



DISCIPLINE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Charles County Public Schools

April 29, 2019

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/ adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

Committee's Purpose: To Provide Input for Systemic Changes to the School System's Discipline Policies and the Code Of Student Conduct

- 6 meetings held starting March 14 to April 17
- 41 members: 2 board members, 1 bus contractor, 1 bus driver, 2 NAACP members, 8 parents, 2 Starkey staff, 4 EACC members, 6 administrators, 4 students, 8 teachers
- Items reviewed: Transportation rules, dress code, personal electronic devices, levels of response, Fresh Start Academy

School Board Policy

The behavior sections of the Code of Student Conduct are driven by discipline standards expressed in School Board Policy. The following policies are specific to the three sections of the Code of Conduct the Discipline Committee worked on:

- Transportation: Policy #3797
- Dress Code: Policy #5155
- Cell Phones/Electronic Devices: Policy #5157.8

Excerpts from Board Policy

- **Transportation (# 3793)**—The Superintendent shall establish rules and procedures for maintaining order, reporting misbehavior and the reporting of accidents. The school bus driver is in full charge of the school bus and the students, except in the presence of a teacher or school administrator, who shall be in charge of the students.
- **Dress Code (#5155)**—The Superintendent shall develop a student dress code, to be approved by the Board of Education of Charles County, that ensures a safe environment conducive to learning. The Superintendent may involve staff, students, parents/guardians, and other community members in the development of the student dress code and shall review the student dress code on a regular basis.
- **Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Devices (#5157.8)**—Except as provided in the Superintendent's Rules, students may not possess or use cell phones or any other personal electronic communication devices on school property, on school buses or school-chartered vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activity before, during or after the school day, except that a student may possess and use a cell phone or other personal electronic devices while attending and not participating in any event held on school grounds after school hours and open to the general public.

Proposed Transportation Changes

- Use of positive language in rules, responsibilities and expectations
- Explanation of driver training and certification requirements
- Safety training for students
- Bus rules for cell phone/personal electronic devices to coincide with in-school allowances
- Removal of separate levels of response for transportation

Proposed Dress Code Changes

- Length of shorts, skirts, slits in skirts or dresses would be measured by fists alongside body, not fingertips
- Ripped jeans permitted as long as holes fall below shorts length criteria, are limited to the front, and do not exceed 3 inches in diameter
- Leggings permitted with acceptable top (same length as shorts or skirts)
- Hats, headwear, and hoodies permitted but must allow face and ears to be visible at all times
- Other language changed to reflect a more gender-neutral perspective

Proposed Personal Electronic Device Changes

- **Elementary**—Students may only bring their phone or device, with a written request from the parent or guardian for a specific (non-social) purpose, and upon receipt of written approval from the principal
- **Middle**—Students may bring their phone or device but once school begins must keep them powered completely off (not on vibrate or silent mode) and in a non-visible, secure location throughout the entirety of each school day.
- **High**—Students may bring their phone or device but once school begins must keep them powered completely off (not on vibrate or silent mode) and they must remain in a non-visible, secure location, with the exception of lunch time or during an approved activity period.
- **Bus**—All students may use their phone or device on the bus or school-chartered vehicle, per their school level approval, but it must not be disruptive or cause a distraction to the driver at any time

Levels of Response

- Include transportation violations/consequences
- Include all cell phone/personal electronic device violations/consequences under “Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics”
- Extend response level of “Camera/Video/Audio Misuse” to Level 5
- Adjust the first sub-section of the “False Alarm/Bomb Threat category to read as follows: Initiating a warning of a fire or other catastrophe without cause (e.g., pulling a fire alarm, misusing 911, or posting/sharing texts or social media messages that incite fear or cause a disruption to school activities)