

**I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to providing a safe and nurturing school environment. The presence of weapons on school property or at any school-sponsored activity threatens this commitment. Therefore, the possession or use of any type of weapon on school property or at school-sponsored activities is strictly forbidden, unless the weapon is in the possession of a law enforcement agent.

**II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish parameters for ensuring a safe and nurturing school environment for students and staff by prohibiting the possession and use of weapons on school property and at school-sponsored activities and to provide clear consequences for anyone who violates this policy.

**III. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Expulsion – The exclusion of a student from the student’s regular school program for 45 school days or longer as determined by the Superintendent/Designee.
- B. Firearm – Any weapon (including a starter gun) which is designed to, or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. This includes:
  - 1. The frame or receiver of any such weapon.
  - 2. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer.
  - 3. Any destructive device (such as a pipe bomb).
- C. Law Enforcement Agent – A local, state, or federal employee vested with law enforcement authority.
- D. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
  - 1. Biological parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.

3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian, as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care).
  6. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- E. Weapon – Object or implement capable of causing harm to another or used in such a way as to cause harm to another. The term weapon can include:
1. gun
  2. firearm
  3. knife
  4. chemical spray
  5. poison
  6. taser
  7. martial arts weapon (e.g., throwing star, nunchakus)
  8. explosive devices
  9. any implement, visible or concealed, possessed under a circumstance that would reasonably lead a person to believe it was a weapon or would be used as a weapon.

#### **IV. Standards**

- A. Notification that weapons are prohibited on school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle located on school property, and at school-sponsored activities will be communicated to all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and service providers annually, to any new student upon enrollment, and when deemed necessary by the principal.
- B. It is a violation of this policy for any person other than a law enforcement agent to carry or possess any weapon on school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle located on school property, or at school-sponsored activities.
- C. A student who possesses a firearm on the school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle located on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity will be expelled from the Howard County Public School System for a minimum of one year. The Superintendent may, on a case-by-case basis, and under certain circumstances, specify a shorter period of expulsion or an alternate educational setting for a student who has brought a firearm onto school property.

- D. Unless used to threaten or harm another, the following are not considered weapons:
  - 1. Tools and materials used by employees in their normal duties.
  - 2. Any antique firearm rendered permanently inoperable.
  - 3. Permanently inoperable rifles used by JROTC cadets during instructional time and at other times when under the direct supervision of JROTC instructors.
- E. Any disciplinary action taken for students as a result of a violation of this policy will be administered in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and Policy 9200 Discipline.
- F. Disciplinary actions for employees taken as a result of a violation of this policy will be administered in accordance with Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

**V. Responsibilities**

- A. The school-based administrator/designee will annually notify all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and service providers of the standards included in this policy.
- B. The school-based administrator/designee will determine if a person is in possession of a weapon and take appropriate action.

**VI. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy.

**VII. References**

- A. Legal
  - 18 U.S.C. §921
  - Annotated Code of Maryland, Criminal Law Article, §4-102
  - Annotated Code of Maryland, Family Law Article, §5-507
  - Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care)
  - Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-305(F)
  - COMAR 13A.08.01.11
  - COMAR 13A.08.01.12.1
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 1040 Safe School Environments
  - Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline
  - Policy 9020 Student Rights and Responsibilities
  - Policy 9200 Discipline
  - Policy 9260 Student Search and Seizure
- C. Relevant Data Sources
  - (TBD)

- D. Other  
Student Code of Conduct

### **VIII. History**

ADOPTED: January 25, 1990

REVIEWED:

MODIFIED: August 14, 2014

REVISED: May 14, 1992

June 23, 1994

September 14, 1995

March 22, 2005

April 12, 2012

EFFECTIVE: August 14, 2014