

Code of Conduct Summary

2024-2025

The Mission Statement for our school district states that:

“The New Paltz Central School District exists for the children of the community. The focus of its programs and activities is the commitment to measured excellence and continuous growth and development for all.”

To achieve that mission, the Board strives to provide welcoming, safe, and orderly schools for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. The Board expects that all members of the school community will behave with personal responsibility, give mutual respect, and accept accountability for their actions.

The Board recognizes that to maintain such an environment, we must all live within certain boundaries and that inappropriate action by one person can infringe upon the rights of another. When conflicts arise, we are committed to nonviolent resolutions that encourage personal growth, responsibility and that treat each individual with respect and dignity.

This Code of Conduct describes the behavior that the Board expects from all members of the school community, identifies interventions if those standards are not met, and establishes procedures to ensure that discipline, when necessary, is prompt, fair and effective. New Paltz Central School District promotes a preventive, positive approach to discipline rather than focusing exclusively on “punishment.” We respond to misbehavior with interventions and consequences aimed at teaching alternative expected positive behaviors, understanding, and addressing the root causes of the behavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students’ needs, keeping students safe and keeping students in school.

The Board supports a restorative approach that emphasizes relationships and community coexisting with rules and regulations. Restorative discipline helps students understand the impact of their behavior both on themselves and others. Students also learn social and emotional skills to help them respond differently in the future. Using restorative discipline, we resolve conflicts, encourage our school community members to take responsibility for their behavior, repair any harm done, restore relationships, and reintegrate students into the school community.

We are committed to applying school discipline policies and practices in a fair and equitable manner so as not to disproportionately impact students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ students, students with limited English proficiency, or other at-risk students that have been historically marginalized in schools.

The full Code of Conduct can be found at www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us.

Section I of the Code of Conduct is an introduction to what information one will find in the Code of Conduct. It lists the purpose of the code as well as the beliefs about the children, learning, and discipline that the Code of Conduct committee followed to create the plan.

Section II of the Code of Conduct lists the rights and responsibilities of members of the constituent groups associated with the school, including students, parents/guardians, school

personnel, and the Board of Education members. The code makes it clear that expectations exist for everyone and that everyone has rights to which they are entitled.

Section III of the Code of Conduct deals specifically with New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). DASA seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. The Board of Education recognizes that a learning environment that is safe and supportive can increase student attendance, enhance student social emotional well-being, and improve academic achievement. A student's ability to learn and achieve high academic standards, and a school's ability to educate students, is compromised by incidents of discrimination or harassment, including but not limited to bullying, taunting, hazing and intimidation. You can read this section of the Code of Conduct to learn more about what can be done if you or another individual experience an inappropriate treatment like one of those described above.

Section IV deals with behavior concerns, violations, interventions, and accountability. This section of the Code of Conduct helps determine how to best address behaviors that take away from a safe and welcoming school. In particular, this section of the Code of Conduct lists different types of inappropriate behaviors and specific responses and interventions that would be appropriate when these behaviors occur. These lists of behaviors and responses/interventions are sorted by grade levels as the appropriateness of certain behaviors and responses are different for younger students and older students. Appropriate responses for students with disabilities who commit inappropriate behaviors are also discussed in this section.

Also included in **Section IV** is the school Dress Code. Specifically, the Dress Code says:

1. Certain body parts must be covered at all times. Clothes must be worn so that genitals, buttocks, and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric. All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories must meet these basic principles.
2. All attire must support a safe learning environment for all.

Classes that include attire as part of the curriculum, may include assignment-specific attire, but should not focus on covering bodies in a specific way or promoting culturally-specific attire.

Must wear attire that is consistent with the Basic Principles as specified previously in this document:

- Shirt (with fabric in the front, back and the sides under the arms), AND
- Pants/jeans/skirt or the equivalent (for example, sweatpants, leggings, shorts) OR
- Dresses (with fabric in the front, back and sides under the arms), and must follow the basic principle that certain body parts must be covered at all times (genitals, buttocks, and nipples must be fully covered with opaque fabric)
- Shoes, including, but not limited to, boots, slides, flip flops, heels.

May wear attire that is consistent with the Basic Principles as specified previously in this document:

- Hats as long as the entire face is visible
- Cultural or religious headwear or cultural or religious attire
- Hoodie sweatshirts, as long as entire face is visible to school staff (except for cloth/paper masks being worn for medical reasons)
- Fitted pants, including leggings, yoga pants and skinny jeans

- Pajamas, consistent with Basic Principles and Goals, set forth above
- Ripped jeans as long as underwear and buttocks are not exposed
- Tank tops, including spaghetti straps and tube tops
- Athletic attire
- Visible waistbands on undergarments or visible straps on undergarments worn under clothing.

The following, although not an exhaustive listing, are deemed to be inappropriate, either because they interfere with the health and safety of our students or staff, or are disruptive to the educational process.

- Violent language or images on clothing
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol on clothing
- Hate speech, profanity or pornography on clothing
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or historically marginalized group on clothing. Swimsuits, except as required in class or athletic practice/performance
- Accessories that could be dangerous or can be used as a weapon
- Any item that obscures the face or ears, except as a religious observance

Section IV includes information about the school's cell phone policy and student use of chromebooks. Cell phones are not allowed to be used in Duzine, Lenape, or the Middle School. In the High School, the following statements about cell phone use are given:

Classroom teachers and study hall teachers have the right to create and enforce cell phone policies in their classrooms. Cell phone limitations in the classroom may range from a complete ban on cell phones to allowing the use of cell phones for educational purposes. Cell phones should not be used for entertainment purposes in classes or in study halls. Students may not use cell phones in the hallways or in the lavatories while class is in session. Special permission to use the phone outside of the room during class may be granted by the teacher, in case of emergency.

Teachers must clearly explain their classroom cell phone policies and include them on their course syllabi so that students and parents fully understand them. Classroom policies and procedures should include personal headphone (wireless or not) use in their classroom. Students are required to follow all classroom cell phone policies. Teachers and study hall monitors have the right to confiscate cell phones that are being used in violation of classroom rules.

Students may use cell phones between periods, during lunch, before and after school, and on school transportation. If listening to music with headphones or earbuds, one of the individual's ears must remain unblocked at all times so that they can hear people talking to them and so that they can hear safety announcements.

An important part of **Section IV** is the High School/Middle School Extracurricular Guidelines. These guidelines can also be found in the High School Student Handbook. They outline the effects of student attendance, tardiness, behavior, and academics on a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular events including interscholastic sports.

Section V includes information about possible interventions as a result of inappropriate behavior including detention, suspension from transportation, in-school suspension, removal from a particular class, out of school suspension, long-term suspension, counseling, and PINS Diversion.

Section VI gives information about public conduct on school property. The District is committed to providing an orderly, respectful and safe environment that is conducive to learning. All persons on school property or attending a school function, whether on or off of school property, are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. These expectations are clearly listed in this section.

Section VII of the Code of Conduct discusses three particular school policies. The first is policy 7110-Comprehensive Student Attendance. Among other things, this policy explains why it is extremely important for students to come to school every day and to be on time for school. This policy defines chronically absent students as students who miss more than 20 days in a school year. Excused and unexcused absences will both count toward the 20 absence limit (or 10 for a half year course). The District will send home periodic letters to the parents/legal guardians of chronically absent students notifying them of the days of absence. Students and their parents/legal guardians who are nearing the 20 or 10 absent limits will be invited to an attendance conference where all extenuating circumstances, including doctor's notes will be considered. Policy 7110 is included, in its entirety, at the end of the Code of Conduct.

Section VII also gives information about student searches and interviews. This policy explains who can perform a search of student property and why a search would be appropriate. Information about the role of law enforcement in searches and interviews is described. This section also comments on the district's expectations of school visitors.

The final portion of **Section VII** of the Code of Conduct explains the requirements for periodic updates of the Code of Conduct and the rights of the members of all constituent groups to review and comment upon the code before it is officially approved by the school board.

Section VIII of the Code of Conduct lists the glossary of important terms used in the document.