

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, nurturing, and supportive school climate. The Board believes that fostering a school climate in which individuals are valued, and their safety and rights are protected, is essential to its mission.

All students, employees, parents, and third parties of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) share responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of students and employees and for establishing and sustaining a safe and supportive school climate. Employees bear a professional responsibility to monitor student behavior, adult behavior, and respond accordingly to both observed and reported violations of policy.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit any behaviors that interfere with safe and supportive school climates and to describe the HCPSS approach to maintaining safe and supportive school climates.

III. Definitions

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

- A. HCPSS Procedures for the Threat Management Process – The manual that provides the process of gathering relevant information about student behaviors, communications and stressors to provide the student with appropriate resources in effort to decrease the risk of them engaging in harmful and violent acts.
- B. HCPSS Student Code of Conduct – A disciplinary framework that is designed to support a safe, positive, and respectful learning environment and discipline procedures for effective learning.
- C. HCPSS System-Level Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – A multi-hazard approach for the school system to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the people, property, and operations of the school system.
- D. Non-School Facility Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – An emergency operations plan created specifically for non-school facilities within the school system that

addresses the roles of non-school based employees in handling all levels of emergencies.

- E. 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) or has been issued a U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Verification of Release form entering into a custodial arrangement with the federal government.
 6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in the home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- F. School Climate – The prevailing attitudes, standards, or environmental conditions within a school. Reflects shared responsibility for the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures of a collaborative school community.
- G. School Property – Any property owned or leased by the HCPSS or used by HCPSS for school-related activities. The concept of property extends to school activities such as field trips, use of parks and recreation facilities, proms at hotels, etc. Bus stops and facilities scheduled by the school system for student use are considered an extension of school property.
- H. School-Related Activity – Any school system activity, whether held on or off school property, in which a student directly participates (e.g., school field trip, athletic event, or class/graduation activity), or in which the student does not directly participate but represents the school or student body simply by being there (e.g., spectator at a school event).

- I. School Specific Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – An emergency operations plan created specifically for individual schools within the school system that addresses the roles of school-based employees and administrators in handling all levels of emergencies.
- J. Supportive – Providing encouragement and social and emotional assistance.
- K. Third Party – Parents, mentors, volunteers, vendors, contractors, and others with whom students or employees interact during school or school-related activities.
- L. Threat – An expression of an intent to cause physical, mental, or emotional harm to someone. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party; and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat. Threats may be direct (“I am going to destroy that school.”) or indirect (“I’m going to get him.”).

IV. Standards

- A. All students, employees, parents, and third parties of the HCPSS will contribute to the development and implementation of a safe and supportive school climate.
- B. The Board will review and approve the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct annually.
- C. Behaviors identified in the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct and other related policies, will be communicated to all students, employees, parents, and third parties annually.
- D. It is a violation of this policy to make a threat against the physical, emotional, mental, or academic well-being of students or employees, and it will be addressed through the application of the appropriate Board policy and the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.
- E. The HCPSS will utilize a multifaceted approach to maintain a safe and supportive school climate to include the following:
 - 1. Threat assessment teams for the regular assessment and intervention, including diversion and de-escalation, if an individual exhibits behavior that may pose a threat to school safety.
 - 2. The timely referral of information to appropriate law enforcement and for evaluation, services (including mental health services), or treatment when appropriate.
 - 3. The use of school resources officers (SROs) and other adequate law enforcement coverage throughout HCPSS.

4. Regular safety evaluations of each HCPSS school.
5. Regular school emergency drills at each HCPSS school.
6. An HCPSS System-Level Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), School-Specific EOPs, and Non-School Facility EOPs.
7. Utilizing restorative practices through HCPSS, including before, during, and after threats and emergencies.

V. Responsibilities

- A. The Superintendent/designee will establish a behavior threat assessment team(s) to implement a process for identifying, assessing and intervening with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of a school or the school system.
- B. The Superintendent/designee will ensure that students, employees, parents, and third parties are notified of the provisions of this policy annually.
- C. The Superintendent/designee or school-based administrator will take action in response to a violation of this policy in accordance with Policy 9200 Student Discipline, the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct, the HCPSS Procedures for the Threat Management Process, Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline, and any other applicable policies.
- D. Principals will disseminate information on the standards and penalties of this policy at their schools annually.
- E. All students, employees, parents, and third parties will maintain a safe and supportive school climate.
- F. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Department of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being, and the Office of Safety and Security will coordinate for a multi-faceted approach to maintain safe and supportive school climates.
- G. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Department of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being, and the Office of Safety and Security will annually provide a safe and supportive school climate implementation findings report to the Board.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U. S. C., Sec. 1681
 - Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U. S. C., Sec 601 and Sec. 2000e.2
 - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-304.1 (Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions).
 - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-305 (Suspensions and Expulsions).
 - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-424 (Reporting Incidents of Harassment Against Students).
 - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-424.1 (Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation).
 - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-424.3 (Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation Policy).
 - COMAR 13A.01.04.03, School Safety
 - COMAR13A.08.01.11, Disciplinary Action
 - COMAR 13A.08.04.03, Student Behavior Interventions
 - Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018
- B. Other Board Policies
- Policy 1000 Civility
 - Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination
 - Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
 - Policy 1030 Child Abuse and Neglect
 - Policy 1050 Tobacco-Free Environment
 - Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
 - Policy 2070 Ethics
 - Policy 3010 Emergency Preparedness and Response
 - Policy 3020 Trespassing or Willful Disturbance
 - Policy 5200 Pupil Transportation
 - Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline
 - Policy 7040 Alcohol and Noncontrolled Substance Abuse by Employees
 - Policy 7050 Drug Use by Employees: Illegal Drugs, Drug Paraphernalia and Controlled Substances
 - Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities
 - Policy 9030 School-Sponsored Publications and Productions
 - Policy 9090 Wellness Through Nutrition and Physical Activity
 - Policy 9200 Student Discipline
 - Policy 9210 Student Dress Code
 - Policy 9230 Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication and Over-the-Counter Products
 - Policy 9250 Weapons
 - Policy 9260 Student Search and Seizure
 - Policy 9270 Student Assault and/or Battery on Employees
 - Policy 9280 Students Charged With Community or Reportable Offenses

Policy 9290 Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Delinquent Group Behavior

- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
 - HCPSS Procedures for the Threat Management Process
 - HCPSS Student Code of Conduct
 - [HCPSS School Safety & Security- Frequently Asked Questions](#)

VIII. History

ADOPTED: October 22, 1992
REVIEWED:
MODIFIED: November 3, 2011
 October 17, 2019
REVISED: January 30, 2001
 April 12, 2007
 June 12, 2014
EFFECTIVE: October 17, 2019

Effective: October 17, 2019

I. Announcement/Dissemination of Information

- A. Written notice of behaviors that interfere with a safe and supportive school climate, including but not limited to those identified in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Student Code of Conduct and other related policies, will be communicated to all students, employees, parents, and third parties at the beginning of each school year and, upon registration, to new students and their parents.
- B. At least annually, the principal or appropriate supervisor will notify students, employees, parents, and third parties of the general provisions of this policy. Notification may be:
1. Given via announcement over the school public address system as deemed appropriate by the principal.
 2. Published in newsletters, on the school/system websites, and/or in student/employee handbooks.
 3. Posted on bulletin boards in offices and other commonly used areas.

II. Violations of Policy

A. Student Violations

Any individual who believes that a student has violated this policy will immediately report the suspected violation to the school-based administrator or supervisor and comply with any additional reporting requirements that may involve criminal or other legal action.

1. A student who is suspected of violating this policy on school property, or at school-related events, or in such a manner that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's or employee's educational benefits, opportunities, performance, or physical or psychological well-being, will be referred to a school-based administrator.
2. The school-based administrator will promptly conduct an investigation of the alleged violation and take appropriate action to address the behavior as quickly as possible in accordance with the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

3. If the investigation reveals that a threat has occurred, the school-based administrator will, as necessary and as required by law, notify law enforcement, the Office of Safety and Security, and notify the student's parents and take appropriate action.
4. A student who violates this policy may be provided with interventions designed to increase the student's understanding of the impact of the offense on the victim(s).
5. A student who violates this policy may also be subject to criminal or other legal action.
6. Any student who has been the object of or who has been affected by conduct prohibited in this policy will be offered appropriate assistance by the school-based administrator or the Superintendent/designee.

B. Employee and Third Party Violations

Any individual who believes that an employee or third party has violated this policy will first consider whether the behavior constitutes a violation of Policy 1030 Child Abuse and Neglect, Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination, or Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct. Violations of those policies must be reported, investigated, and followed through in accordance with those policies and other applicable disciplinary procedures.

When the provisions of these policies do not take precedence, the following procedures will be followed:

1. An employee or third party suspected of violating this policy will be referred to an appropriate supervisor or the Superintendent/designee.
2. The supervisor or Superintendent/designee will promptly conduct an investigation and address the behavior as quickly as possible.
3. If the investigation reveals that a threat has occurred, the supervisor or Superintendent/designee will, as required by law, notify law enforcement and the Office of Safety and Security, and will take appropriate action. Disciplinary action against an employee will be taken in accordance with Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline. Action against a third party will be taken in accordance with relevant school system policies and other applicable local, state, and federal laws.

III. Safe and Supportive Schools Maintenance

To address the continuous maintenance of safe and supportive school climates, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Department of Program Innovation and Student

Well-Being, and the Office of Safety and Security will coordinate for a multi-faceted approach in the areas of threat assessment, security, and equity.

A. Threat assessment

The Department of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being will coordinate with the Office of Safety and Security to implement the HCPSS Procedures for the Threat Management Process, including how to:

1. Provide guidance to students and employees through professional learning, case consultation, and written procedures, etc. regarding recognition of behavior that may represent a threat.
2. Implement behavior threat assessment team(s) will assess, identify and manage the risks of threats of targeted violence posed by an individual or group.
3. Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported.
4. Assess and intervene with individuals whose behavior poses (or may pose) a threat to the safety to school employees or students, and where appropriate, referrals to community providers for further evaluation and/or treatment.

B. Security

The Office of Safety and Security is responsible for all aspects of physical security and general safety for students and employees. To ensure that we contribute to safe and supportive schools, the HCPSS will:

1. Collaborate with law enforcement to maintain SROs and other law enforcement coverage at levels defined by state law: We will monitor coverage on a quarterly basis and will adjust as required by changes in law.
2. Perform annual safety evaluations of schools and tracking improvement projects in compliance with the Maryland Safe to Learn Act 2018.
3. Conduct school emergency drills on an annual basis based on the schedule below:
 - a. 5 evacuation drills
 - b. 2 reverse evacuation drills
 - c. 2 active assailant drills
 - d. 2 severe weather drills
 - e. 1 shelter in place drill
 - f. 1 lockdown drill
 - g. 1 duck, cover, and hold drill

4. Provide initial and annual refresher training for school system employees for our Emergency Operations Plans (EOP).
 - a. System-Level EOP – Position specific training for those with roles during emergency response.
 - b. School-Specific EOP – Annual plan updates for new employees and positions specific training for those with roles during an emergency at the school.
 - c. Support Facility EOP – Annual plan updates for new employees and positions specific training for those with roles during an emergency at the facility.

C. Equity

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will support schools in maintaining safe and supportive school climates by assisting in:

1. Shaping restorative cultures.
2. Fostering inclusive relationships.
3. Infusing voice (Student, Family, and Staff) throughout the educational experience.
4. Providing opportunities for professional learning that helps teachers and employees feel valued and effective in maintaining safe and supportive school climates. These learnings could include but are not limited to:
 - a. Confronting bias.
 - b. Culturally responsive teaching.
 - c. Understanding generational trauma.
 - d. Restorative justice.
 - e. Social emotional learning.
 - f. Cultural proficiency.
5. Collaborating with families and community members to form active and valued partnerships and nurture trust.

D. Accountability

The Office of Safety and Security, the Department of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will coordinate an annual review of the implementation of Policy 1040 and report its findings to the Board to evaluate the effectiveness of its policy, including but not limited to the following areas:

1. The effects of the security drills on students and employees mental health.
2. Any after action evaluations for incidents where Emergency Operations Plans were used.
3. Threat Assessment, Security, and Equity as outlined in the preceding sections.

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