students may be disciplined for kissing, touching, hugging, and other public displays of affection.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BAP1	Interfering with learning in the classroom (talking, excessive noise, off-task, out of seat, possessing items that distract)	PK-2	X					No
		3-5	X					
		6-12		X				
BAP2	Interfering with learning outside of the classroom (excessive noise, interrupting a class, etc.)	PK-2	X					No
		3-5	X	X*				
		6-12		X				
BSO3	Refusal to comply with requests of staff in a way that interferes with the operation of school	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5	X	X	X			
		6-12		X	X			
BSO6	Bringing unauthorized persons to school or allowing unauthorized persons to enter the school building	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5	X	X	X			
		6-12		X	X			
BSO9	Possessing items that are inappropriate for school (examples include toys, literature, electronics)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5	X	X	X			
		6-12	X	X	X			
RB6	Speaking to another in an uncivil, discourteous manner	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5	X	X	X			
		6-12	X	X	X			
RB8	Using profane or vulgar language or gestures (swearing, cursing, hate speech, gang signs or gestures)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X*		
RB10	Failure to respond to questions or requests by staff	PK-2	X	X	X			No

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
		3-5	X	X	X			
		6-12	X	X	X			
RB11	Unwanted or inappropriate physical contact	PK-2	X	X	X			
		3-5	X	X	X			No
		6-12		X	X			
BSC13	Engaging in reckless behavior that creates a risk of injury to self or others	PK-2	X	X	X			
		3-5	X	X	X	X*		No
		6-12		X	X	X*		
BSC15	Inciting or causing a substantial disturbance to the operation of school or the safety of staff and/or students	PK-2	X	X	X	X		
		3-5		X	X	X		No
		6-12		X	X	X	X	
BSC16	Throwing an object that has the potential to cause a disturbance, injury, or property damage	PK-2	X	X	X*			
		3-5	X	X	X*			No
		6-12		X	X			
BSC17	Shoving, pushing, striking, biting another student with no visible injury	PK-2	X	X	X			
		3-5		X	X			No
		6-12		X	X			

Dress and Grooming (Student)

Students are urged to dress for success each school day. Their overall appearance, while on school grounds or virtually, should be based on the health and safety of an inclusive school community. It is understood that student dress may reflect outdoor weather conditions throughout the school year, however, students should refrain from wearing any item of clothing which may cause a distraction or disruption to the educational process or compromise the physical and emotional health and safety of the student or others. Students whose appearance disrupts instruction may be asked to change clothing.

The PWCS student dress and grooming guidelines are created to ensure equity in student expression and staff enforcement and are not intended to discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. The dress and grooming standards apply equally to all students regardless of gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

Students are permitted to wear any religiously and ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle.

Permitted head coverings and hairstyles include, but are not limited to:

- Braids
- Cornrows
- Headwraps
- Hijabs
- Locs
- Yarmulkes

Prohibited items of clothing include clothing items which:

- Reveal or expose undergarments.
- Fit in a manner as to reveal or expose undergarments.
- Contain vulgar, discriminatory, lewd, patently offensive, or obscene language or images.
- Contain threats or gang symbols.
- Promote violence or the illegal use of weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and/or associated paraphernalia.
- Cause or may foreseeably cause a disruption to the learning environment.

- Are accessories that could be regarded as or used as a weapon.
- Headwear that covers one's entire head or face, unless the headwear is:
 - Worn as part of one's religion.
 - Worn for medical reasons.
 - Worn for personal prevention practices, like in the case of infectious diseases.
 - Worn for an approved school event.
 - Worn as an expression of one's cultural or ethnic background.

No PWCS employee may enforce the Student Dress and Grooming provisions by direct physical contact with the student or the student's attire. No student shall be required to undress in front of any individual to comply with these provisions.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO7	Dress Code Violation	PK-2	X	X				No
		3-5	X	X				
		6-12	X	X				

Fighting

Engaging in a fight or altercation that involves physical violence and/or verbal abuse, regardless of which participant is the aggressor, is prohibited. Encouraging others to fight, facilitating or instigating a fight, and/or cheering on a fight is also prohibited. This includes acting as a look out or interfering with staff who seek to intervene during a fight.

Grades K-5

Following a student's first fight, a letter of warning or suspension shall be sent to their parents or legal guardian. If the student is involved in another fight, the student may be placed in in-school assistance or suspended. The disciplining administrator shall have discretion in deciding whether a fight occurred and in determining the length of the suspension. If it is needed, a teacher or school official may use reasonable and necessary physical force to stop fighting or to prevent injury or damage to other people or property. When this occurs, any student who interferes shall be disciplined by school officials.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
RB7	Teasing, taunting, engaging in a verbal confrontation, verbally inciting a fight	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
BESO3	Fighting: The use of physical violence between students or on another person where there is minor injury as determined by the school administration.	PK-2		X	X	X*		No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
BSC14	Fighting that results in no injury as determined by the school administration.	PK-2	X	X	X	X*		No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
BESO1	Assault: Intending to cause physical injury to another person	PK-2	X	X	X	X*		No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
BESO2	Assault and Battery: Causing physical injury to another person	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		P3-5			X	X	X	

Grades 6-12

Fighting is not allowed in school and will not be tolerated. The principal shall be responsible for deciding what actions constitute a fight and shall determine the length of suspension when a fight occurs. A teacher or school official may use reasonable and necessary physical force if it is needed to stop a fight or prevent injury or damage. Students who interfere or attempt to keep a teacher or administrator from fulfilling this responsibility will be subject to discipline. If a student has multiple violations for fighting in the same school year, the student may be referred for further disciplinary

action for a possible long-term suspension. A recommendation may be made to the School Board for expulsion for students with multiple fights during the same school year or for those whose fights involved gangs, weapons or severe injuries.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
RB7	Teasing, taunting, engaging in a verbal confrontation, verbally inciting a fight	6-12		X	X			No
BESO3	Fighting: The use of physical violence between students or on another person where there is minor injury as determined by the school administration.	6-12			X	X	X	No
BSC14	Fighting that results in no injury as determined by the school administration.	6-12			X	X		No
BESO1	Assault: Intending to cause physical injury to another person	6-12			X	X		No
BESO2	Assault and Battery: Causing physical injury to another person	6-12			X	X	X	No

Note – Self Defense: Exceptions may result when the evidence clearly supports that a student is assaulted, acted solely in self-defense, or made previous efforts to avoid such confrontations. A student claiming self-defense must:

- Be without fault in provoking or bringing on the fight or incident;
- Have reasonably feared, under the circumstances, as they appeared to the individual, that they were in danger of harm; and
- Have used no more force than was reasonably necessary to protect them from the threatened harm.

Gambling

A student shall not bet money or other things of value or knowingly play or participate in any game involving a bet while on school property, on school buses, or during any school-sponsored activity.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSO8	Gambling (games of chance for money or profit)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X	X*		

Gang or Gang-Related Activity

Gang activity, recruitment, and expressions of gang membership will not be tolerated. Gang-related actions, speech, gestures, clothing, symbols, or other signs of gang membership or gang activity are prohibited at school and school-related activities. Any student involved in gang-related behavior at school is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including a referral to the Student Hearings Department for further disciplinary action.

A gang is defined as any group of three or more persons whose purpose includes:

- Commission of illegal acts.
- Participation in activities that threaten the safety of person or property.
- Disruption of the school environment.
- Creation of an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

Gang activity is defined as:

- Wearing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other thing that is evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang.
- Committing any act or omission, or using any speech, either verbal or non-verbal (such as gestures or handshakes) showing membership or affiliation in a gang.
- Using any speech or committing any act or omission in furtherance of the interests of any gang, including: (a) soliciting, hazing and initiating others for membership in any gang, (b) requesting any person to pay protection or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person, or (c) committing any other illegal act or other violation of school policy and inciting other students to act with physical violence.

- Inappropriate congregating, bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, degradation, disgrace and/or related activities which are likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or mental harm to students, employees or visitors.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
RB8	Using profane or vulgar language or gestures (swearing, cursing, hate speech, gang signs or gestures)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5	X	X	X	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X*		
BESO10	Gang-Related Behavior: Engaging in threatening or dangerous behavior that is gang-related as defined in Code of Virginia § 18.2-46.1	PK-2	X	X	X	X		No
		3-5		X	X	X		
		6-12			X	X		

Harassment, including Sex-Based Harassment

Repeatedly annoying or attacking a student or group of students, or personnel, creating an intimidating or hostile educational or work environment for any reason. Harassment demeans, threatens, intimidates, or harms an individual or group in such a way as to cause anxiety or fear for safety. Harassment that targets the victim on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin (including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital status or parental status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis by law shall be investigated following procedures outlined in [Regulation 738-1](#), “Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct,” [Regulation 738-3](#), “Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment,” or [Regulation 738-4](#), “Nondiscrimination Against Students on the Basis of Disability,” as applicable.

Imposition of discipline for conduct that constitutes Title IX Sexual Harassment shall follow the procedures set forth in [Regulation 738-1](#), not the procedures outlined in the Code of Behavior.

Any complaint of harassment or sexual harassment should be reported as required by [Policy 738](#), “Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students.” See the [PWCS website](#) for the processes of reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints of harassment/sexual harassment.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
RB1	Bullying with no physical injury (See Model Policy to Addressing Bullying in Virginia's Public Schools)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12				X*		
RB2	Cyberbullying (See Model Policy to Addressing Bullying in Virginia's Public Schools)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X*		
RB3	Posting, distributing, displaying, or sharing inappropriate material or literature, including using electronic means	PK-2	X	X				No
		3-5		X	X*	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X*		
RB4	Saying or writing either directly or through electronic communication sexually suggestive comments, innuendoes, propositions, or other remarks of a sexual nature	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X*		
RB7	Teasing, taunting, engaging in a verbal confrontation, verbally inciting a fight	PK-2	X	X				No
		3-5		X	X*			
		6-12		X	X			
RB8	Using profane or vulgar language or gestures (swearing, cursing, hate speech, gang signs or gestures)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
		6-12		X	X	X*		
RB9	Using slurs based upon the actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, weight, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12			X	X*		
BSC18	Exposing body parts, lewd or indecent public behavior	PK-2	X	X				No
		3-5		X	X*			
		6-12		X	X	X		
BSC19	Physical contact of a sexual nature – patting body parts, pinching, tugging clothing	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X		

Hazing

Students shall not engage in hazing. “Hazing” is defined as recklessly or intentionally endangering the health or safety of a student or students or inflicting bodily harm on a student or students.

Students shall not engage in behavior that recklessly or intentionally endangers the health or safety of others or inflicts bodily injury on a student in connection with initiation, affiliation, or admission into a club, group, organization, or student body. Violators are subject to disciplinary action, and possible criminal consequences. [Code of Virginia § 18.2-56](#) imposes a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty for hazing violations meaning confinement in jail for not more than 12 months and a fine of not more than \$2,500, either or both.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO11	Hazing as defined in Code of Virginia § 18.2-56 and noted in Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.6	PK-2					X	No
		3-5					X	
		6-12					X	

Profanity

No student shall use vulgar, lewd, patently offensive, or indecent language or gestures.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
RB8	Using profane or vulgar language or gestures (swearing, cursing, hate speech, gang signs or gestures)	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X	X*		
		6-12		X	X	X*		

Prohibited Substances

The rules governing those substances prohibited by PWCS are summarized in this section. Please refer to [Regulation 735-1](#), “Prohibited Substances,” for all information pertaining to this subject.

In accordance with [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.08](#), the School Board shall, but is not required to, expel any student determined to have brought a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana, as defined in [Code of Virginia § 18.2-247](#), onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity. Students who violate the law shall be referred to local authorities for appropriate action in the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system. However, the principal, School Board, and/or Superintendent or designee (the director of SHD or a SHD hearing officer) shall have the

authority to modify the type of disciplinary action when special circumstances exist based on the facts of a particular situation. Special circumstances include, but are not limited to, the statutory criteria outlined in [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.06](#), as described in [Regulation 745-1](#), “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students.”

The list of prohibited substances and paraphernalia for which a student may be expelled under the rules of PWCS is broader than the list of prohibited substances for which the law mandates expulsion. Even if the prohibited substances or related paraphernalia do not fall within the class of substances prohibited by law, a student shall be subject to expulsion if the student is involved in the possession, use, receipt or attempted receipt, purchase or attempted purchase, or distribution or attempted distribution, of prohibited substances or paraphernalia, unless the principal or Superintendent's designee (the hearing officer or designated designee), or the School Board finds that special circumstances justify a lesser disciplinary action, or no action at all, based on the facts of a particular situation. In some cases, there may be a question about whether or not the possession, use, or distribution of a substance or object is a violation. The nature and appearance of the substance or related paraphernalia, its purpose, and how it was used, or intended to be used, shall be considered when making decisions about disciplinary action.

- **Duty to Report Prohibited Substances** – All PWCS employees and students are required to notify the principal, assistant principal, a school resource officer, security personnel, teacher, or other school employee immediately if they have reason to believe that there are, or are likely to be, prohibited substances or related paraphernalia in school, on school grounds, on school buses, at bus stops, on the way to or from school, or at any school-related activity. Students who have such knowledge but fail to report the presence or anticipated presence of prohibited substances or related paraphernalia may themselves be subject to disciplinary action. The principal or the principal's designee shall retain commensurate authority to immediately act within school division policy to ensure student's and staff's safety and welfare. The resources of the school division and local police department shall be available to assist the principal in this action.
- **Consequences of a Prohibited Substance Violation** – Any student accused of committing a prohibited substance violation shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as described above. Principals, or their designated representatives, may offer substance abuse offenders and their parents information about community resources. As part of the hearing officer's decision, a student may be required to attend a prevention program, complete an assessment or be placed on probation as part of the condition of returning to a traditional school.

A substance abuse suspension shall also result in an immediate suspension for a minimum of 30 calendar days from participation in all school activities (teams, clubs, and all other school-sponsored activities), including practice. Whether suspended from school or not, coaches and/or sponsors, with the approval of the school administration, may suspend students from participation in school-sponsored activities for violations of the rules of the team, club, or activity regarding prohibited substances. This includes violation of rules regarding prohibited substances committed off school grounds and outside the school day. The student may also be subject to disciplinary probation for 90 calendar days during which time principals may require subsequent follow up with the substance abuse prevention staff.

Use or Possession and Sale or Distribution of Controlled or Imitation Controlled Drugs, including Anabolic Steroids (Grades K-12)

No student shall possess, use, sell or distribute, transmit, or be under the influence of any drug, alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, other intoxicant, or substance in any form whatsoever prior to arriving at school or while on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or under the legal jurisdiction of the school system.

The possession, sale, distribution, or use of a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or any mood-altering chemicals, including inhalants on school property or at school-sponsored activities is prohibited. A violation may result in enrollment in a student-assistance program or immediate suspension and referral to the Student Hearings Department. A student who is determined in accordance with the procedures set forth in the [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277](#) to have had in his/her possession, sold, distributed, or used a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or any mood-altering chemicals, including inhalants, on school property or at school-sponsored activities shall be expelled from school attendance for a period of not less than one year (365 calendar days). The School Board authorizes through [Regulation 735-1](#), “Prohibited Substances,” the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee to conduct a preliminary review of such cases to determine whether a disciplinary action other than expulsion is appropriate. If a determination is made that another disciplinary action is appropriate, any such subsequent disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with procedures set forth in the [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.08](#). Enrollment in a drug treatment program or an alternative education program may be required.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC4	Drugs: Violating school board non-prescription (over the counter) medication policy or look-alike drug policy	PK-2		X	X	X	X	No
		3-5		X	X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	
BES05	Drugs: Possessing controlled substances, illegal drugs inhalants, or synthetic hallucinogens or unauthorized prescription medications	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	
BES07	Drugs: Using controlled substances or using illegal drugs or synthetic hallucinogens or unauthorized prescription medications	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	
PD16	Illegal possession of controlled drugs and substances with intent to distribute or sell	PK-2					X	Yes
		3-5					X	
		6-12					X	

Drug Paraphernalia (Grades K-12)

No student shall sell, use, or possess drug paraphernalia while on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or under the legal jurisdiction of the school. The paraphernalia will be confiscated, and parents/legal guardians will be notified. The student may be suspended, with the number of days left to the discretion of the administrator. Consideration of impact on the school operations in addition to the student's discipline history and/or additional offenses may result in a recommendation to the Student Hearings Department for further disciplinary action.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC3	Drugs: Possessing drug paraphernalia	PK-2	X	X	X	X*	X*	No
		3-5		X	X	X*	X*	
		6-12		X	X	X*	X*	

Alcohol and Marijuana (Grades K-12)

A student shall not possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind prior to arriving at school, while on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or under the legal jurisdiction of the school system. Any student guilty may be suspended. Enrollment in a student-assistance program may be recommended. Students with a pattern of behavior that is not aligned with the expectations of the Code of Behavior may result in a recommendation to the hearing officer for a long-term suspension or a recommendation to the school board for expulsion from school. For reasonable cause, a student may be required by a SHD hearing officer to take an alcohol or drug screening at the request of school authorities.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BES05	Drugs: Possessing controlled substances, illegal drugs inhalants, or synthetic hallucinogens or unauthorized prescription medications	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	
BES06	Drugs: Being under the influence of controlled substances, illegal drugs, inhalants, or synthetic hallucinogens or unauthorized prescription medications	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	
BES07	Drugs: Using controlled substances or using illegal drugs or synthetic hallucinogens or unauthorized prescription medications	PK-2			X	X	X	No
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
PD16	Illegal possession of controlled drugs and substances with intent to distribute or sell	PK-2					X	Yes
		3-5					X	
		6-12					X	
BSC1	Alcohol: Possessing or using alcohol	PK-2		X	X	X*	X*	No
		3-5			X	X*	X*	
		6-12			X	X*	X*	
BSC2	Alcohol: Distributing alcohol to other students	PK-2			X	X	X*	No
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12			X	X*	X*	

All PWCS schools are smoke-free environments. Smoking and vaping are not permitted in any PWCS building at any time. Students, regardless of age, are not permitted to smoke or be in possession of tobacco products, nicotine vapor paraphernalia, cigarettes, matches, lighters, or other electronic smoking devices, on school buses, in school buildings, on school property, or at an on-site or off-site school-sponsored activity.

Students involved in the possession or use of tobacco or nicotine vapor products shall receive penalties ranging from Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) to other effective options assigned by the principal as appropriate deterrents for individual students. These options may include OSS, in-school suspension (ISS), detention, school/community projects, and charges filed with local authorities. Educational programs are available at the middle and high school levels to help students better understand the negative health consequences associated with smoking and nicotine use.

Grades K-5

Students shall not possess, distribute, sell, or use any form of tobacco or nicotine vapor products, matches, lighters, or other electronic smoking devices while on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or under the legal jurisdiction of the school system. In addition to any other consequences that may result, all tobacco products, nicotine vapor products, or other electronic smoking devices, when found, will be confiscated and parents/legal guardians will be notified.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC5	Tobacco: Possessing/using/distributing tobacco products, possessing tobacco paraphernalia, electronic cigarettes, vaping equipment	PK-2		X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			

Grades 6-12

Students shall not possess, distribute, or use any form of tobacco or nicotine vapor products while school property, at school-sponsored activities, or under the legal jurisdiction of the school system. In addition to any other consequences that may result, all tobacco products, nicotine vapor products, or other electronic smoking devices, when found, will be confiscated and parents/legal guardians will be notified.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC5	Tobacco: Possessing/using/distributing tobacco products, possessing tobacco paraphernalia, electronic cigarettes, vaping equipment	6-12		X	X*	X*	X*	No

Reporting Requirement – Crimes in the Community (Including Offenses On or Off of School Grounds)

Pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 16.1-260\(G\)](#), law enforcement or the Court Services Unit will notify the Superintendent when a student has been charged with an offense relating to the Commonwealth's laws. The Superintendent or Superintendent designee may impose a disciplinary sanction pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.2:1](#).

Actions outside of school that have a detrimental impact on the school building, programs, students, or staff will not be tolerated. The School Board and PWCS staff are committed to maintaining the schools as safe and healthy places in which to learn, free from the impact of violence, weapons, gang activity, substance abuse, and other harmful influences. Students are subject to corrective measures at school, up to and including further disciplinary action, for offenses that occur in the community or at other locations off of school grounds if those offenses result or may foreseeably result in material disruption to the operation of the school, the educational process, or impact the rights, safety, or welfare of students, staff, or school property. Under Virginia law, a student may be suspended or expelled if found guilty in court for the manufacture, sale, gift, distribution, or possession of drugs, even if the offense is not connected with school.

Furthermore, Virginia law provides that a student may be reassigned or placed in an alternative education program (alternative school, evening school, online resources, etc.) upon notice that the student has been charged with certain school-reportable criminal offenses, including offenses relating to weapons, alcohol/drugs, intentional injury to another person, or if convicted or found not innocent of other school-reportable offenses, as set forth in [Regulation 681-1](#), "Nontraditional Education Programs." Conviction or adjudication of certain school-reportable criminal charges may result in reassignment, long-term suspension, or expulsion. Students may also be reassigned, placed in nontraditional education programs, suspended, or expelled when they have committed a serious offense or repeated offenses in violation of School Board policies and regulations.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO18	A crime in the community where the student was charged with an offense relating to the Commonwealth's laws, required to be disclosed to the superintendent of the school division pursuant to Code of Virginia § 16.1-260(G)	PK-2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Law Enforcement Informs Division
		3-5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
		6-12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

School Bus Violations

See [Transportation Expectations](#).

Stalking

Stalking is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalking behavior may include, but is not limited to, making repeated and unwanted contact with the person through phone calls, mail, emails, texts, or social media; following the person; making threats to the victim, either directly or indirectly; and damaging or threatening to damage the person's property.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC21	Stalking as described in the Code of Virginia § 18.2-60.3	PK-2			X	X	X	Yes
		3-5			X	X	X	
		6-12			X	X	X	

Technology – Misuse or Unauthorized Use

See Unauthorized or Misuse of Technology.

Theft

Taking without permission or attempting to take without permission school property or personal property of others is expressly forbidden. All incidents involving theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications shall be reported to the principal or designee. Violators are subject to disciplinary action at school and may be referred to appropriate authorities for legal action.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSO10	Possession of stolen items	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			
RB5	Stealing money or property without physical force	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			

Threats Against Students and Staff

A threat is a concerning communication or behavior that suggests an individual is a danger to the safety of school staff or students, either through violence or other harmful actions. A threat can be conveyed behaviorally, verbally, visually, in writing, electronically, or by any other means. It is deemed a threat whether it is directly observed by or communicated to the intended target or indirectly observed by or communicated to a third party, and regardless of the target's awareness of the threat. Schools have threat assessment teams tasked with evaluating and addressing behaviors that may jeopardize the safety of school staff or students. PWCS threat assessment procedures are detailed in [Regulation 777-1](#), "Threat Assessment Procedures." While the Threat Assessment process itself is not punitive, threats do breach the Code of Behavior and may lead to disciplinary actions.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO12	Threatening, intimidating, or instigating violence, injury or harm to a staff member or members	PK-2		X	X	X	X*	No
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12			X	X	X*	
BESO13	Threatening, intimidating, or instigating violence, injury or harm to another student(s) or other(s) (not including written threats)	PK-2			X	X*	X*	No
		3-5			X	X*	X*	
		6-12			X	X*	X*	
BESO14	Threatening, intimidation, or instigating violence, injury or harm to another student(s) or other(s) in writing.	PK-2			X	X*	X*	No
		3-5			X	X*	X*	
		6-12		X	X	X*	X*	
BESO17	Bomb threat - Making a bomb threat	PK-2		X	X	X	X*	No
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12			X	X	X*	

Transportation Expectations

Riding the school bus is a privilege, except as required by law for students with disabilities, that comes with the responsibility of adhering to the student code of conduct. Students are expected to behave in a respectful and orderly manner at all times. This includes following the bus driver's instructions, remaining seated while the bus is in motion, and speaking in a low voice to avoid distracting the driver. Any form of bullying, fighting, or use of inappropriate language is strictly prohibited. Additionally, students must not damage the bus or its equipment. Violations of the 'code of behavior', such as defiance of the bus driver's instructions, physical aggression, or vandalism, will result in disciplinary actions, which may include suspension from bus privileges. It is essential for all students to contribute to a safe and respectful environment on the school bus.

Should a student be reported to the principal, the principal will be responsible for disciplinary action, which may include the loss of the privilege of bus transportation, until the parent, the bus driver, the principal, and, in some instances, a Transportation Department representative can arrive at an understanding that will correct the problem. The parent will be responsible for the transportation of students who have lost school bus transportation privileges.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC9	Bus: Distracting the bus driver	PK-2	X	X	X*			No
		3-5		X	X*			
		6-12		X	X			
BSC10	Bus: Endangering the safety of others on the bus	PK-2	X	X	X*			No
		3-5		X	X*			
		6-12		X	X			

Trespassing

Students serving an out-of-school suspension for 1-10 days may not be on school property without the written permission of the principal. Students who are long-term suspended must have permission from the Student Hearings Department (SHD) prior to entering any PWCS property.

In the event the student has a matter before the SHD for consideration of long-term suspension or further disciplinary action, except to attend a scheduled meeting with a parent and school officials regarding the student's education, the student shall not be on the property or in the buildings of any PWCS school or building, school bus, or school-sponsored event without the specific prior written permission of the SHD. Any violation of this provision may lead to the imposition of further sanctions by the school administration or the filing of trespassing charges, or both. Should the student need to access a PWCS school or property during this time, please submit a written request to SHD.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSC25	Trespassing	PK-2		X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X	X*		

Unauthorized Access – Endangering Others

Student conduct that may put others in danger will not be permitted. This includes but is not limited to, allowing access to others through unauthorized entrances (e.g., opening, blocking, or wedging a corridor door open).

Students are strictly prohibited from bypassing safety screening technology by opening exterior doors that are not monitored. Such actions pose a risk to the safety and security of the school environment and are considered a violation of the Code of Behavior.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSO16	Student is in an unauthorized area of campus	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			

Unauthorized Possession or Use of Cell Phones (or Personal Electronic Communication Devices)

“Cell Phone” means a personal device capable of making calls, transmitting pictures or video, or sending or receiving messages through electronic means. The definition of cell phone is inclusive of a non-smartphone that is limited to making phone calls or text messages, a smart phone that encompasses the above features, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

“Personal Electronic Communication Device” means any personal device capable of connecting to a smartphone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or directly connects to another similar device. Personal electronic communication devices may include some wearable devices such as smart watches, as well as personal headphones, laptops, tablets, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

Guidelines

- A. Elementary and Combined Schools:
 - 1. All cell phones and personal electronic communication devices must be turned off and stored away and may not be used at any time within the school building or on school grounds or during any instructional periods regardless of location including field trips.
 - 2. Students are permitted to use their cell phones and personal electronic communication device(s) while on school buses, while in parent/guardian vehicles, and before they enter or after they exit school grounds.
- B. Middle and High Schools:
 - 1. All cell phones and personal electronic communication devices must be turned off and stored away during the bell-to-bell school day and during any instructional periods regardless of location including field trips.
 - 2. All cell phones and personal electronic communication devices may be turned on and used within the school and on the school campus before or after the bell-to-bell school day.
- C. Rules Applicable to All Schools and Grade Levels:
 - 1. Students, regardless of age or grade level, are required to follow the rules applicable to the specific school where they are present. For example, if a high school student is attending an activity at an elementary school, the high school student must follow the cell phone and personal electronic communication device rules applicable to elementary schools while present on the elementary school campus.
 - 2. Use of cell phones and personal electronic communication devices is prohibited in all locker rooms and restrooms at all times.
 - 3. Cell phones and personal electronic communication devices may be used on school buses provided the device does not distract the driver, compromise safety, or violate the Prohibited Content and Use for All Students provisions detailed below.
 - 4. Use of cell phones and personal electronic communication devices during extra-curricular and co-curricular activities held outside of the bell-to-bell school day will be determined by the coach, sponsor, or instructor.
- D. Disability and Other Accommodations:
 - 1. Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted as disability accommodations through Section 504 plans or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or for students in English Language Learner programs when necessary to ensure student access to the curriculum, school, and school-sponsored activities. Exceptions also may be granted as part of a student’s safety or other support plan.

The PWCS School Board voted to adopt a bell-to-bell cell phone-free education [Policy 729](#), “Cell Phone-Free Education.” More information can be found on the PWCS’ website under [Wireless Communication Device Usage](#).

Unauthorized or Misuse of Technology

Computers, computer networks, and other electronic technology shall be used only for **valid educational purposes and only with the approval of a school staff member**. When using electronic technology in the school, students are required to abide by the COB and adhere to the standards defined by [Policy 295](#), “Standards for Computer Systems and Network Services,” [Regulation 295-1](#), “Computer Systems and Network Services – PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy,” and [Regulation 295-2](#), “Website Development and Implementation.”

These policies and regulations are available online at [PWCS Policies and Regulations](#). Unacceptable uses of technology include, but are not limited to:

- Violating the privacy rights of others.

- Using, producing, distributing, or receiving profanity, obscenity, or material that bullies, harasses, offends, threatens, or degrades others. This includes cyberbullying, a form of bullying that involves the transmission, receipt, or display of electronic messages or images.
- Producing, transmitting, possessing, and/or sharing images, messages, or other material of a sexual nature using a wireless communication device.
- Copying commercial software in violation of copyright law.
- Using technology for financial gain or commercial or illegal activity.
- Using technology for product advertisement or political endorsement.
- Repost personal communications without the author's prior consent.
- Using technology in violation of other rules and regulations of the COB.
- Use of technology off school property which has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the school division, impacts the integrity of the educational process, threatens the safety and welfare of students, staff, or school property, occurs when the student is under the school's authority or otherwise invades the rights of students or staff.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, loss of technology-use privileges, and penalties under law. Willful irresponsibility may be viewed as malicious and may lead to corrective action or criminal penalties. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt technology system performance will be viewed as criminal activity under applicable state and federal law.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSO13	Violation of school board policy regarding the possession or use of portable communication devices	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5	X	X	X			
		6-12	X	X	X			

Vandalism or Other Damage to School or Personal Property

Vandalism and/or damage to school or personal property is prohibited.

Pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 18.2-137](#), vandalism is the unlawful or intentional destruction, defacing, damaging or removing another person's personal or real property without the intent to steal. Vandalism that results in damages of less than \$1,000 is a misdemeanor. Damages in excess of \$1,000 may result in felony charges. See [Code of Virginia § 18.2-138](#). Virginia law authorizes the School Board to take legal action to recover the cost of such damage from the parents of such students.

Vandalism violations include, but are not limited to arson, graffiti, theft, vandalism, destruction of computer hardware, modification of installed software, modifications to network configurations, and/or installation of unauthorized software, including viruses.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BSO10	Possession of stolen items	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			
BSO14	Vandalism, graffiti, or other damage to school or personal property	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12		X	X			
RB5	Stealing money or property without physical force	PK-2	X	X	X			No
		3-5		X	X			
		6-12			X			

Weapons

The rules governing weapons and other objects prohibited by PWCS are outlined in [Regulation 775-1](#), “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects,” and summarized in this section. Weapons and other prohibited items are not permitted on any school property, on school buses, going to or from school, or at any school-related activity, regardless of where that activity takes place. School property means any real property owned or leased by the School Board or any vehicle owned, leased, or operated by or on behalf of the School Board. Students may also be subject to disciplinary action for weapons offenses that occur off school grounds, if the offense results in material disruption to the operation of the school, is planned in school or at school activities, occurs during a school-sponsored activity, threatens the safety and welfare of students, staff, or school property, is otherwise connected to the school, or results in an adjudication of delinquency reportable to the Superintendent as required by Code of Virginia §§ [6.1-260](#), [16.1-301](#), and [16.1-305.1](#).

Possession of Firearms and Other Statutory Weapons – Mandatory Expulsion

Principals shall suspend all students who possess weapons detailed below for 10 school days and shall refer the student to the SHD for further disciplinary action. The student shall be expelled for 365 days unless a SHD hearing officer or the School Board determines, upon reviewing the specific facts of the case, that special circumstances warrant no disciplinary action or a different form of discipline or period of expulsion. Special circumstances may include but are not limited to, the factors set forth in subsection C of [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.06](#).

- Weapons in violation of the Federal Improving America’s School Act of 1994 (Part F-Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994) and [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.07](#).
- A firearm, destructive device, firearm muffler, firearm silencer, or pneumatic gun. Weapons in violation of [Code of Virginia § 18.2-308.1](#).
- A stun weapon.
- Knife, except a pocketknife having a blade of less than 3 inches.
- Any dirk, bowie knife, stiletto knife, ballistic knife, machete, razor, sling bow, spring stick, metal knucks, or blackjack.
- Any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain.
- Any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled, and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart.
- Any weapon of like kind.

Possession of Other Weapons or Prohibited Objects – Disciplinary Consequences

The principal shall have the discretion to impose appropriate disciplinary sanctions, up to and including a 10-day suspension from school and a referral for further disciplinary action, for the possession of the following items:

- Pocket knives having blades of less than 3 inches
- Box cutters
- Pepper spray
- Ammunition
- Razor blades
- Fireworks
- Sling shots
- Other like items
- Look-alike or toy weapons

Principals must impose appropriate discipline for possession of any weapon or prohibited object listed below as outlined in [Regulation 775-1](#), “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects.” Depending on the particular circumstances of the student and situation, principals may impose school-based consequences, short-term suspension, or refer the student to SHD for further disciplinary action such as long-term suspension or expulsion.

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO15	Using an object not generally considered to be a weapon to threaten or attempt to injure school personnel	PK-2		X	X	X	X*	No
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12			X	X	X*	

SBAR Code	Offenses	Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Mandatory Report to Law Enforcement
BESO16	Using an object not generally considered to be a weapon to threaten or attempt to injure students or others	PK-2		X	X	X	X*	No
		3-5			X	X	X*	
		6-12			X	X	X*	
BSC26	Possessing dangerous instruments/substances that could be used to inflict harm upon another	PK-2		X	X			No
		3-5			X			
		6-12			X			
BSC27	Weapons: Possessing any weapon (other than a firearm) as defined by Code of Virginia § 18.2-308.1	PK-2				X	X	*See conditions
		3-5				X	X	
		6-12				X	X	
PD11	Illegal possession of handgun	PK-2					X	Yes
		3-5					X	
		6-12					X	
PD12	Illegal possession of rifle or shotgun	PK-2					X	Yes
		3-5					X	
		6-12					X	
PD13	Illegal possession of any other projectile weapon	PK-2					X	Yes
		3-5					X	
		6-12					X	

Disciplinary Responses

Suspensions and Expulsions

[Code of Virginia § 22.1-277](#) addresses suspensions and expulsions of students generally.

Here are the key points:

1. **Sufficient Cause for Suspensions and Expulsions:**
 - Students may be suspended or expelled from school for sufficient cause.
 - However, sufficient cause for suspensions cannot include only instances of truancy.*
2. **Preschool through Grade Three:**
 - For students in preschool through grade three, the following rules apply:
 - **Suspensions:** Except for certain drug or weapons offenses identified in the Code of Virginia, no student in this age group shall be suspended for more than **three school days** unless:
 - The offense involves physical harm or a credible threat of physical harm to others.
 - The local school board or division superintendent finds that **aggravating circumstances** exist, see Suspension or Expulsion of Students in Preschool through Grade 3 as outlined in [Regulation 744-1](#).
 - **Expulsions:** Similar rules apply for expulsions from attendance at school.
3. **Exceptions:**
 - There are exceptions provided in subsections C, Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-277.07](#), or [Code of Virginia § 22.1-277.08](#).
 - A student in preschool through grade three may be suspended or expelled from school upon the school division's receipt of a report pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 16.1-305.1](#) of an adjudication of delinquency or a conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of [Code of Virginia § 16.1-260](#).

School Conference

Whenever students or parents feel that the best interests of the individual or the group have been disregarded, a conference with the teacher, sponsor, coach, counselor, or other school personnel should be arranged. If a routine agreement cannot be reached among student(s) and school personnel, then the student has the right to:

- Arrange a meeting with the principal or the designated assistant principal to discuss such conditions or decisions judged by the student(s) to be detrimental.
- Request a conference of the parent, student, and principal if not satisfied with the initial meetings.

See “Appeals of Student Matters” as summarized and set forth in [Regulation 731-1](#), “Appeal of Student Matters.”

Teacher Removal of Students from Class

Teachers may remove disruptive students from class in accordance with School Board [Policy 702](#), “Teacher Removal of Students from Class,” as stated below.

[Code of Virginia § 22.1-276.2](#) provides for the initial authority of a teacher to remove a student from class for disruptive behavior. Further, the Code of Virginia defines disruptive behavior as a “violation of school board regulations governing student conduct that interrupts or obstructs the learning environment.”

Search and Seizure

Students will be held responsible for items that they have at school or at school-related activities. Student desks and lockers are the property of the school, and school officials reserve the right to search them. Lockers or desks may be searched to repossess school property or to locate materials that are not permitted in school. Students, their belongings, and items under their control (including cars) may be searched under certain circumstances as described in

[Regulation 737-1](#), “Search and Seizures.” The student’s individual right to privacy and freedom from unreasonable search and seizure is balanced by the school’s responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all persons within the school community. Should illegal materials be found during a search, law enforcement officials will be notified. If a student refuses to be searched when the administration has reasonable suspicion that the student possesses or has under their control prohibited items as defined in the regulation, parents and/or authorities will be contacted, and the students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Self-Defense

Whether a student has acted in self-defense may be considered when making a disciplinary decision. The criteria that define when an incident would be considered an act of self-defense must include the following conditions to support such a claim:

- Be without fault in provoking or bringing on the fight or incident.
- Have reasonably feared, under the circumstances, as they appeared to the student, that there was imminent danger or harm.
- Have used no more force than was reasonably necessary to protect themselves from imminent danger or harm.
- No other readily accessible option to de-escalate or eliminate the danger or harm.

Procedures for consideration of a self-defense claim when determining appropriate administrative responses shall include an opportunity for the student to present their version of what occurred, as well as a review of facts involving school personnel and others as appropriate, including other students and staff who may have witnessed the incident or may have observed previous interactions between the students involved. In some instances, interactions between students may be investigated beyond a single incident to examine patterns of interaction, past threats, and bullying.

Retaliation or willfully participating in a fight is not considered self-defense. Students are to disengage and seek assistance from school staff as soon as the threat of immediate danger or harm has subsided.

Weapons or harmful objects of any kind are strictly prohibited on school property for the purpose of self-defense. The possession or use of a weapon on school property or at any school-sponsored activity is not a valid form of self-defense. Possession of a weapon on school property or at a school-sponsored activity is a violation of [Regulation 775-1](#), “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects.”

Use of Seclusion and Restraint

[Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.1:1](#) requires that the State Board of Education adopt regulations on the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia primary and secondary schools. The “Regulations Governing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Virginia” ([8VAC20-750-5 et seq.](#)):

- Define what constitutes seclusion and physical restraint, as well as mechanical restraints, pharmacological restraints, and aversive stimuli.
- Ban the use of mechanical restraints, pharmacological restraints, and aversive stimuli.
- Describe the conditions under which it is permissible for a student to be restrained or secluded.
- Provide for notification and reporting to parents, for debriefing with staff and the student following incidents, and for follow-up when a student has been restrained or secluded more than twice during the course of a school year.
- Provide for reporting to the Virginia Department of Education.
- Require local school divisions to adopt policies and procedures regarding the use of seclusion and restraint.
- Require that all school personnel be trained in techniques for avoiding the use of seclusion and restraint and that school personnel who work with students who are likely to be restrained or secluded must receive additional training on safe methods for restraining or secluding a student.

PWCS [Regulation 746-1](#), “Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion,” outlines the expectation for all school staff to complete training focused on positive behavior support, conflict prevention, de-escalation, and crisis response.

Disciplinary Policies, Regulations, and Procedures

Notice of Disciplinary Policies and Regulations

Students and parents are also responsible for reading and becoming familiar with the following policies and regulations placing them on notice of PWCS' disciplinary programs and procedures:

- [Policy 681](#) and [Regulation 681-1](#), "Nontraditional Education Programs"
- [Policy 702](#), "Teacher Removal of Students from Class"
- [Policy 715](#), "Notice of Student's School Status Required as Condition of Enrollment," and [Regulation 715-5](#), "Disclosure of Child's Disciplinary and Criminal History Prior to Enrollment"
- [Policy 730](#), "Student Conduct and Responsibilities"
- [Policy 731](#) and [Regulation 731-1](#), "Appeal of Student Matters"
- [Policy 735](#) and [Regulation 735-1](#), "Prohibited Substances"
- [Policy 743](#) and [Regulation 743-1](#), "Student Discipline"
- [Policy 744](#) and [Regulation 744-1](#), "Short-Term Suspension of Students"
- [Policy 745](#), "Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students, Readmissions, and Exclusion/Admission," [Regulation 745-1](#), "Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students," [Regulation 745-2](#), "Discipline of Students with Disabilities," [Regulation 745-3](#), "Discipline of Summer School Students," [Regulation 745-4](#), "School Board Disciplinary Committee Procedures for Student Expulsion Appeal Hearings," [Regulation 745-5](#), "Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions," and [Regulation 745-6](#), "Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board"
- [Policy 747](#) and [Regulation 747-1](#), "Student Management and Alternative Programs Department"
- [Policy 775](#) and [Regulation 775-1](#), "Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects"
- [Exclusionary Discipline](#)

Exclusionary Discipline

General Provisions Related to All Suspensions

Due Process

A principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee may suspend a student from school for misconduct, which includes, but is not limited to, violations of the COB. Before being excluded from school for disciplinary purposes, students have a right to adequate and meaningful due process, established in accordance with the rules and principles as outlined in [Regulation 747-1](#), "Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD)." SMAPD is now referred to as the Student Hearings Department (SHD).

Students have the right to be informed of the reasons for the suspension and offered the opportunity to tell their side of the story before being suspended. If the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or presents an ongoing threat of disruption, however, the student may be removed from school immediately, and the notice, explanation of facts, and opportunity to present the student's version of events shall be given as soon as practicable. Whenever a suspension is imposed, the principal/designee will make all reasonable efforts to contact the parent(s) to advise them of the suspension and to make appropriate arrangements for the student to be returned to the student's home. Students and families also have the right to receive notice of the suspension in writing, including conditions imposed on the student during the suspension and their right to appeal.

Continuing Education During Suspensions

The student's school shall continue to provide educational services throughout the term of any short-term suspension and, if the student has been referred to SHD for consideration of further disciplinary action, until a decision to long-term suspend, reassign, or expel the student has been finally issued by SHD or the School Board. During this period, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete all assignments missed from the school. These assignments must be completed within a time frame established by the school. However, the principal may also provide other

assignments or make-up options that would be more effective in changing the behavior of the student. If a final decision is made to long-term suspend, reassign, or expel a student, the student and parents will be provided specific information on eligibility for alternative educational services.

Presence on School Property Prohibited During the Term of the Suspension

Students who are suspended from school are prohibited from school property (including school buses) and school-related activities for the duration of their suspension and may be arrested for trespassing. Unless the student has written permission from school officials to be on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event, students whose disciplinary cases are pending a long-term suspension or expulsion decision (with the exception of disciplinary hearings) are prohibited from school property, school buses, and school-sponsored activities. Students who are suspended from school shall also be suspended from participation in all school activities (teams, clubs, and all other school-sponsored activities), including practice. In cases where the parent or adult student notifies the principal at the time of the suspension that there will be an appeal, the student shall be allowed to attend school until the case is heard and a final decision has been rendered unless the principal considers that the presence of the student creates a present and continuing threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of persons or property in the school or may pose a disruption to the educational process.

Authority to Modify Disciplinary Decisions

At each level of the procedure for all disciplinary appeals, the appeal may be granted or denied, and the related consequences (corrective measures) may be increased, decreased, or allowed to remain the same. If, in the appeal of a long-term suspension, the School Board determines that expulsion may be appropriate, the student shall be notified by the SHD of the right to request a due process hearing before a committee of the School Board. If the student does not request such a hearing or a hearing is requested and the student fails to appear, a committee of the School Board will render a decision based on the written record. In the event that the decision of the School Board committee is not unanimous, the student may submit a written appeal to the full School Board.

Suspension or Expulsion of Students in Preschool Through Grade Three

Except for certain drug or weapons offenses identified in the Code of Virginia, no student in preschool through grade three shall be suspended for more than three school days or expelled from attendance at school unless:

1. The offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others; or
2. The School Board, the Superintendent, or designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist.

A student in preschool through grade three may be suspended or expelled from school upon the school division's receipt of a report pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 16.1-305.1](#) of an adjudication of delinquency or a conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of [Code of Virginia § 16.1-260](#).

Suspension of Students in Grade Four and Above

Short-Term Suspension

A short-term suspension is a disciplinary action after which a student may not attend school for up to 10 school days as outlined in [Regulation 744-1](#), "Short-Term Suspension of Students." The student and parent may appeal a short-term suspension decision to the principal within three school days of notice of suspension. The parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the status of the principal's decision within five school days of having received the written appeal. Students whose short-term suspension is under appeal may attend school until the appeal is decided unless they pose a safety risk or present a threat of ongoing disruption.

If the principal's decision is appealed, a written request appealing the decision must be received by the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent within three business days of the parent(s)/guardian(s) having been notified of the principal's decision. The written appeal must include the student's account of the incident and the reason for believing the suspension is unjustified. The Level Associate Superintendent or designee shall provide a written decision within five business days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the level associate superintendent or designee shall be final.

For more serious offenses, a principal or designee may impose a 10-day suspension in conjunction with a referral to the SHD for consideration of further discipline, e.g., a long-term suspension, reassignment, or expulsion. Any appeal of a

10-day suspension imposed in conjunction with a referral to the SHD for consideration of further disciplinary action shall be decided by the SHD hearing officer following the due process hearing described in the section titled Long-Term Suspension below.

Long-Term Suspension

A long-term suspension is a disciplinary action after which a student may not attend school for more than 10 school days but less than 365 calendar days. A student shall not be suspended for more than 45 school days; however, unless:

1. The offense is one described in Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-277.07](#) or [§ 22.1-277.08](#) or involves serious bodily injury; or
2. The School Board, the Superintendent, or designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist as defined by the Virginia Department of Education.

Before a long-term suspension is imposed, the student shall have the right to a due process hearing conducted by the Student Hearings Department (SHD) pursuant to those procedures explained in [Regulation 745-1](#), “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” and [Regulation 747-1](#), “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD).” Now referred to as the Student Hearings Department (SHD). Any further appeal shall be in accordance with [Regulation 731-1](#), “Appeal of Student Matters,” [Regulation 745-6](#), “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board,” and [Regulation 745-2](#), “Discipline of Students with Disabilities.”

Parents and students may appeal Long-Term Suspension decisions following procedures set forth in [Regulation 745-6](#), “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board,” which are summarized here. A parent or student may file a written appeal within four business days of the date of the SHD decision letter. The written appeal must be submitted to SHD and may include the student’s account of the incident, the reason for believing the suspension is unjustified, and any additional evidence the student or parent wishes to have considered. The SHD hearing officer may submit a written statement in response to the parent’s appeal. The appeal will be decided by the School Board Disciplinary Committee (SBDC), a panel of three School Board members. The SBDC shall review the written appeal of the SHD hearing officer’s decision in closed session. The SBDC may uphold, deny, or amend the decision of the SHD hearing officer or may determine that other disciplinary action is merited, including expulsion. The SBDC’s decision shall be final unless the decision is not unanimous, in which case the student may, within four business days of the SBDC’s decision, notify SHD in writing that the student intends to appeal the SBDC’s decision to the full School Board. The School Board shall review the appeal based solely on the administrative record presented to the SBDC and shall render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

Expulsion Procedures

Expulsion is a disciplinary action in which a student is not permitted to attend any PWCS school for 365 calendar days after the date of expulsion. The School Board may, however, permit or require any student who has been expelled from school to attend an alternative educational program during the term of the expulsion.

The rules governing expulsion, readmission, and exclusion are summarized in this section. Please refer to [Regulation 745-1](#), “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” [Regulation 745-5](#), “Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions,” [Regulation 745-6](#), “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board,” and [Regulation 747-1](#), “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD),” for all information pertaining to this subject. Please refer to [Regulation 745-2](#), “Discipline of Students with Disabilities,” for information regarding the expulsion of students receiving special education services.

Certain limitations apply to the expulsion of students in preschool through grade three. Please see the section titled Suspension or Expulsion of Students in Preschool Through Grade Three for more information.

The School Board may expel students for sufficient cause. A student may be expelled and denied the right to attend any PWCS school when:

- The student is a potential or continuing danger to the health, welfare, or safety of others; or
- The student’s conduct is disruptive to the educational mission or the orderly operation of the school; or
- The student has engaged in conduct that violates the school division’s policies and regulations or the COB, or that threatens the safety or security of the school or is otherwise connected to the school; or
- The student has obtained an accumulation of offenses for which expulsion is merited; or

- The student has been adjudicated delinquent or convicted following a report pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 16.1-305.1](#) for an offense listed in subsection G of [Code of Virginia § 16.1-260](#); or
- Other circumstances demonstrate that the expulsion of the student is in the best interest of the local school or the school division.

PWCS considers the following offenses to be of particular concern, and consideration of expulsion is mandatory:

- The possession, use, or distribution of prohibited substances as set forth in [Regulation 735-1](#), “Prohibited Substances;”
- The possession of weapons, as set forth in [Regulation 775-1](#), “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects;”
- Physical assaults and battery on a school staff member; and
- Group assaults.

If a student is recommended for expulsion by SHD, the parent(s) and student may appeal the disciplinary recommendation of the SHD hearing officer to the SBDC following procedures set forth in [Regulation 745-6](#), “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board.” Any decision by SHD to place the student in an alternative education program upon readmission may also be appealed. However, any other placement decision by SHD is final and may not be appealed. A written request for a hearing before the SBDC must be received by SHD within four business days of the date of the decision letter.

The student and parent will have the right to present the student’s version of the incident and the reasons they believe the expulsion recommendation is in error during a live 45-minute hearing before the SBDC. The student may be represented by an attorney. If the decision of the SBDC is not unanimous, the student and parent may file a written appeal for the matter to be decided by the full School Board within four business days of the SBDC decision. The School Board will consider the matter in closed session based only upon the record presented to the SBDC and will reach a decision within 30 calendar days of the appeal. The decision of the School Board shall be final. The procedures, timeline, and appeal process for the readmission to school of students who have previously been expelled from PWCS are set forth in [Regulation 745-5](#), “Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions.” For those cases that are appealed, the School Board shall conduct a review of the record in closed session and vote on the readmission decision in open session. Only those documents submitted to SHD for consideration for readmission shall be considered by the School Board. No additional documents, other than the letter of appeal, shall be submitted for consideration. The student and parent(s) shall be notified in writing of the School Board’s decision.

Exclusions from School

PWCS is authorized to deny admission to its schools to students who have been placed in a nontraditional educational program or expelled or suspended from attendance at school by another school division or private school, or for whom admission has been withdrawn from any school the student was previously enrolled following a SHD admission hearing. This process is set forth in [Regulation 745-5](#), “Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions.”

Students and parents have the right to appeal the SHD decision to the School Board within four business days of the date of the SHD decision letter. The School Board shall meet in closed session to conduct a review of the documentation considered in the SHD admission hearing and the parent’s letter of appeal. The student and parent(s) shall be notified in writing of the School Board’s decision. The School Board may require an excluded student to attend a nontraditional education program provided by the School Board for the term of any exclusion from a base school.

Reassignment/Placement by the Student Hearings Department for Certain Criminal Offenses

Under Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-209.1:2](#) or [§ 22.1-277.2:1](#), PWCS is authorized to reassign or place students in alternative programs if the student has been charged or convicted of certain criminal offenses following the procedures set forth in [Regulation 681-1](#), “Nontraditional Education Programs.” A student and parent may appeal the SHD decision to the School Board within 10 calendar days of the date of the SHD decision.

Appeals of Student Matters

One of the goals is to resolve issues at the school level whenever possible. In addition to the right to appeal suspension and expulsion decisions explained above, PWCS provides students and parents the right to appeal the following student matters:

- Academic appeals.
- Appeal of a decision involving a complaint of discrimination or harassment.
- Eligibility appeals - cocurricular and extracurricular programs.
- Graduation appeals.
- Interscholastic activities and competition appeals.
- Music performance participation and academic/grade-related issues appeals (middle and high school).
- Placement in a nontraditional education program.
- Readmission to traditional school for non-elective placements.
- School transfers.

Please refer to [Regulation 731-1](#), "Appeal of Student Matters," for timelines and appeal procedures.

Student Behavior Supports

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Research demonstrates that the use of Restorative Practices improves school climate and reduces student suspensions and discipline disparities. Research has shown that frequent out-of-school suspensions, zero-tolerance policies, and “get-tough” approaches to school safety are ineffective and increase the risk for negative social and academic outcomes, especially for children from historically disadvantaged groups.

Approaching school discipline from an instructional prevention-based standpoint, as with Restorative Practices, contributes to a positive school environment and ensures equity, fairness, and continuous improvement. PWCS continues to increase the number of school staff trained in Restorative Practices and Restorative Practice teams throughout the division. Restorative Practices are grounded in the need to keep schools safe by building relationships that strengthen the school social structure. Restorative Practices incorporate opportunities for school community involvement in the resolution of wrongdoing while empowering students and staff members to take personal responsibility for the well-being of the entire school community.

Restorative Practices provide direct opportunities for students who have harmed others to be accountable to those they have harmed, including themselves and their families. Restorative Practices emphasize the need to educate students who have harmed others about the effects of disruptive behavior on those harmed, as well as on the school community. Participants in a restorative discipline process learn the underlying factors that lead to making poor decisions. They practice social skills and learn self-improvement strategies that encourage better decision-making in the future. Restorative Practices do not replace discipline but rather complement it by focusing on relationship-building and personal accountability. These skills lead to student success not only in school, but also as members of our community.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is an adaptive and responsive framework that helps schools identify and provide targeted supports for students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally.

The focus is to identify students by name and need while providing differentiated instruction and the necessary academic, behavioral, and social-emotional wellness support for ALL students across ALL schools. In PWCS, MTSS is built upon strong and intentional collaboration, enhanced by the belief that ALL students can learn at high levels.

PWCS will implement coherent, articulated, aligned, culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices and learning pathways across all grade levels and content areas, focusing on improving the academic progress of English learners and students with disabilities.

The Key Components of MTSS are:

- Student Support Team (SST) with an identified leader to guide MTSS implementation.
- Culture of collective responsibility for all students.
- High-quality core instruction for academics, behavior, and student social-emotional wellness.
- Goal setting and monitoring student progress.
- Data-informed decision-making across tiers.
- Early implementation of evidence-based interventions with fidelity.
- Families as authentic partners to support student success.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based framework used in schools to promote positive behavior and prevent challenging behaviors. It emphasizes prevention, teaching social skills, and creating a supportive school climate. The goal is to enhance student well-being and academic success while minimizing disruptions and disciplinary actions.

The Relationship between PBIS and Restorative Practices

PBIS and Restorative Practices can complement each other to build a positive climate and culture in schools while reducing the reliance on exclusionary discipline practices. The integration of PBIS and Restorative Practices does not replace consequences in alignment with the PWCS "Code of Behavior." By integrating PBIS and Restorative Practices, school staff can create a comprehensive approach to behavior management that emphasizes prevention, positive relationships, and the restoration of harm.

Tiered Support

MTSS is a framework that provides a multi-tiered approach to meeting the diverse behavioral and academic needs of students. PBIS and Restorative Practices can be integrated into different tiers of support within the MTSS framework. PBIS can be implemented as a universal Tier 1 support by establishing schoolwide behavioral expectations and providing proactive strategies for all students. Restorative Practices can also be used at Tier 1 to build a sense of community among all students. Additionally, Restorative Practices can provide structure for targeted Tier 2 or Tier 3 support to address specific student behavioral concerns and provide individualized interventions.

Shared Focus on Positive Behavior

PBIS underscores the importance of promoting positive behavior and creating a supportive environment for all students. Restorative Practices also foster positive relationships and build a sense of community. Both approaches prioritize the development and reinforcement of positive behaviors, which helps to foster a positive school climate.

Prevention and Early Intervention

PBIS aims to prevent challenging behavior through proactive strategies, such as explicitly teaching, reinforcing, and incentivizing expected student behaviors. The objectives of Restorative Practices center around early intervention, providing opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and repairing harm before conflicts escalate. By addressing behavior issues early, both approaches can help reduce the need for exclusionary discipline practices.

Clear and Consistent Expectations

PBIS establishes clear behavioral expectations across the settings in the school, promoting consistency in behavior management. Restorative Practices rely on clear expectations for behavior and communication, enabling students and staff to understand how to engage in restorative conversations (and structures) effectively. By aligning these expectations, both approaches create a common language and understanding among students and staff.

Restorative Consequences

PBIS encourages the use of logical and restorative consequences for behavioral infractions, focusing on teaching and reinforcing appropriate behavior rather than solely relying on punitive measures. Restorative Practices provide a framework for repairing harm caused by a student's behavior through dialogue, empathy, and accountability. By incorporating restorative consequences, both approaches promote growth, assist students in learning from errors in judgment, and reduce recidivism. As mentioned previously, Restorative Practices do not replace discipline consequences for violations of the "Code of Behavior."

Building Relationships and Fostering Empathy

Restorative Practices emphasize building positive relationships, empathy, and understanding among students and between students and staff. PBIS recognizes the importance of positive relationships in fostering a supportive school climate. By promoting empathy and building relationships, both approaches contribute to a more inclusive and connected school community.

Data-Informed Decision-Making

PBIS uses data to inform decision-making processes related to behavior interventions and supports. Restorative Practices also rely on data to assess the effectiveness of restorative processes and identify improvement areas. By using data, both approaches can identify behavioral trends, measure the impact of interventions, and make strategic decisions to reduce exclusionary discipline practices effectively.

Educator Cultural Competency

According to [Code of Virginia § 22.1-298.7](#), “Each school board shall adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and any other school board employee holding a license issued by the Board to complete cultural competency training, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board, at least every two years.” The Virginia Framework for Cultural Competency is comprised of four domains, which are Culturally Competent Self-Reflection, Culturally Competent Pedagogy and Practice, Culturally Competent Learning Environments, and Culturally Competent Community Engagement.

As the 10th most diverse school division in the nation, PWCS understands the responsibility of supporting a positive climate and culture. We are all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, ability, national origin, political ideology, area of residency (including rural locations), or gender. This means we value and respect differences within our student populations and support our staff with their commitment to the advancement of cultural competency within our schools and classrooms with an emphasis on the following areas as they relate to pre-K-12 student behavioral expectations:

- Access and opportunity.
- Resource equity.
- Family communication and engagement.
- Intercultural competency and inclusion.

Our commitment to a universally positive climate and culture ensures that, when discipline is necessary, students and families are well-informed about the disciplinary process, school communities are restored, and students are provided with access to a supportive system that is in line with PWCS behavioral standards.

Roles and Responsibilities

Prince William County Public Schools

Prince William County School Board

The “Code of Behavior” has been established for PWCS. The School Board, acting through the Superintendent, holds all school employees responsible for supervising student behavior while students are legally supervised by the schools. The School Board holds all students responsible for appropriate conduct as defined in the policies and regulations of the School Board and as summarized in the COB. Policies and regulations governing student behavior and student discipline are available online at www.pwcs.edu.

All PWCS employees are held to the highest ethical standards and are accountable for their actions. Therefore, all staff must comply with the policies and regulations established by the School Board.

The School Board requires all parents to read the “Code of Behavior” (COB) and any policies or regulations mentioned within it to support proper student conduct.

Student Hearings Department (SHD)

As delineated in [Policy 747](#), “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department,” the School Board has designated SHD to enforce and coordinate the school division’s efforts to provide a safe school environment conducive to teaching and learning. The objectives of SHD are as follows:

- To resolve serious student disciplinary offenses.
- To promote a safe educational environment conducive to teaching and learning and free from violence, conflict, and unnecessary disruptions.
- To oversee and conduct the due process procedures applicable to the long-term suspension, expulsion, exclusion, and readmission of students, and to coordinate any appeals to the school board.
- To determine the appropriate educational services, programs, and placements for regular education students who are subject to the further disciplinary action and criminal reassignment process.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Compliance Department (DEIC)

DEIC supports the PWCS Strategic Plan through the advancement of access and opportunity, resource equity for positive climate and culture, and emphasis on family and community engagement, as well as intercultural competence and inclusion for all. Our team provides support to school communities through training, coaching, and other resources based on the needs of school sites. The DEIC works to address cultural competency within day-to-day school interactions. Specifically, the DEIC team:

- Supports staff as they operationalize cultural competency in practices for all students and staff through shared language and the use of terms that are non-divisive.
- Supports school-level councils and committees with diversity, equity, and inclusion opportunities at the student and staff level.
- Supports families in navigating and understanding the PWCS discipline, suspension, and expulsion process.

Definitions:

- Diversity – Values and respects differences of each individual person regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or political ideology.
- Equity – The fair and impartial provision of resources, access, and opportunities to all students based on their individual needs, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, area of residence (rural locations), or sexual orientation.
- Inclusion – Creating conditions for all students and staff to feel welcomed, valued, and positioned for success.

Educational Team

While discipline is ultimately the individual's responsibility, implementing an effective discipline program requires a cooperative team effort. An equitable and preventive approach to discipline shall be taken in an effort to clarify standards of conduct, effectively assess a student's individual needs, and identify any significant factors that may be contributing to a student's misconduct. The school principal is the instructional leader responsible for the development of school-based behavior expectations that are consistent with the School Board policies, PWCS regulations, and the COB. Administrators, teachers, and support personnel all work together to ensure the rights and responsibilities of each student in the school division.

The educational team is responsible for:

- Providing a safe and positive school environment.
- Providing a favorable psychological environment for learning.
- Encouraging self-discipline.
- Providing an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Treating each student as an individual in accordance with one's needs.
- Encouraging, monitoring, and evaluating the progress of students.
- Initiating and maintaining open lines of communication with parents.
- Discussing the COB with students at the beginning of each school year and providing periodic reviews during the school year.
- Formulating and implementing school rules and regulations in compliance with the policies and regulations of the School Board and the COB throughout the school setting.
- Providing both instruction and access to the COB to all new students upon registration throughout the school year.
- Developing a plan of action, whenever possible, based on the needs of the student and the school environment as a whole.
- Maintaining the educational records of individual students to include a record of disciplinary actions involving the student. (Such records may contain information on police arrest or court action if the student is involved in unlawful behavior. Whenever charges are placed with juvenile court authorities, it may be considered an "arrest" even if the student is not physically taken into custody by police.)
- School administrators are responsible for appropriate follow-up action whenever students report misconduct that violates the COB. Teachers, counselors, and other educational support staff are responsible for helping students obtain the assistance they may need from administrators. Staff response to each student complaint should be documented.

Professional Teaching Staff

According to Virginia's Standards of Accreditation ([8VAC20-132-210](#)), "The professional teaching staff shall be responsible for providing instruction that is educationally sound in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy..." Teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe, supportive developmentally and culturally appropriate environment that promotes student academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development. Developing positive relationships with students built on mutual trust and respect has demonstrated some of the highest positive effects on student achievement and behavior. Developing relationships requires specific skills of the teacher such as the skills of listening, empathy, caring, and having a positive regard for others. The impact of teacher-student relationship variables includes gains in positive behavior, critical/creative thinking, math skills, verbal skills, and overall grades.

Given the correlation between student behaviors, a positive school climate, academic achievement, and keeping students in the classroom with uninterrupted instruction, teacher responsibilities include:

- Developing positive relationships.
- Developing a safe and positive physical environment.
- Teaching (and reteaching when necessary) behavioral expectations.
- Reinforcing positive behavior.
- Providing instructional feedback on behaviors.
- Utilizing the school's tiered framework of interventions and supports for students who are not meeting behavioral expectations.
- Recognizing personal stress, reactions that may escalate negative student behavior, and personal bias.
- Using individual and classroom data to monitor student behavior and the teacher's responses to behavior.

If a student is not meeting the behavioral expectations and the teacher has implemented classroom or school-based interventions as outlined in school procedures, the teacher may request that a student be removed from a class.

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

The Virginia Board of Education's *Model Guidance for Positive and Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension* recognizes that these professionals have a direct role in promoting and supporting a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, intervention, and support to assist students in meeting the behavioral expectations of the COB.

School Counselors

School counseling programs support the Virginia Standards of Learning by guiding students in their academic, career, personal, and social development. School counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and others to promote learning and to help students establish and achieve their education, career, and personal goals using the following standards:

- Academic Development – Students will acquire the academic preparation essential to choose from various educational, training, and employment options upon completion of secondary school.
- Career Development – Students will investigate the world of work to make informed career decisions.
- Social Emotional – Students will acquire an understanding of and respect for self and others, and the skills needed to be responsible citizens.

School Social Workers

School social workers have special expertise in understanding family and community systems and linking students and their families with the community services that are essential for promoting student success.

They work to remedy barriers to learning created because of poverty, inadequate health care, and neighborhood violence. School social workers often focus on providing support to vulnerable populations of students who have a high risk for truancy and dropping out of school, such as homeless and foster children, migrant populations, students transitioning between school and treatment programs or the juvenile justice system, or students experiencing domestic violence.

They work closely with teachers, administrators, parents, and other educators to provide coordinated interventions and consultation designed to keep students in school and help their families access the support needed to promote student success.

School Psychologists

School psychologists have specialized training that enables them to understand and work with students in relation to their academic progress, behavior, social-emotional development, and relationships.

School psychologists specialize in analyzing complex student and school problems and selecting and implementing appropriate evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes at home and school.

They may consult with teachers and parents to coordinate services and supports for the students' academic, social, and behavioral needs.

Their training in conducting risk and threat assessments and in evaluation, data collection, and interpretation can facilitate identifying and implementing the support that students may need to ensure their success.

Behavior Specialists

Behavior specialists conduct assessments to identify the underlying causes of student behaviors and support school staff in developing strategies to address challenging student behavior.

Behavior specialists coach teachers to strengthen proactive classroom management strategies and appropriate behavioral responses to maintain the momentum of high-quality instruction.

They consult with school teams to strengthen Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Restorative Practices as part of a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework.

They collaborate with school administration and division support staff to provide ongoing professional learning around the best practices for supporting student behaviors.

School Nurses

The school nurse provides emergency care assessments and interventions, management of acute and chronic health conditions, referral and support to access primary care, preventive services, communicable disease control measures, counseling for health promotion, and identification and management of health-related barriers to student learning.

Non-Certified Staff

All school community members should be engaged in and responsible for establishing a positive school climate, and every school employee is responsible for ensuring a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment.

Families as Partners

PWCS recognizes the importance of partnerships between schools and families in making schools safe, effective learning environments and in promoting children's social-emotional development. PWCS emphasizes the significance of positive communication between families and educators and encourages avenues for families to communicate their concerns, provide suggestions, and access information regarding their children to create a positive partnership between families and schools, thus strengthening the school community.

As partners in education, parents are to:

- Assist the school in enforcing the standards of student conduct and compulsory school attendance in order that education may be conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property, and supportive of individual rights ([Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.3 \(a\)](#)).
- Review and acknowledge the COB, promote proper student conduct, assist the school with the discipline of the student, and meet with school officials, if requested, to discuss matters related to discipline and school.
- Safely store any firearm present in the household.
- Sign a statement showing that they know their responsibilities. This statement is in the Back to School packet in [ParentVUE](#).
- Complete an annual review of the COB and other necessary legal acknowledgments immediately before the start of school or during the first weeks of the school year.
- Ensure that the student is appropriately dressed for school as determined by the dress code, which is developed cooperatively at local schools by students, parent(s), and school staff.
- Provide such books, materials, instruments, uniforms, and equipment as are required for effective participation in the school program.
- Know promotion and graduation requirements as published each year for middle and high school students in the [Secondary Course Catalog](#).
- Provide current emergency information, including a telephone number, to the school to ensure that the school can contact the parent immediately in case of an emergency.
- Provide a certified copy of the student's birth certificate, and/or immigration documentation, physical examination, and record of the completed series of immunizations, upon initial entry to school.
- Understand that drugs and weapons, as described in the COB, will not be tolerated at school activities, on property owned by the school board, when going to and from school and bus stops, on school buses, at bus stops, and in cases involving off-site, school-sponsored activities such as field trips, sporting events, and club activities; and that violators are subject to corrective action, up to and including expulsion.

(Parents have the right to disagree with a school's or school division's policies or decisions. Parents may appeal decisions concerning their student using the procedures outlined in [Regulation 731-1](#), "Appeal of Student Matters.")

School Resource Officers

The school resource officer (SRO) is defined in [Code of Virginia § 9.1-101](#) as “a certified law enforcement officer hired by the local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools.” However, law enforcement officers are not school disciplinarians. Their role in PWCS is to promote positive and supportive school climates and to create and maintain safe and secure school environments by focusing on incidents that may involve a violation of criminal law, while school administrators focus on whether student conduct violates the provisions of the COB.

School administration is required by [Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.3:1](#) to report certain potential criminal offenses to local law enforcement.

Appendix

Bullying Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is bullying?

A: Bullying is any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and the victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyberbullying. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Q: What is ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict?

A: Ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict are behaviors that fall outside the definition of bullying. Ordinary teasing refers to playful or light-hearted remarks between peers. Similarly, horseplay involves playful physical activity, often without malicious intent. Argument refers to disagreements or verbal disputes, which can occur naturally among individuals. Lastly, peer conflict arises when peers have disagreements or clashes but do not engage in harmful behavior toward each other. In summary, while bullying involves harmful intent and repetition, ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, and peer conflict do not fall under the category of bullying.

Q: What is cyberbullying?

A: Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that involves sending, receiving, or displaying electronic messages and/or images. Cyberbullying can include any threats by one student toward another, typically through emails, texts, or websites (e.g., blogs, social media sites). Electronic communications that support deliberate, hostile, and hurtful messages intended to harm others are also examples of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can include such things as sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images, posting sensitive, private information about another person, pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad, and using defamatory online personal polling websites.

Cyberbullying using the PWCS internet, PWCS computers, or other wireless communication devices in schools, on school property, or at school-related activities will not be tolerated. Cyberbullying that occurs off school grounds and/or does not involve the use of the PWCS internet or computers may also result in disciplinary action if it causes, or is likely to cause, a material disruption to the operation of the school or the school division, threatens the safety or mental/physical well-being of students or staff or threatens the safety of school buildings or school property.

Q: What behaviors are considered to be bullying behaviors?

A: Some examples of bullying behaviors may include purposely excluding others, taunts, threats, gestures, insults, gossip, humiliation, teasing, cyberbullying, physical aggression, stealing or destroying property, or cursing or laughing at someone. Bullying takes many forms. For example: Sometimes, bullying is people making other people feel left out; other times, bullying may involve hitting, teasing, or threatening to hurt someone. Stealing or damaging someone's lunch or books could be bullying, too; so is laughing at people because they wear glasses or different kinds of clothes, or because they aren't good at sports. Using the internet or computers to harm people is another form of bullying.

Q: What if the bully is threatening and intimidating a student? What can school officials do to help keep the students safe?

A: Any student who is being threatened or intimidated (or who is aware that another student is being threatened or intimidated) is strongly encouraged to report the misconduct to a school administrator, counselor, or a trusted school staff member. The allegations will be promptly investigated and reported to the school's Threat Assessment Team, which, among other things, will take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of students and of the school environment.

Q: How can I report bullying?

A: Any student can report bullying by talking to an administrator or a trusted school staff member or by completing the Bullying Complaint Form. Any school staff member who receives a report of bullying must tell the school administration. Students or parents can [report bullying incidents online](#).

Q: What should I do if the bullying continues?

A: Report this to a school administrator or a trusted school staff member immediately. It is also important to tell your parent(s) that the bullying is continuing. Administrators will take disciplinary action if the student accused of bullying attempts to get back at the victim for reporting the bullying behavior.

PWCS [Regulation 733-1](#), "Bullying of Students," provides detailed information about PWCS' rules concerning and response to bullying.

Out-of-School Suspension Discipline Flow Chart

Step 1: Out-of-School Suspension

- 1-10 days of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) for most disciplinary incidents. Notice and a right to be heard must be provided to the student before the suspension is initiated, absent exigent circumstances.

Possible Outcomes

- **No Further Disciplinary Action Referral** – Student returns to school after 1-10 days of OSS.
- **Further Disciplinary Action Referral** – Student serves 10 days OSS and is referred to the Student Hearings Department (SHD) for consideration of Further Disciplinary Action (FDA).

Step 2: Consideration of Further Disciplinary Action

- Further Disciplinary Action (FDA) is a referral to the Student Hearings Department (SHD) for consideration of long-term suspension, reassignment, or expulsion. Notice of a 10-day suspension and a referral must be provided.
- For any student who is suspected of having a disability, under evaluation, or who has a Section 504 plan, or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) must be conducted during the first 10 days of the suspension and before the SHD hearing.

Hearing Information

- A hearing must be scheduled to be held no later than day 10 of the suspension.
- Notification from SHD of the hearing date and time will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Receipt of the packet from SHD 48 hours before the hearing, along with a Zoom link if the hearing will be held virtually, will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the school meet with a hearing officer to conduct a disciplinary hearing.

Educational Process

- The student completes work through Canvas or at site indicated until SHD hearing and decision are made.
- If the student is receiving special education services, the IEP team must convene to propose education services during the removal.

Possible Outcomes*

- **End of Suspension** – The student returns to student to their base school or program attended prior to the FDA referral.
- **Reassignment** – Students may be placed in a traditional or nontraditional setting.
- **Long-Term Suspension (LTS) for 11-45 Days** – The hearing officer decides the term of suspension and assigns the student to a nontraditional education program.
- **Long-Term Suspension (LTS) for 46-365 Days** – Upon a finding of aggravated circumstances, the hearing officer may impose longer suspension. The hearing officer decides the term of suspension and assigns the student to a nontraditional education program.

- **Expulsion (365 Days)** – The School Board expels the student and assigns the student to a nontraditional education program. If the student receives special education services, the School Board will allow the IEP team to determine placement that is offered outside the grounds of any PWCS school.

* Note: If the student receives special education services and the hearing officer sets restrictions on the student's access to PWCS grounds, the IEP team will then determine a placement consistent with those restrictions.

Categories of Behavior Descriptors and Responses

The following lists combine the Categories of Student Behavior Descriptors and the Levels of Administrative Responses (SBAR) to facilitate the equitable, responsive application of student conduct standards. School boards are encouraged to differentiate responses to behavior for elementary and secondary students. SBAR stands for “student behavior, administrative response.” The SBAR codes were developed by the Virginia Board of Education and are incorporated in its *Model Guidance for Positive and Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension*, with which public school divisions must comply. The behavior categories are designed to recognize the impact student behavior has on the school environment and on learning. They encourage awareness for administrators, teachers, parents, and counselors of students’ social-emotional development and emphasize the importance of helping students achieve academically and develop social-emotional learning competencies.

Category A: Behaviors that Impede the Academic Progress (BAP)

Behaviors in this category impede the academic progress of the student or of other students. They are typically indicative of the student’s lack of self-management or self-awareness. Sometimes, the student may need help in understanding how the behavior impacts others so training in social awareness may also be indicated. For elementary students, level one responses are recommended for these behaviors. For secondary students, level one or level two responses are recommended. These behaviors should not involve or be reported to law enforcement.

Category B: Behaviors Related to School Operations (BSO)

These behaviors interfere with the daily operation of school procedures. Students exhibiting these behaviors may need to develop self-management, self-awareness, or social awareness skills. Recommended responses to these behaviors for elementary and secondary students range from level one to level three. These behaviors do not require a report to law enforcement.

Category C: Relationship Behaviors (RB)

Behaviors in this category create a negative relationship between two or more members of the school community (no physical harm is done). Relationship behaviors affect the whole school community in that the school climate is often a reflection of how people treat one another. Students who exhibit difficulty with relationship behaviors may also have difficulty with the other social-emotional competencies. For elementary and secondary students, recommended responses to these behaviors range from level one to level three. These behaviors do not require a report to law enforcement.

Category D: Behaviors of a Safety Concern (BSC)

Behaviors in this category create unsafe conditions for students, staff, and/or visitors to the school. The range of recommended responses for elementary and secondary students is noted in parentheses and should be based on the age and development of the student and the harm caused by the behavior. The underlying reasons for this type of behavior may lie in any of the social-emotional competencies so the administrator should investigate the underlying motivation for the student’s behavior. Training in social awareness and decision-making is usually indicated in any behavior that creates a safety concern. Behaviors that are felony offenses require a report to law enforcement.

Category E: Behaviors that Endanger Self or Others (BESO)

Behaviors in this category endanger the health, safety, and/or welfare of either the student or others in the school community. Behaviors that rise to this level of severity are often complex. While they are indicative of poor decision-making skills, students who exhibit these behaviors may also have developmental needs in the other social-emotional

competencies. Recommended responses for all students range from level one to level five, depending upon the age and development of the student and the danger caused by the behavior. The range of recommended responses is noted in parentheses. Behaviors that are felony offenses require a report to law enforcement.

Category F: Persistently Dangerous Behaviors (PDB)

These behaviors are used in calculations to identify a school as persistently dangerous. “The incidents to be used as measures for determining persistently dangerous public schools are those violent crimes and offenses against a person and the possession of drugs with intent to distribute or sell, all designated as felonies in the criminal section of the *Code of Virginia (Title 18.2)*.” These behaviors require a report to the superintendent’s office and law enforcement and should be addressed in a manner consistent with a level 5 response.