

# Hyde Park Central School District

## CODE OF CONDUCT Plain Language Summary

Updated September, 2009

The Board of Education recognizes that a safe and orderly school environment is necessary for students and district personnel in order to provide a quality educational without disruption or interference. To achieve this environment, responsible behavior is required of all students, district personnel, parents and other visitors that is based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, and integrity.

This document is intended to give students, parents, staff and visitors an overview of the expected behavior while on school property or attending school functions and the consequences when these expectations are not met. Expectations for acceptable conduct on school property or during participation in any school function are clearly described in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Board of Education. Possible consequences of unacceptable conduct and the fair and prompt administration of discipline when necessary are also included in this document. Anyone interested in more information and specific details should obtain a copy of this document which is available on the district website [www.hydeparkschools.org](http://www.hydeparkschools.org), or from the office of any school, as well as central office.

The goal of the district is to assist students in learning self-discipline and to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of misbehavior. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline. The district expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, district personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. In summary, students may not engage in behavior that is disorderly, insubordinate, disruptive, violent or which endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others. In addition, students are expected to refrain from misconduct and from assisting another student in prohibited conduct.

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct. Students may report to a teacher, guidance counselor, the building principal (or someone the principal designates) or any administrator in the building. Any student observing another student in danger of causing physical harm to oneself, other students or staff must immediately report it. Such physical harm can come from a weapon, alcohol or illegal substances, as well as other sources.

When discipline must be imposed because of a breach of the Code of Conduct, it will be done promptly, fairly and in a lawful manner with the objective of most effectively improving behavior and self-discipline. If a staff member observes or receives a report of conduct that requires greater disciplinary measures than the staff member is authorized to impose, that staff member will report the behavior to her/his immediate supervisor. Determining the appropriate disciplinary action will consider the student's age, the nature of the offense, the circumstances which led to the offense, and the student's prior disciplinary record. Information from parents, teachers and/or others will be considered, as well as the context of the situation. As a general rule, discipline will increase in severity with each offense. Under no circumstances will corporal

punishment or any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishment, be used for discipline. However physical force for the purposes of protecting oneself or others, or for protecting school property, or for restraining or removing a disruptive or insubordinate student, may be used if other methods are not effective.

Discipline of students with disabilities will follow the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations. These students will have no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by applicable federal and state law and regulations. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to his or her disability. The Committee on Special Education will determine whether the behavior that violated the Code of Conduct is related to the disability.

Code of Conduct violations that are also a crime will be reported to the local police.

Anything that a student brings to school (or on a school bus) that is not allowed on school property will be confiscated and the parent or guardian will be notified. Confiscated material that is illegal will be reported to the local police.

Students who are found to have violated the district's Code of Conduct may be subject to an oral warning, written notification to parents, detention, removal from class, suspension (from attendance, transportation, athletic events, extra curricular events or social events), in-school suspension or loss of privileges. Except for verbal warnings, parents will be notified when discipline is imposed on a student. For all discipline other than verbal warnings and lunch detention, the student and his or her parents are entitled to a formal or informal meeting with the staff member imposing the discipline. Refer to the complete Code of Conduct for those cases as well as a description of the staff members authorized to impose each type of discipline and the process to be followed.

A student who brings a weapon to school will be suspended. Students guilty of violence or who are habitually disruptive will be suspended for up to five days. Upon appeal, the superintendent of schools may change the suspension based on the student's age, grade, discipline record, input from parents, or extenuating circumstances, to a more effective form of discipline.

If a student under the age of 17 is habitually truant, ungovernable, or disobedient or otherwise demonstrates that he or she requires supervision or treatment, the district may file a PINS (person in need of supervision) petition in family court. The district may also file a PINS petition on students found to be in possession of marijuana and similar illegal substances. The superintendent is required to refer students who are under the age of 16 and bring a weapon to school to the county attorney for a juvenile delinquency proceeding before the family court.

Students may be questioned about alleged violations of the Code of Conduct without being informed of their rights or having their parents notified. They will be told by the staff member questioning them why they are being questioned. School lockers, desks and other assigned storage areas are school property and may be searched individually or collectively without warning and without notifying the student to whom the area was assigned. If particular evidence or contraband is being sought, the person to whom the area is assigned will be given an opportunity to admit that the item or item is in the area before it is searched. Such an admission will be considered when assigning discipline. Searches of such areas may be authorized by a

school official if the official has credible reason to believe the search will reveal evidence or contraband.

Students are required to remove outerwear (coats, hats, etc.) if requested by a school official during a search or questioning. A student will only be required to remove other clothing if the search is authorized by the superintendent of schools or the school attorney. If a student is required to remove clothing other than outerwear in a search authorized by the superintendent of schools or the school attorney, the search will be conducted by a school district official of the same sex as the student and in the presence of another administrator, teacher or other school district professional who is also the same sex as the student. In an emergency situation in which there is imminent danger to the school community where there is not another administrator, teacher, or other school district professional of the same sex as the student being searched, an opposite sex third party witness to the search may be used.

The police will not be involved in violations of the Code of Conduct that are not criminal. The police will be invited to enter school property if the school district believes a criminal act has occurred on school property. In addition, the police may enter school property or a school function to question or search a student, or to conduct a formal investigation involving students, only if they have a search or an arrest warrant or probable cause to believe a crime has been committed on school property or at a school function.

Before police officials are permitted to question or search a student, the building principal or someone designated by the building principal will try to notify the student's parent to give the parent the opportunity to be present during the questioning or search. The principal or designee will also be present during any police questioning or search of a student on school property or at a school function.

If the district has reason to believe a student has been abused, neglected or maltreated, the district will notify local child protective services and cooperate with them in conducting interviews of students. Such interviews may be conducted on school property and may include school officials. If the nature of the allegations is such that it may be necessary for the student to remove any of his or her clothing in order for the child protective services worker to verify the allegations, the school nurse or other district medical personnel will be present during that portion of the interview. No student will be required to remove his or her clothing in front of an official of the opposite sex or in the presence of fewer than two interviewees.

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given all students under state and federal law while promoting a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment. All district students have the right to participate equally in all district activities. Students have the right to present their version of events relevant to disciplinary procedures. Students can receive a copy of school rules at any time. Students have the right to an explanation of the rules. Along with these rights, all students have a responsibility to know and follow the rules, treat district staff and their fellow students civilly and respectfully and work to the best of their ability.