

Highlights of Changes to Policies and Implementation Procedures: 2024-25 School Year

HCPSS Ethics Regulations

Effective: May 8, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education received modified HCPSS Ethics Regulations on May 8, 2025. The Ethics Regulations were modified by adding personal phone number and address to the material that is redacted if the Financial Disclosure Statement is asked to be provided to an outside third party.

The Ethics Regulations were issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 35 on May 13, 2025.

Policy 1025 Title IX Sexual Harassment

Effective: September 12, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education approved suspending Policy 1025 Title IX Sexual Harassment on September 12, 2024. The policy is inconsistent with the federal regulation and ongoing litigation which impacted federal regulation as well as policy. HCPSS will continue to address potential sexual discrimination in accordance with Policy 1020 Sexual Harassment, Sexual Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct. An updated implementation procedure will be released prior to the start of the upcoming school year.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 1080 Educational Equity

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 1080 Educational Equity on March 13, 2025. Revisions to the policy include promoting student voice and providing materials and resources to support youth in becoming active and engaged participants in their academic experience; identifying and removing institutional barriers that could prevent students from equitable accessing educational, athletics, and extracurricular opportunities in all schools; prohibiting exclusion from educational, extracurricular opportunities, and services on the bases of a student's social identifiers and addressing violations through Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline; and build and nurture healthy relationships with students, HCPSS employees, and community, through a restorative culture and student-centered practices.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 2070 Ethics

Effective: November 7, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 2070 Ethics on November 7, 2024. The policy was modified to update language within the policy to align with current best practices and to update the list of employees and appointed officials required submit a financial disclosure in the Ethics Regulations.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 21 on January 7, 2025.

Policy 4000 Grants

Effective: December 12, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 4000 Grants on December 12, 2024. Revisions to the policy include that principals will serve as grant managers for school-based grants and will ensure grants are accounted for and used for legitimate education-related purposes; any equipment, goods, or materials purchased with grant funds are solely the property of HCPSS and must remain with the school or facility original to the grant until the end of its useful life; and the Grants Office will provide central coordination to the grants management process.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 21 on January 7, 2025.

Policy 4050 Procurement of Goods and/or Services

Effective: July 11, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 4050 Procurement of Goods and/or Services on July 11, 2024. The policy was modified due to changes in COMAR and to include language regarding school bus contracts that are currently included in Policy 5220 School Bus Contracts and School Bus Personnel.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 4 on July 22, 2024.

Policy 5100 Health Services

Effective: June 12, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 5100 Health Services on June 12, 2025. The policy was modified to update language regarding emergency medication procedures to comply with COMAR regulations.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 37 on June 16, 2025.

Policy 5200 Student Transportation

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 5200 Student Transportation on June 6, 2024. Revisions to the policy include providing transportation to all eligible students who opt in that attend public schools; updates the measured distance between a student's bona fide residence and their home school for all grades; students may be required to walk more than a half mile where it is unsafe or not feasible to establish a school bus stop within a half mile of a student's bona fide residence; and students are expected to board and exit the bus from the same bus stop location, unless otherwise directed or permitted by a school-based administrator.

Additionally, the Board adopted modifications to Policy 5200 Student Transportation on June 12, 2025. The policy was modified to remove the requirement that students must opt in to be eligible for transportation.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 5220 School Bus Contracts and School Bus Personnel

Effective: July 11, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education approved rescinding Policy 5220 School Bus Contracts and School Bus Personnel on July 11, 2024. Language regarding school bus contracts was incorporated into Policy 4050 School Bus Contracts and School Bus Personnel.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 4 on July 22, 2024.

Policy 7060 Intellectual Property and Royalties

Effective: May 8, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 7060 Intellectual Property and Royalties on May 8, 2025. The policy was modified to update language and definitions within the policy and to align with current best practices.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 35 on May 13, 2025.

Policy 7100 Family and Medical Leave

Effective: February 13, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 7100 Family and Medical Leave on February 13, 2025. The policy was modified to add more comprehensive language regarding FMLA, add the requirement of meeting a minimum number of hours worked to be eligible, and update language to align with current best practices.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 26 on March 12, 2025.

Policy 8040 Selection of Instructional Resources

Effective: May 8, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education received modified Policy 8040 Selection of Instructional Materials, implementation procedures on May 8, 2025. The implementation procedures were modified to provide more clarity related to initiating a resource reevaluation review by the committee and to ensure greater community representation on the committee.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 35 on May 13, 2025.

Policy 8080 Responsible Use of Technology, Digital Tools, and Social Media

Effective: March 3, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 8080 Responsible Use of Technology, Digital Tools, and Social Media on January 30, 2025. The policy was modified to include language intended to reduce the use of personal devices by students during the student day. Modifications include language that states that students must keep personal technology devices away and silenced during the student day; smart watches may be worn during the student day but may not distract instruction or be used for reasons other than checking the time; a personal technology device may be permitted during a school-sponsored field trip in limited situations such as capturing a picture or video or when contacting a parent is necessary; use of a personal device in rare instances may be authorized such as an emergency for communication purposes, and when allowed as part of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Health Plan; and personal laptops may be used for instructional activities in high school.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 25 on March 5, 2025.

Policy 9000 Student Residency, Eligibility, Enrollment and Assignment

Effective: January 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 9000 Student Residency, Eligibility, Enrollment and Assignment on October 10, 2024. Modifications were to update language and definitions within the policy to align with current best practices.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 21 on January 7, 2025.

Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504

Effective: April 29, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education received modified Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504, implementation procedures on April 29, 2025. The implementation procedures were modified to ensure that students' Section 504 Plans are reviewed in a timely manner without burdening parents and school staff.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 33 on April 30, 2025.

Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities on November 7, 2024. Revisions to the policy include that for Interscholastic Athletics, eligibility of all returning students for Fall sports is determined by the final marking period grades of the preceding June unless eligibility is achieved through the completion of summer school courses; for high school, a full-time student earns academic eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities by maintaining a 2.0 grade-point average (GPA), calculated using credit or non-credit courses, with no more than two failing grades. Eligibility is based on determination of marking period grades; students making progress towards graduation, by being promoted from the prior grade level in the summer before the current school year, who are not eligible, may receive a one-time waiver to participate in any one season of athletics or extracurriculars. They must complete a request including why they are ineligible and what they will do to become eligible in the future. HCPSS staff will review the request and make plans with the student and their parents for one time eligibility; students with less than a 2.0 GPA with no more than two failing grades for the final marking period may attend summer school and raise the appropriate grade and the GPA to gain eligibility for fall interscholastic athletics and other extracurricular activities.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 9080 Interscholastic Athletic Program

Effective: December 12, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 9080 Interscholastic Athletic Program on December 12, 2024. The policy was modified to update language with the policy and implementation procedures to align with current best practices.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 21 on January 7, 2025.

Policy 9090 Wellness Through Nutrition and Physical Activity

Effective: December 12, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education received modified Policy 9090 Wellness Through Nutrition and Physical Activity, implementation procedures on December 12, 2024. The implementation procedures were modified to update language with the policy and implementation procedures to align with current best practices.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 21 on January 7, 2025.

Policy 9200 Student Discipline

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9200 Student Discipline on June 12, 2025. The policy standards were reorganized adding new sections for Disciplinary Consequences/Leveled Responses, In-School Intervention (ISI), Alternative Educational Setting, and Annual Data and Reporting. Revisions to the policy include all search and seizures conducted on school property will take place in accordance with Section 7-308 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Policy 9020 Student's Rights and Responsibilities, and Policy 9260 Student Search and Seizure; a principal/designee may suspend a student enrolled in grades 3 through 12 for up to ten (10) consecutive school days for each offense; for students in grades PreK-grade 2, a principal/designee may suspend a student for up to no more than five (5) days per offense only when the school administration, in consultation with a school psychologist or other mental health professional, determines that a student is an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or HCPSS employees that cannot be reduced or eliminated through intervention and supports; for students in grades PreK-grade 2, the Superintendent/designee may expel a student from school only if required by federal law; at the request of a principal, the Superintendent/designee may suspend a student enrolled in grades 3 through 12 for more than ten (10) school days or expel the student for 45 school days or more; expulsion may occur when the Superintendent/designee has determined that the student's return to school prior to the completion of the expulsion period would pose an imminent threat of serious harm to other students, HCPSS employees, or others; the Superintendent/designee will limit the duration of the suspension to the shortest period practicable; and HCPSS will provide the suspended student with comparable educational services and appropriate behavioral support services to promote successful return to the student's regular academic program; and the HCPSS will provide training and resources to enable HCPSS employees to implement this policy.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 9250 Weapons

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9250 Weapons on April 9, 2025. Revisions to the policy include that it is a violation of this policy for any person to carry or possess any weapon on school property, in a vehicle located on school property, or at school-related activities other than a law enforcement agent in the regular course of the agent's duty. Additionally, an armored car service hired by the Board who has been expressly authorized in writing by the Superintendent; unless used to threaten or harm another, tools and materials used by students or HCPSS employees in their normal duties and as part of instructional activities, are not considered weapons; possession of a weapon by a third party on school grounds will result in referral to Howard County Police Department (HCPD) to address the violation; and the school-based administrator, supervisor, or designee will annually notify all students, HCPSS employees, parents, and third parties of the standards included in this policy.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 9290 Criminal Organizations, Criminal Organization Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Behavior

(formerly Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Delinquent Group Behavior)

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9290 Criminal Organizations, Criminal Organization Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Behavior on February 13, 2025. References to gangs, gang activity, and similar destructive or delinquent group behavior were changed to criminal organizations, criminal organization activity, and similar destructive or illegal group behavior throughout the policy and implementation procedures. Revisions to the policy include all suspected violations of this policy will be reported to school-based administration, supervisors, or designees. School-based, administrators, supervisors, and designees will collaborate with HCPSS employees, students, and their families to address the report to determine if the report can be confirmed; any HCPSS student or employee who engages in criminal organization activity or similar destructive or illegal group behavior that does not occur on school property, the administrator, supervisor, or designee will adhere to the guidelines set forth by Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline and Policy 9280 School Use of Community or Reportable Offenses; and if specific school awareness, prevention, or intervention training is determined to be needed based on community or school incidents, the Superintendent/designee will coordinate training with school-based administration.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 9300 Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (formerly Homeless Children and Youth)

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth on June 12, 2025. References to homeless children and youth was changed to students experiencing homelessness throughout the policy and implementation procedures. Revisions to the policy include students who were previously enrolled and then newly begin experiencing homelessness will have the option, based upon the best interest of the student, to remain enrolled at their school of origin or they may transfer to the school in the new area. Students experiencing homelessness will be afforded supports for continuing education as outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act and food and nutrition services will be provided immediately upon the enrollment of a student who is experiencing homelessness and the student will be provided free and reduced price meals (FARMS).

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 9400 Student Behavior Intervention

Effective: July 1, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9400 Student Behavior Intervention on June 12, 2025. Revisions to the policy include the policy does not prohibit HCPSS employees from breaking up a fight in the school building or on school grounds in accordance with §7-307, Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland or Law enforcement officers, including School Resource Officers (SROs), from using mechanical restraints (including handcuffs) and restraining a student in a face down (prone) position; HCPSS employees will ensure the implementation of appropriate pr in accordance with COMAR 13A.08.04.03, Student Behavior Interventions, COMAR 13A.08.04.04, Use of Exclusion, COMAR 13A.08.04.05, General Requirements for the Use of Restraint or Seclusion, COMAR 13A.08.04.06, Administrative Procedures, and COMAR 13A.08.04.07, Annual Data Reporting; HCPSS defines “excessive use of exclusion” as ten (10) or more exclusions in a single school year; and a copy of the completed and signed Single Incident Restraint Form will be provided, as soon as the debrief section is complete, but no longer than ten (10) school days.

Additional revisions include the Departments of Special Education and Student Well-Being will provide training to HCPSS employees on the effective use of classroom management strategies and positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to increase or decrease targeted student behaviors; the Departments of Special Education and Student Well-Being will provide training to HCPSS employees on the use of Exclusion; the principal/designee and/or the Director of Schools, in consultation with employees from the Department of Special Education and/or Student Well-Being will receive, investigate, and document complaints regarding exclusion and physical restraint practices; and HCPSS employees from the Department of Special Education, the Department of Student Well-Being, and the Office of Data Warehouse and Reporting will report data to MSDE and the Board of Education.

The policy is included in Circular Series 2025-2026, Circular No. 3 on July 8, 2025.

Policy 9460 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Involving Students
Effective: April 9, 2025

The Howard County Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy 9460 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Involving Students on April 29, 2025. The policy was modified to align with the Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation (BCHI) form which now includes the option to report hate/bias incidents.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 33 on April 30, 2025.

Policy 9500 Educating Student Sex Offenders
Effective: September 12, 2024

The Howard County Board of Education adopted modifications to Policy 9500 Educating Student Sex Offenders, on September 12, 2024. The policy was modified to update language within the policy to align with legal mandates.

The policy was issued in Circular Series 2024-2025, Circular No. 19 on September 23, 2024.