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August 2007

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Providing a safe and orderly learning environment is a top priority at all Charles County public schools. To accomplish this, we rely on the support and cooperation of the Charles County Sheriff's Office, our staff, parents and students.

Because school safety is a team effort, we ask that you review this booklet with your child and remind him or her of the expectations and the consequences for breaking the rules. These regulations apply to all school activities including those that occur after regular school hours. The booklet also outlines guidelines for teachers to help them deal consistently with discipline problems.

Please sign, along with your child, the signature page in the center of this booklet and return it to your child's school.

The *Code of Student Conduct* is distributed to all students at the beginning of each school year. Additional copies are available in each school and the information is posted on the school system web site (www.ccboe.com).

If you have any questions, please call your school principal or the Director of Student Services, 301-392-7510 or 301-870-3814.

Sincerely,



James E. Richmond
 Superintendent of Schools

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- use someone else's password or account number;
- copy or download materials in violation of copyright laws;
- attempt to degrade or disrupt system performance or attempt to enter and/or destroy computer systems and files;
- repost personal communications without the author's prior consent;
- make personal purchases or unauthorized orders using the school system's name; and
- download or copy information onto disks or hard drives without prior teacher approval.

U. Self-reporting of possession of prohibited objects/materials

Students sometimes find they have brought something from home in their pocket or bookbag that they didn't mean to bring that might be against the law or school rules to possess on school property. Students who find themselves in possession of any item that is a violation of the rules should immediately turn the object or material into the nearest teacher or the school office. This action may minimize or eliminate the disciplinary consequences.

V. Student driving privileges

Licensed students may drive to and from school after complying with the school requirements to obtain permission. Violations of the driving regulations may result in withdrawal of permission to drive to school. Notification to the school by police of driving violations by students going to or from school may also result in the loss of school driving privileges.

W. Public displays of affection

Public displays of affection are prohibited. The school building and school programs or activities are not the proper time or place for personal-level touching. Verbal reminders will normally be given for the first offense and followed by more serious disciplinary actions, if necessary.

X. Academic Dishonesty/Cheating

Charles County Public Schools students are expected to maintain the highest level of ethical standards. Students are required to exhibit honesty in both verbal and written form. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, photo copying, copying off fellow students, using Internet or other sources without acknowledgement and the use of electronic equipment such as cell phones, blackberries, iPods and other similar devices to cheat, is not acceptable.

Dishonest behavior, when detected, may result in both academic and disciplinary consequences such as academic failure and/or suspension from school.

Y. Filing of False Reports

Students are encouraged to provide information to assist school administrators to carry out their responsibility to provide for the health and safety of the school community and to maintain an orderly school environment. However, students who are found to have intentionally filed false and malicious reports against staff or other students will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences.

Internet contract for elementary school students

- When I am in the computer lab or the media center, I will use the Internet only for school-related projects and visit only the sites assigned by my teachers. I will use all computer equipment with care and respect. I will print only information that my teacher has approved.
- When I use computers in the school, I will be respectful of the computer rights of others. I will not type or use any inappropriate or unacceptable words on the computer. If I encounter any type of inappropriate materials, I will immediately inform my teacher.
- I will limit my use of the Internet in school for education purposes assigned by my teacher. I will not surf the Internet or visit chat rooms. I will never log onto the Internet without permission from a teacher or supervising staff member.

Internet contract for middle and high school students

1. Acceptable uses of the Internet include:
 - searching for information on school-related projects using approved search engines;
 - accessing reference, newspaper or periodical services made available to students by subscription to Charles County Public Schools;
 - downloading information related to schoolwork; and
 - communicating via e-mail for school-related purposes.
2. Students should abide by the following rules when using the Internet and school system networks:
 - the Internet is to be used only for school-related activities;
 - students are responsible for their behavior on the Internet just as they are for their behavior in a classroom or on school property;
 - students will use language acceptable to the workplace and school on the Internet;
 - students will follow the same code of conduct as required by *Charles County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct* and pay special attention to Section P. Offensive Language/Conduct;
 - any harassment encountered on the Internet should not be responded to and should be reported to the teacher; and students will respect the privacy of others.
3. Students may not:
 - use offensive, obscene, libelous, disruptive or inflammatory language, pictures or other material on any computer or network;
 - install their personal service provider's software on school equipment and may not dial into their personal service provider using school equipment;
 - reveal their home phone numbers, addresses or other personal information;

I. Purpose

The *Code of Student Conduct* is published to provide information concerning the guidelines and procedures governing student conduct and discipline in Charles County Public Schools. This document, together with the *Maryland State Guidelines for Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, *Charles County Students' Responsibilities and Rights Handbook*, and the student handbook published by every school, serves to inform each student and his or her parent/guardian(s) of the rights, responsibilities and expectations for all students in Charles County Public Schools (CCPS).

II. Policy

The Board of Education of Charles County expects the guidelines and procedures outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct* to be fairly and equitably applied to all students.

The publication of the *Code of Student Conduct* meets the requirement of the State Board of Education Bylaw (COMAR 13A.08.01.11), which states that each county board of education must adopt a set of rules and regulations designed to maintain order and discipline necessary for effective learning to take place. The main concern of the Board of Education of Charles County is that a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning be maintained and that those students trying to learn might do so free of the influence of those who would disrupt that safe and orderly environment.

This *Code of Student Conduct* is an effort to standardize procedures designed to guarantee the equal rights of every student enrolled in Charles County Public Schools and at the same time clearly define the reasonable expectation that every student accepts responsibility for practicing acceptable behavior.

Each public school in Charles County has a responsibility to develop rules and regulations for that individual school with this code. These school rules are published and explained in a school handbook that is made available to every student enrolled in the school.

III. Definitions

A. School property, school activity and school time

School property is understood to mean all real property owned, leased or under the supervision of the Board of Education, including vehicles owned or leased by the Board of Education.

School activity is defined as any approved activity sponsored by the Board of Education and/or any approved activity sponsored by any Charles County public school on or off Board of Education property. This includes all approved school-and/or system-sponsored trips and activities.

All periods of time expressed in number of days throughout the *Code of*

Student Conduct are deemed to be days of the week in which school is in session. The regular school day or time is meant as the time extending from the moment the Board of Education assumes responsibility for the student until the end of the school day when that responsibility ceases. This is from the time the student steps onto the bus or arrives on school property until departure from the bus or school property after dismissal. The Board of Education is not responsible for individuals on school property who are not participating in an approved school-sponsored program.

Student is defined as an individual registered in the Charles County Public Schools. Staff member is defined as an individual employed or contracted by Charles County Public Schools to carry out assigned duties and responsibilities.

Off-campus conduct may be regulated under CCPS policy, which states students may be disciplined for off-campus conduct that caused or could cause a disruption to the orderly school environment.

B. Misconduct and gross misconduct

Most violations of the *Code of Student Conduct*, school rules and/or common sense rules of behavior are generally classified as misconduct. Infractions classified as misconduct are normally dealt with at the school level by the classroom teacher or the school-level administrator. If incidents of misconduct are frequent or persistent or sufficiently serious, they might be labeled as gross misconduct, which could be dealt with at a level beyond the school. This might include suspension to the Superintendent and involvement by legal authorities.

IV. Disciplinary procedures

The basic tenet of the *Code of Student Conduct* is embodied in the principle that the appropriate reaction to a disciplinary problem or incident is the least extreme reaction that reasonably holds promise of resolving the problem. The concept of discipline is to cause a positive behavioral change by the application of consequences for behavior. In this way, the correction of misconduct becomes part of the learning experience rather than the exacting of retribution or vengeance.

A. Conferencing

Minor and/or first infractions of the school rules usually result in an effort to solve the situation by discussing the misconduct with the student. Often the product of such a conference is an oral agreement or possibly a written contract.

B. Detention

The principal or a teacher may choose to assign after-school detention to students who are guilty of persistent minor disciplinary infractions. After-school detention meets for the period of time specified by the teacher or principal but no

R. Searches

The principal or designee may make a reasonable search of a student on the school premises or on a school-sponsored field trip if the principal or designee has a reasonable belief the student is in possession of an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under Maryland law or a violation of any other state law or rule or regulation of the school system.

Designated teachers may conduct searches on field trips or other school-sponsored activities away from the school under the same guidelines.

Student lockers may be assigned to students for their use but remain the property of the school. The principal and vice principal may search lockers assigned for student use at any time for any reason.

Dogs trained to detect the presence of drugs, weapons or other contrabands may be used on school property when deemed necessary or appropriate by school administrators.

S. Computer, technology misuse

Computer, telecommunications and technology misuse is considered serious misconduct and may result in suspension to the Superintendent with a recommendation for expulsion. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The unauthorized or illegal use of or access to:
 - computers
 - software
 - telecommunications systems
 - related technologies
 - telecommunications devices
2. Any willful act that causes physical, financial or other harm or otherwise disrupts information technology; and
3. Unauthorized use or attempts to use electronic technology to change or alter grades, attendance, any part of any student information record or the system's restricted information base or file.

T. Internet use/contracts

The Internet is used to enhance learning and to provide students the use of resources from all over the world. Charles County Public Schools tries to prevent students from being exposed to objectionable or offensive materials. The staff does its best to guide and monitor student use of the Internet, but staff cannot be held liable if a student accidentally or willfully goes to an objectionable site.

All students who plan to take advantage of Internet connections at school must sign, together with their parents, the Charles County Public Schools Internet contract. The contract is provided to all students as an insert in this booklet. Any student not returning a signed contract will not be allowed to access the Internet at school.

of Maryland. Absences for the following reasons only are deemed lawful by the state:

- a. Death in the immediate family
- b. Student illness, for which the principal may require a physician's certificate
- c. Court summons
- d. Hazardous weather conditions
- e. Work, if approved or sponsored by the school
- f. Observance of a religious holiday
- g. State emergency
- h. Suspension
- i. Lack of authorized transportation
- j. Other circumstances, as determined by school officials.

Students have the right to make up work missed due to lawful absence, but need not be given such an opportunity when work is missed due to an unlawful absence.

3. Unlawful absence

It is a violation of state law to be absent from school for any reason that is not considered lawful. Students who miss school harm not only themselves but they also detract from the educational process of the school.

Students who are unlawfully absent are dealt with according to the steps outlined in the Charles County Public Schools Attendance Procedures. This might include referral to the Department of Juvenile Justice and/or the Charles County State's Attorney Office.

4. Cutting school, cutting class, leaving school grounds

It is difficult to educate students who miss classes and impossible to safeguard their well-being and safety if they are not in school. It is a potentially dangerous situation anytime a student leaves the school grounds without the knowledge and permission of the school administration. Repeated class or school cutting or leaving school without permission is viewed as gross misconduct. Any secondary school student charged with two or more unlawful absences from school and/or from class, with proper notification by the school authorities, will fail the class(es) missed for the nine-week marking period.

Any student who leaves school property without the permission of the school authorities is subject to school suspension for up to 10 days on the first occurrence. Chronic behavior of this type is considered gross misconduct and the student may be suspended to the Superintendent. Students who are unlawfully absent from school may be referred by student services personnel to the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.

longer than one standard class period. Guidelines for detention are developed by each school and distributed to the students as part of the school rules normally contained in the student handbook. Parents must be made aware and approve of the assignment of detention prior to its being held.

C. Removal from class

A teacher may temporarily remove a student from class for conduct that constitutes disobedience. Such behavior is defined as that which substantially or materially disrupts the educational process and includes willful disrespect or defiance of the teacher. In order to maintain effective learning conditions, the school administrator may remove a student from class for a longer period of time or permanently for chronic or more serious misconduct.

D. In-school suspension

Some schools offer in-school suspension programs. In this case, the student is required to complete class work while supervised in a separate area away from the regular classrooms.

In-school suspension is assigned by the school principal or designee. The student's parents are informed of the infraction and of the in-school suspension by the school administration.

E. Short-term suspension (out-of-school)

In more serious cases of misconduct or if the misbehavior persists, the principal may suspend a student from school for a period of up to 10 days.

While serving an out-of-school suspension, the student may not be on school property or participate in any school activity. The suspension is normally terminated by the school administration at the conclusion of a successful conference with the student and the student's parents.

F. Long-term suspension (out-of-school)

In cases involving gross misconduct or cases of chronic misconduct that the efforts of the school and parents have not been able to change, a suspension to the Superintendent may be made by the school principal.

A hearing is then scheduled, consistent with state law and Board of Education policy and procedures and the suspension may be extended for more than 10 days or for a period of time up to the balance of the school year. Makeup work may be done by the student during an extended suspension, if feasible. Students are given an opportunity to make up class work upon return to school at the conclusion of any suspension prior to the end of the school year.

G. Alternative placement

As a result of chronic or gross misconduct, a student may be placed into an alternative educational program. This is done either as a result of the Superintendent's hearing officer's decision or through a placement by the Deputy Superintendent's office in response to a recommendation by the school student support team and the school principal.

One example of possible placement is at one of the Charles County Public Schools alternative programs. This placement can be made in conjunction with or in place of the regular school program.

H. Expulsion from school

In those cases that require suspension to the Superintendent as a result of the serious nature of the infraction, the chronic nature of the case or as a result of Board policy, the hearing officer may expel the student from Charles County Public Schools. Expulsion is the total and complete removal of a student from the services provided by Charles County Public Schools for a period of up to one calendar year or longer. Usually no unearned credits for the year are awarded, and the individual is restricted from entering upon Board of Education property or participating in any Charles County Public Schools activity for the duration of the expulsion.

I. Referral to the legal authorities

When an individual carries out some act or behavior that may be a violation of civil or criminal law, the school system may inform the legal authorities. Charles County Public Schools reserves the right to deal with the violation separately from any actions and/or consequences carried out by the civil authorities.

V. Behavioral infractions

The following is behavior that falls into the category of misconduct or gross misconduct. While not complete, the following list of infractions serves to identify the types of behavior that the Board of Education considers unacceptable. Misconduct in any of these areas on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at a school-sponsored or system-sponsored event will result in disciplinary consequences.

A. Arson, etc.

Infractions involving the act of setting fires, reporting false alarms, interfering with the response to an emergency, possessing or threatening to use dangerous flammable or explosive materials and/or making bomb threats are viewed by Charles County Public Schools as gross misconduct.

1. Arson, attempted arson

Arson is defined as the willful and malicious burning of, or the attempted burning of, any part of any building or property.

This includes any property located within or upon public school-owned premises or property. Such action may constitute a felony, under Section 6-101, et seq., of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

2. Reporting a false alarm, bomb threats, interfering with emergency response

The act of initiating a fire alarm, or initiating a report warning of a fire, or an

approved by the school principal. Students who distribute materials may not substantially interfere with the normal flow of traffic within the school corridors and entrance ways, may not coerce any other person into accepting or rejecting any publication, and may not interfere with normal school activities.

Written, drawn, printed materials or publications that are obscene, libelous, vulgar, offensive or disruptive or which otherwise violate Board policies concerning the distribution of materials or advertising on school grounds, may not be produced, distributed or shown to other individuals on school property, in school vehicles or during school-sponsored activities. Students may not possess, distribute or show pornographic materials.

School-sponsored publications are subject to review by the school principal or by the faculty advisor or teacher assigned to the particular class or publication staff that is producing the publication or in which a student is preparing or editing material for publication. The principal or teacher or faculty advisor may prevent the publication of material for legitimate education-related concerns, such as if the publication or material is (1) poorly written; (2) inadequately researched; (3) biased or prejudiced; (4) vulgar or profane; (5) unsuitable for the intended audience; or (6) obscene, libelous or disruptive.

4. Tattoos/body markings/jewelry

Permanent or temporary tattoos or other body markings that are vulgar, offensive or potentially disruptive are prohibited from being displayed by students on school property or during school activities. Prohibited markings must be covered in such a way that they are not visible by other individuals. Students may be required to remove or cover jewelry, including those used in body piercing, if the jewelry constitutes a danger to the student or others, or which causes substantial disruption to the education environment.

Q. Attendance

All Maryland residents who are five years old by Sept. 1 of the school year and under 21 years shall be admitted free to the public schools. Students have a right to public education in Maryland that cannot be taken away without due process of law.

1. Compulsory school attendance

Coupled with the right to an education is the legal duty of the student to attend regularly and of the parent or guardian to ensure the student's regular attendance. Section 7-301 of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*, requires all children who reside in Maryland and who are between five and 16 years old regularly attend a public school unless the child regularly receives, in some other setting, instruction similar to that which is provided in the state's public schools.

2. Lawful absence

Students may be excused from school attendance by county officials for necessary absences under Section 7-301(b) of the Education Article, *Annotated Code*

includes, but is not limited to, material relating to drugs, alcohol, profanity, obscenity, racism, gang activity and violence.

16. Recreational and noninstructional swimsuit attire must not be disruptive or distracting. Female swimsuits must be one piece and fully cover the chest and buttocks. Male swimsuits must be mid thigh. All swimsuits must remain nontransparent when wet. Swimsuits may not be worn uncovered outside of the pool area.
17. Formal attire must not be disruptive or distracting. Spaghetti straps and sleeveless or strapless formal dresses are acceptable as long as adequate coverage is maintained during activity. Slits in skirts or dresses may not rise more than a hand's width above the knee. Transparent attire is prohibited. Necklines may not fall below mid-sternum. Backless gowns may be permitted at the end-of-year prom, but are inappropriate for all other events including school dances, choral performances and in situations where a student or group of students officially represent the school system.
18. The dress code is in effect at all school-sponsored events on and off campus.

Note: Administrators have the flexibility to exercise their judgment, with the authority of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools or his designee, to determine if a student's attire is considered disruptive or distracting.

P. Offensive language/conduct

1. Language

Certain types of speech and behavior are considered so disruptive that they are prohibited outright. The free speech rights that students have in the school environment are governed by a rule of reason applied to specific acts. For example, the Supreme Court has held that a school official may take disciplinary action against students who use vulgar and offensive language in school, or who promote drug use or other activities that are either illegal or dangerous for students. Such language is not allowed in school or at school-sponsored activities or events.

2. Gestures

Vulgar, offensive and/or disruptive physical gestures to other students or staff members are not allowed. Students who engage in this behavior are guilty of misconduct.

3. Drawn/written material

Any student who wants to distribute a publication that is not officially recognized as a school publication shall submit such publication to the principal of the school for review and approval prior to such distribution.

Written, drawn or printed material or publications may not be distributed on school property during school hours except at times and locations

impending bombing, or other catastrophe without cause, or any interference with the proper response to an emergency by authorities, may be a violation of state law under Section 9-601, et seq., of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. Individuals found guilty of making false fire or bomb reports will be prosecuted and recovery of the cost to the taxpayers by the responding agencies will be sought from the guilty party through the courts.

3. Fireworks/explosives

The possession, use or threatened use of any fireworks, explosives or similar dangerous materials not a part of the authorized program of studies and not approved for possession or use by the principal is prohibited and may be a violation of state law.

B. Assaults, threats and harassment

It is clear that students must feel safe in order to learn in school. Conduct that threatens the safety and sense of well being of others to the detriment of the educational program is not tolerated.

1. Harassment/Bullying/Hazing/Teasing/Intimidation

Charles County Public Schools does not condone or allow the harassment, bullying, hazing, teasing or intimidation of students by others. Hazing is defined as any activity that humiliates, teases, harasses, injures or potentially injures another student as part of a ritual of belonging to any club, team, gang or group. Bullying, hazing or harassment may result in a negative learning environment for those that it is directed against. Therefore, this type of behavior will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken. This might include suspension from school. The school must be able to provide a safe and comfortable environment in order for all students to learn.

Any incidents of this type should be immediately reported to a teacher, school administrator or other school staff. Contact any school or the Department of Student Services to obtain a formal harassment complaint form. Although all complaints concerning harassment and/or bullying are required to be fully investigated, CCPS encourages the use of the formal complaint form.

All harassment/bullying complaints will be investigated by appropriate staff, whether a formal complaint form is filled out or not.

2. Physical and verbal assaults/battery and threats

The Board of Education considers physical or verbal attacks and threats upon fellow students, teachers, administrators and other staff members, and any other individual on school grounds, as serious conduct to be dealt with in a severe manner. This may include threats made against school employees away from school grounds. The principal or victim may, based upon the level of seriousness of the infraction, notify the police, who may take appropriate action under Section 26-101 of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. The police may charge the individual involved with simple assault or a more serious charge.

Physical or verbal attacks upon staff members or any other violation of this section, are considered gross misconduct and are dealt with accordingly.

3. Robbery/shakedown/strong-arm/extortion

Extorting, borrowing or attempting to borrow any money or thing of value from any individual are not allowed unless both parties enter into the agreement freely and without the presence of an implied or expressed threat. These activities may be a violation of Maryland law under Section 3-701 et seq., of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

4. Hate incidents

An individual may not, based upon another person's race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, color, gender, disability or national origin, harass or commit a crime against that person or damage or deface the property of that person. An infraction of this rule may constitute a hate crime as defined under Section 10-301 et seq., of the Criminal Law, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. Any person who violates this rule is subject to suspension to the Superintendent with a recommendation of expulsion from school.

C. Property crimes

1. Destruction of property - vandalism

A student may not willfully destroy or deface any property belonging to the school or another individual. The individual may face appropriate disciplinary action and be required to pay for the costs of the repair or replacement of the damaged property.

2. Theft/larceny

An individual may not knowingly take or obtain property belonging to another without their permission and knowledge.

3. Trespassing on school property

Section 26-102 of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*, states that the principal or designee has the authority to deny access to the buildings or grounds to any person who:

- a. is not a bona fide student at the school and who does not have any lawful business at the school;
- b. is a student of CCPS who is suspended or expelled; and/or
- c. acts in a manner that disrupts or disturbs the normal educational functions of the school.

The law also states that administrative personnel and authorized employees of any public school may require identification from any person who desires to use or enter the premises of the school. Employees of Charles County Public Schools have the authority to ask individuals who have no apparent lawful business or are acting in a disruptive manner to leave the school property.

O. Student dress

Suggestive, provocative or excessively tight clothing is not allowed to be worn to school or to school-sponsored activities. Charles County Public Schools does not allow clothing to be worn on school property or to school-sponsored activities which display messages or images offensive in terms of their reference to sex, race, national origin or religion. Clothing that is judged by the school administration to be disruptive to the orderly school process either by virtue of the design or in the manner in which it is worn is also forbidden.

Members of the Charles County Association of Student Councils, at the request of Superintendent James E. Richmond, developed the following systemwide dress code, as amended and approved by the Board of Education:

1. Shorts are permitted as long as the shorts reach the middle of the thigh, defined as shoulders relaxed and arms straight down alongside the body where fingertips touch the thigh.
2. Skirts are permitted as long as the skirt reaches the middle of the thigh, defined as shoulders relaxed and arms straight down alongside the body where fingertips touch the thigh. Slits in the skirt may not rise more than two inches above fingertips.
3. Sleeveless shirts are permitted as long as at least two-fingers' width of fabric covers both shoulders and the chest area and undergarments are not exposed.
4. Spaghetti straps are not permitted with the exception of formal wear.
5. Midriff area (front and back) must not be visible at any time, even while seated.
6. Undergarments must not be visible at any time.
7. Cleavage must not be visible at any time.
8. Pants must be secured no lower than mid hip and must not cover the front of the shoes while walking.
9. Backless and open-toed shoes with a hard sole are permitted as long as the shoes do not pose a safety hazard. Foam and similar soft-soled shoes, such as flip-flops or beach footwear, are prohibited.
10. Headwear is not permitted. This includes but is not limited to hats, visors, bandannas and hoods. (Exceptions may be granted based on religious and medical reasons with proper verification.)
11. Sunglasses are not permitted except during outdoor activities.
12. Sleepwear and sleepwear-type clothing are not permitted. (Exceptions are granted for certain activities, such as overnight field trips.)
13. Jewelry that poses a safety hazard to the student or other students is not permitted.
14. Sports uniforms that are worn during the school day must conform to the dress code.
15. Clothing that displays or symbolizes any language or material that is inappropriate for school or offensive to any group is not permitted. This

to result in injuries to students and/or staff. Charles County Public Schools considers fighting and frays unacceptable behavior and, in more serious cases, examples of gross misconduct. Participants may be suspended to the Superintendent with a recommendation for extended suspension or expulsion from school, dependent upon the nature of the specific incident and the age or level of understanding and development of the individuals involved.

Fights and frays involving groups or individuals may, if there is evidence of group association, be considered as gang activity and will be dealt with accordingly.

L. Classroom/school disruption

The education of all the students in a class is interrupted each time one student disrupts the class. The classroom teacher has a responsibility to maintain classroom order so that learning is possible. Students who chronically disrupt the orderly learning process are guilty of misconduct and are removed from the class. School disruption is dealt with as misconduct or gross misconduct dependent upon the incident(s) and the level of the student involved.

M. Student demonstrations

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees "the rights of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." These protections of the First Amendment apply to public school students, subject to reasonable time, place and manner limitations, but they may be restricted if the exercise of these rights materially and substantially disrupts the educational environment.

N. Bus misconduct

Bus transportation to and from school is a privilege and not a right. The public school system is not required to transport students to and from school, and students may be denied transportation if they violate the rules set forth by the school and the transportation service. Inappropriate behavior on the school bus is considered serious misconduct. Infractions are handled at the school level. In addition to being subjected to discipline, a student may have his bus riding privileges suspended for a period of time or for the remainder of the school year. Parents are normally notified if there is a bus infraction and of the disciplinary action taken. Charles County Public Schools reserves the right to randomly videotape students on school buses. This might include both audio and video recording. The use of the videotapes helps to monitor student behavior and evaluate bus drivers. The school bus ride is an extension of the school day and the consequences of student misbehavior will result in school disciplinary measures being taken that might include suspension from school.

At the beginning of the year, all students receive a handbook concerning bus rules and regulations.

D. Controlled dangerous substances (CDS) and alcohol

The Board of Education views the illegal possession, use and distribution of drugs as one of the single most important problems facing our community and the school system.

The decision was made to provide a high level of drug prevention and awareness programs at all grade levels and at the same time assume a clear and uncompromising position against the possession, use and distribution of drugs on school property and during school activities.

Students may voluntarily request drug abuse assistance. Confidentiality is extended to the student according to state regulations.

1. Definitions

The definitions of the following terms are defined in Section 5-101 et seq., of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

Anabolic steroid	Marijuana (including seeds)
Controlled dangerous substance	Manufacturing
Counterfeit substance	Narcotic drug
Deliver [distribute]	Opiate
Dispense [distribute]	Possession
Drug	Paraphernalia
Inhalants	Prescription drugs

In this section CDS is defined as including applicable terms above. CDS is also defined as a look-alike of the items listed above that are presented in a manner such that a fellow student might reasonably believe them to be real.

2. Possession, use or distribution of controlled dangerous substances (CDS)

It is illegal for students to possess, use, distribute or intend to distribute any CDS under Section 5-601 et seq., of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. In certain situations, students may be found to have constructive possession of a CDS by having domain over and control of the substance. Students who have in their possession or control any CDS in an amount that indicates a likelihood that they had intended to distribute the CDS may be deemed to have had an intent to distribute the CDS. If a student has violated this section, the principal shall suspend the student with a recommendation to the Superintendent for a long-term suspension or expulsion of the student. The principal shall notify the student's parents and may contact the police. In addition to these actions, if a student is found to be or suspected of being under the influence of a CDS, medical treatment may be sought.

3. Alcohol

In Maryland, the possession of alcohol by persons under age 21 is against the law under Section 10-114 of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. Charles County Public Schools policy prohibits students from using, possessing or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages while under its

jurisdiction or on Charles County Public Schools property during the regular school day. The use, possession or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on school property by students or adults at after-school activities or at activities conducted on the weekends. Students who violate the prohibitions of this rule are subject to suspension for their first offense for up to 10 school days with readmittance only after a successful conference involving the principal, the parent and the student. On occasion of a second offense for violation of the alcohol policy the student is suspended to the Superintendent with a recommendation for expulsion from school.

4. Anabolic steroids

Maryland law prohibits the non-prescription use, possession or distribution of anabolic steroids or human growth hormone. Upon conviction, violators are subject to a fine or imprisonment or both. The school system treats these cases as CDS violations.

E. Tobacco

The Board of Education prohibits the use or possession of tobacco and tobacco paraphernalia by students on school property and at any school-related or school-sponsored activities on or off campus. The use of tobacco is not permitted on school property by students or adults at any time.

1. Definitions

Tobacco includes any and all forms of tobacco that might be consumed either by smoking, chewing or in any other manner including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco and snuff. Tobacco paraphernalia is that equipment that is used to consume tobacco products including, but not limited to, pipes and tobacco pouches or bags.

2. Possession/use of tobacco products

The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in school buildings, on school grounds and in school vehicles at all times. Tobacco regulations are strictly enforced. The following consequences may be applied:

First offense: Students are required to successfully complete an approved smoking education class and sign a contract with the school and their parents/guardians that they will not violate the tobacco policy in the future.

Second offense: Students are suspended from school for five days and must work at least five hours after school on a school cleanup project or work five hours at an approved health care facility.

Third offense: Students are suspended to the Superintendent with a recommendation of expulsion from school. If found guilty of a third violation of the Charles County Public Schools tobacco policy, the student is removed from the regular day school program.

F. Cell phones and pagers

Except as provided in this rule, students may not possess or use cell phones, pagers, beepers, two-way radios, or any other portable electronic communication

tim must interact in order to perform school duties where the result of that attention is that the victim's responses are restrained by fear of reprisals. Sexual harassment may occur: male to female, male to male, female to female or female to male.

2. Procedure

When possible, students who feel they are the victims of sexual harassment should report suspected sexual harassment to the principal or the school Title IX Coordinator or the Title IX Coordinator for Charles County Public Schools.

Any student who is found to be responsible for sexual harassment is subject to appropriate disciplinary action that may include counseling, suspension or expulsion. The severity of the disciplinary action is based upon the circumstances of the infraction.

J. Gang Activity

1. Definition

A gang is defined as a group of three or more individuals who associate on a continued basis for the purpose of committing criminal acts.

2. Behavior, colors, dress, signs and symbols

Group (gang) behavior that poses a threat to individual students or other groups of students or disrupts the orderly school process is not tolerated by Charles County Public Schools.

Gang colors, gang signs or symbols and gang dress are not allowed on school property or at school-sponsored activities.

The courts have made it clear that schools may restrict the wearing of gang symbols. Schools may also restrict certain types of dress that involve issues such as safety or discipline.

Students found to be participating in gang activities are suspended from school until a successful readmission conference involving their parents/guardians can be held. They may be suspended to the Superintendent with a recommendation for extended suspension or expulsion dependent upon the nature of the activity and the level of the student(s) involved.

The police may be notified of any suspected gang activity by the school administration. Any gang activity coupled with gross misconduct on school property or during a school-sponsored activity will result in expulsion from school.

K. Fighting/Frays

1. Definition

Verbal or physical combat by two or more individuals that represents a safety issue and/or a disruptive incident is classified as fighting. Conflicts involving a group of individuals that become or threaten to become physical in nature are defined as frays.

2. Procedure

Fighting and frays are disruptive to the school program and have the potential

a reasonable person should realize constitutes a danger to the safety of other students such as tools, chemicals, hardware, and/or toxic materials.

H. Sex offenses

Any misconduct of a sexual nature towards another student or staff member is viewed as potentially serious misconduct dependent upon the age and level of development of the student in question. Disciplinary measures include notification of the parents of the students involved. In most cases, the student is suspended and the appropriate legal authorities are notified in order that charges may be filed.

1. Definitions

Sex offenses are defined by Maryland law, under Section 3-301 et seq., and Section 11-107 (indecent exposure) of the Criminal Law Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

2. Procedure

The school administrator investigates alleged sex offenses, taking into consideration the age and developmental level of the students involved. Parents of the individuals involved are informed and, if appropriate, the legal authorities are contacted. Depending upon the level of misconduct, students guilty of violating the rules are suspended from school for up to 10 days or to the Superintendent with a recommendation for an extended suspension or expulsion from school.

I. Sexual harassment

Charles County Public Schools does not condone or accept harassment by an individual toward another.

1. Definition

Sexual harassment is the verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a student that denies, limits, differentiates or conditions the provisions of aid, benefits, services or treatment protected under Title IX of the Education Act, 1972. Such unlawful behaviors may include:

- verbal comments such as derogatory statements, slurs or unwanted sexual advancements, invitations or comments;
- visual displays such as derogatory posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with the educational program of a student because of his/her sex or race or any other protected basis;
- retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment;
- rape or attempted rape; and
- other sexual criminal offenses.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual attention on a continuing basis from peers or any unwanted sexual attention from anyone with whom the vic-

devices on school property, on school buses or school-chartered vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activity before, during or after the school day.

Elementary and middle school students may not possess or use cell phones on school property except under the following conditions:

- A student may possess and use a cell phone, pager, beeper, two-way radio, or other portable electronic communication device if that student's parent or guardian receives approval from the school principal for a specific purpose. At no time will permission for cell phone possession or use be granted for socializing or other non-essential purposes.
- A student may possess and use a cell phone while attending and not participating in any event held on school grounds after school hours and open to the general public.

High school students may not possess or use cell phones on school property except under the following conditions:

- Cell phones must not be visible and must be powered off at all times during the school day and either in the school building, or while aboard a school bus or other school-sponsored vehicle, or during after-school activities. A cell phone in the vibrate or other non-audible mode is not considered "off."
- Cell phones may be used after school hours, but not during a time when the student is either attending a school-sponsored activity not open to the general public, or participating in a school-sponsored activity, whether on or off school grounds. A student may possess and use a cell phone while attending and not participating in any event held on school grounds after school hours and open to the general public.
- In order to briefly communicate with the student's parent/guardian/caregiver, a cell phone may be used while attending or traveling to or from a school-sponsored activity on a school bus or other school vehicle, as long as the supervising teacher/coach has granted the student permission. At no time will permission for cell phone use be granted for socializing or other non-essential purposes.
- A student may possess and use a cell phone if that student's parent or guardian receives approval from the school principal for a specific purpose. At no time will permission for cell phone possession or use be granted for socializing or other non-essential purposes.

The possession or use of a cell phone must not cause any disruption to the school setting at any time.

Cell phones with camera functions must not be used to take or transmit any image at any time, even if the use of the cell phone is otherwise permitted.

It is the intent of the Superintendent to ensure cell phone possession does not disrupt the learning environment, after-school activities, or the safe transportation of students. Therefore, students found to be in violation of this rule are subject to the following disciplinary action:

- Upon the first offense for middle and high school students the student shall be warned; the student's parent or guardian shall be notified; and the cell phone or other portable electronic communication device shall be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian, upon request, after a successful conference with the appropriate school administrator.
- Upon the second offense for middle and high school students the student shall be suspended out-of-school for three days; the student's parent or guardian shall be notified; and the cell phone or other portable electronic communication device shall be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian, upon request, after a successful re-admittance conference with the appropriate school administrator.
- Upon the third offense for middle and high school students the student shall be suspended to the Superintendent; the student's parent or guardian shall be notified; the cell phone or other portable electronic communication device shall be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian, upon request, after a successful conference with the Superintendent's hearing officer; and the Superintendent's hearing officer may remove the privilege of possession and use of cell phones or other portable electronic communication devices.
- Upon the first offense for elementary school students the student shall be warned; the student's parent or guardian shall be notified; and the cell phone or other portable electronic communication device shall be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian, upon request, after a successful conference with the appropriate school administrator.
- Upon the second offense for elementary school students the student shall be suspended out-of-school for one day; the student's parent or guardian shall be notified; and the cell phone or other portable electronic communication device shall be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian, upon request, after a successful re-admittance conference with the appropriate school administrator.
- Upon the third offense for elementary school students the student shall be suspended out-of-school for three days; the student's parent or guardian shall be notified; and the cell phone or other portable electronic communication device shall be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian, upon request, after a successful re-admittance conference with the appropriate school administrator.

The Charles County public school system is not responsible for the loss, theft, damage, or destruction of any cell phone, pager, beeper, two-way radio, or other portable communication device, whether allowed or prohibited by this policy.

G. Weapons

The Board of Education prohibits students from possessing weapons of any kind for any reason, whether for offensive use, self-protection or any other reason.

1. Definitions

The Board of Education prohibits any weapon defined by state law and any object that is used, is threatened to be used, or is designed and readily capable of being used as a weapon to inflict injury, including knives.

Weapons as defined by state law include:

Dirk knife	Bowie knife	Switchblade knife
Star knife	Sand club	Metal knuckles
Razor	Nunchaku	Stun guns
Tear gas	Pepper spray/mace	Pellet guns
Starter pistols	BB guns	Look-a-like guns

Handguns, rifles, BB guns and shotguns of any type or design are considered weapons as defined by the Board of Education and are forbidden on school property including inside motor vehicles on school property.

Live ammunition is defined as any device or any part of such a device for propelling a projectile from a gun. This includes the projectile and the explosive material or substance. Weapons also include all types of gases such as tear gas, mace and pepper gas as well as devices manufactured or designed to stun individuals by rendering a high voltage electrical shock. In the event that a common object, designed for innocent purpose, is used as a weapon or threatened to be used as a weapon by a student against another individual, the object would fulfill the definition of a weapon and the appropriate procedure would be followed.

2. Ammunition, etc.

It is a violation to possess any live ammunition on Board of Education property. Possession of live ammunition on Board of Education property may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

3. Possession and/or use

The Board of Education views the possession and/or use of a weapon as a serious example of gross misconduct and is grounds for immediate suspension to the Superintendent with a recommendation for expulsion from school. The parents are notified and police are contacted.

4. Facsimile/replica weapons

Facsimile, replica or collector weapons, including starter pistols, are permissible on school property for educational purposes only with the knowledge and special permission of the school principal. Otherwise, facsimile/replica weapons and look-a-like weapons are prohibited.

5. Laser lights/laser pointers

Student possession and/or use of objects capable of emitting laser light for whatever purpose is prohibited on school property and at school activities unless approved by the school principal.

6. Dangerous materials

Students are prohibited from bringing or possessing any item or material that

August 2007

Board of Education of Charles County
 P.O. Box 2770
 La Plata, Maryland 20646

Dear Parents and Students:

Your signature below indicates that you have reviewed the contents of this booklet that explains certain Board of Education policies and rules and that you understand the policies and the consequences of the violations. Please take the time to understand the importance of knowing and following the rules pertaining to the following subjects in particular:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Smoking | Controlled Dangerous Substances |
| Theft | Alcoholic Beverages |
| Attendance | Weapons |
| Assaults/Fighting | Internet Use Contracts |
| Verbal threats toward staff/physical attacks on staff members | |

 Signature of Student

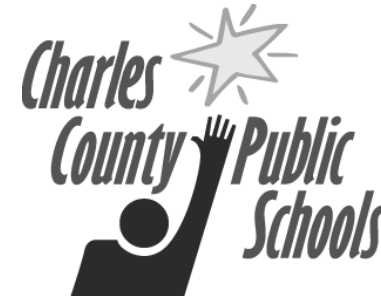
 Signature of Parent/Guardian

 School Student Attends

 Grade

 Teacher

 Date Signed



Charles County Public Schools
Code of Student Conduct Insert
2007-2008

This center pullout page serves several purposes. We want to emphasize the importance for you, as a parent, to sit down with your child(ren) and review this booklet, using age-appropriate words and explanations. This insert also includes the school system's Internet contract. This is an opportunity to communicate your expectations for behavior, as well as ours, to your child(ren). In our experience, when the parents and the schools are saying the same thing and setting the same expectations for behavior, problems, as a rule, don't become as serious.

Please review the new rules regarding cell phones listed on pages 11 and 12. Please sign the last page of this insert, pull it out of the booklet, and return it to your child's school so that we may know that you have received and read it.

If you have any questions or comments, please call 301-934-7326. We want the same thing you do; safe and happy children in an environment that allows them to receive the highest quality education possible.

A copy of the *Code of Conduct* is posted on the school system web site (www.ccboe.com) for easy, year-round reference and access.

Computer misuse

Recently, the media has devoted time to the issue of computer misuse by children and young people. Charles County Public Schools has made every attempt to do three things: (1) Educate our students about the proper and acceptable ways to use computers; (2) Use the following regulations in a contract form to guide student computer use; and (3) Use the best screening software available to filter out as many inappropriate sites as possible.

Please examine the contracts and discuss them with your child(ren). They will be asked to agree to these regulations prior to being allowed to use a school system computer.

We are proud of our technology and want to provide the most educational benefits possible.

The Internet contracts are printed below as well as on pages 21-23 of this booklet for future reference. Other rules regarding computer use can also be found on page 21.

Internet contract for elementary school students

- When I am in the computer lab or the media center, I will use the Internet only for school-related projects and visit only the sites assigned by my teachers. I will use all computer equipment with care and respect. I will print only information that my teacher has approved.
- When I use computers in the school, I will be respectful of the computer rights of others. I will not type or use any inappropriate or unacceptable words on the computer. If I encounter any type of inappropriate materials, I will immediately inform my teacher.
- I will limit my use of the Internet in school for education purposes assigned by my teacher. I will not "surf" the Internet or visit "chat rooms."
- I will never log onto the Internet without permission from a teacher or supervising staff member.

Internet contract for middle and high school students

1. Acceptable uses of the Internet include:
 - searching for information on school-related projects using approved search engines;
 - accessing reference, newspaper or periodical services made available to students by subscription to Charles County Public Schools;
 - downloading information related to schoolwork; and
 - communicating via e-mail for school-related purposes.
2. Students should abide by the following rules when using the Internet and school system networks:
 - the Internet is to be used only for school-related activities;
 - students are responsible for their behavior on the Internet just as they are for their behavior in a classroom or on school property;
 - students will use language acceptable to the workplace and school on the Internet;
 - students will follow the same code of conduct as required by *Charles County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct* and pay special attention to Section P. Offensive Language/Conduct;
 - any harassment encountered on the Internet should not be responded to and should be reported to the teacher; and students will respect the privacy of others.
3. Students may not:
 - use offensive, obscene, libelous, disruptive or inflammatory language, pictures or other material on any computer or network;
 - install their personal service provider's software on school equipment and may not dial into their personal service provider using school equipment;
 - reveal their home phone numbers, addresses or other personal information;
 - use someone else's password or account number;
 - copy or download materials in violation of copyright laws;
 - attempt to degrade or disrupt system performance or attempt to enter and/or destroy computer systems and files;
 - repost personal communications without the author's prior consent;
 - make personal purchases or unauthorized orders using the school system's name; and
 - download or copy information onto disks or hard drives without prior teacher approval.