

Oswego City School District

Code of Conduct (2015)

Plain Language Summary

Introduction

The Oswego City School District (the “District”) and its Board of Education (the “Board”) are committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive, and district personnel may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, school personnel, parents, and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

Accordingly, The Oswego City School District has developed and its Board of Education has adopted a Code of Conduct which governs the conduct of students, all school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending any school functions. The district has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity.

The following is a plain language summary of the District Code of Conduct. This summary is to be used as a guide of the basic parameters of the District Code of Conduct. The complete Code of Conduct may be accessed on the District’s website (www.oswego.org) or by visiting the main office of any District school. Should there be a conflict between the plain language summary and the Code of Conduct, the provisions of the District Code of Conduct shall always prevail.

Student Rights

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all district students have the right to:

1. Take part in all district activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation or any other legally protected status.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.
4. To be protected from bullying, harassment, or discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, disability or any other legally protected status, by employees or students on school property or at a school-sponsored event, function or activity.

Student Responsibilities

All district students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
2. Be familiar with and abide by all district policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
5. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
6. Work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.
7. Ask questions when they do not understand.
8. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
9. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
10. Acknowledge and accept responsibility for their actions.
11. Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.
12. To respect one another and to treat others in the manner that one would want to be treated.
13. To express opinions and ideas in a respectful manner so as not to offend, slander, or restrict, the rights and privileges of others.
14. To report incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying that are experienced or witnessed to the Building Administrator and Dignity Act Coordinator in a timely manner.

Student Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

The Board of Education prohibits attire or appearance bearing an expression or insignia which is obscene or libelous, or which advocates discrimination and harassment including, but not limited to, an individual's actual or perceived race, color, weight, religion, religious practice, national origin, ethnic group, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex or any other legally protected status. In addition, clothing that suggests profanity, is sexually explicit, or promotes the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

Prevention is the cornerstone of the district's effort to address bullying and harassment. In order to implement its anti-bullying prevention program, the Board will designate, at its annual organizational meeting, individuals at each school to act as the Dignity for All Students Act Coordinator (DASA Coordinator). These individuals shall be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex and any other legally protected status.

It is essential that any student who believes he/she has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying or retaliatory behavior, as well as any individual who is aware of and/or who has knowledge of, or witnesses any possible occurrence, immediately report same to any staff member or administrator. The staff member / administrator to whom the report is made (or the staff member / administrator who witnesses or suspects bullying / cyber-bullying behavior) shall document and take appropriate action to address the immediacy of the situation and shall promptly report it.

Prohibited Student Conduct

The Board of Education 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.

The best discipline is self-imposed, and students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own misbehavior, as well as the consequences of their misbehavior.

Student Searches and Interrogations

The board of education is committed to ensuring an atmosphere on school property and at school functions that is safe and orderly. To achieve this kind of environment, any school official authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty on a student may question a student about an alleged violation of law or the district code of conduct. Students are not entitled to any sort of "Miranda"-type warning before being questioned by school officials, nor are school officials required to contact a student's parent before questioning the student. However, school officials will tell all students why they are being questioned.

Disciplinary Measures and Procedures

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. School 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.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations.

Range of Consequences and Penalties

Students who are found to have violated the district's code of conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination. The school personnel identified after each penalty are authorized to impose that penalty, consistent with the student's right to due process.

Prohibition of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student. Corporal punishment of any student by any district employee is strictly forbidden. The district will file all complaints about the use of corporal punishment with the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Commissioner's regulations.

Visitors at School

The board encourages parents and other district citizens to visit the district's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The building principal or his or her designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds.

Public Conduct on School Property

The district is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of an environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. For purposes of this section of the code, "public" shall mean all persons when on school property or attending a school function including students, teachers and district personnel.

The restrictions on public conduct on school property and at school functions contained in this code are not intended to limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. The district recognizes that free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the objectives of the district. The purpose of this code is to maintain public order and prevent abuse of the rights of others.

All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. In addition, all persons on school property or attending a school function are expected to be properly attired for the purpose they are on school property.