



Customizing Learning,
Nurturing Potential...
Delivering Excellence

Fort Couch Middle School

Student/Parent Handbook
2019-2020

515 Fort Couch Road
Upper St. Clair, PA 15241
(412) 833-1600 Ext. 3000



Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year at Fort Couch Middle School! We are excited to embark on a new school year with you. Our hope is that this handbook will be valuable as you and your child embark on the journey through Fort Couch.

Fort Couch has a rich tradition of academic and extra-curricular innovation for the middle level student. Fort Couch Middle School has been recognized by the Pittsburgh Business Times as one the highest performing middle schools in terms of state assessments. In addition, Fort Couch Middle School has been re-designated as a Pennsylvania Middle Schools Association "Schools to Watch" Recipient for the fourth time and has received four National Blue Ribbon Awards.

The educational program at Fort Couch has been developed with a clear understanding of the students' academic, physical, emotional and social characteristics and needs. Additionally, the curriculum and activities allow students to explore and begin to develop their creativity, strengths, and passions. The Fort Couch staff works hard to build connections with students and parents to ensure quality relationships and partnerships.

Ultimately, the mission of the school is to provide the best educational opportunities to all students. The programs of the school aim to be responsive to the needs of all students through various options while striving to achieve and surpass district, state, and national learning standards. The future for students, parents, and staff is full of exciting and challenging opportunities. Enjoy your time at Fort Couch Middle School!

Best wishes,

Joseph F. DeMar
Principal

Erin Peterson
Assistant Principal

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FORT COUCH MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFICE STAFF

Mr. Joe DeMar, Principal
Mrs. Erin Peterson, Assistant Principal
Mr. Jace Palmer, School Counselor (Grade 7)
Mrs. Jessica Robinson, School Counselor (Grade 8)
Mrs. Sharon Lacey, Building Secretary
Ms. Jill Polfus, Attendance Secretary
Mrs. Annette Hansen, School Nurse
Mr. Dean Sabolick, Head Custodian

UPPER ST. CLAIR SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. John Rozzo, Superintendent
Dr. Sharon Suritsky, Assistant Superintendent / Deputy Superintendent
Mrs. Amy Pfender, Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Lou Angelo, Director of Operations and Facilities
Mr. Raymond Berrott, Director of Technology
Mr. Sean Bryson, Chief of School Police
Dr. Judith Bulazo, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development
Mr. Scott Burchill, Director of Business and Finance
Mr. Ray Carson, Jr., Senior Director of Operations and Administrative Services
Dr. Kevin Dietrick, Director of Athletics
Ms. Sheila Gorgonio, Director of Advancement
Mrs. Lauren Madia, Assistant Director of Student Support Services
Mr. Jonn Mansfield, Director of Transportation
Mr. Bradley Wilson, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Ms. Jennifer Marken, Director of Food Services, ARAMARK

UPPER ST. CLAIR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs. Amy L. Billerbeck, President
Mrs. Barbara L. Bolas, Vice-President
Mrs. Jennifer L. Bowen
Mr. Phillip J. Elias
Dr. Daphna Gans
Mr. Patrick A. Hewitt
Mr. Louis P. Mafrice, Jr.
Mrs. Angela B. Petersen
Mr. Dante R. Plutko

Compliance Notifications

Upper St Clair School District complies with all federal and state regulations. Documents required by state and federal regulations are included on the District's website and can be accessed by viewing www.uscsd.k12.pa.us >>information >>compliance notifications.

Title IX

The Upper St. Clair School does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admission to or employment in its education programs or activities.

Inquiries concerning Title IX should be directed to:

Mrs. Amy Pfender (students)
Assistant to the Superintendent

Mr. Ray Carson (employees/third parties)
Senior Director of Operations and Administrative Services

Upper St. Clair School District
1820 McLaughlin Run Road
Upper St. Clair, PA. 15241

Child Find Notice of Special Education Services & Program

Each school district, along with other public agencies in the commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children, offer assistance to parents, and describes the parents' rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process. The content of this notice has been written in English but can be translated into other languages. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district (412-833-1600 ext. 2062) and request an explanation.

Student Bill of Rights

You, as a student of the Upper St. Clair Middle School Program, have the right to...

- **Grow intellectually** by exposing yourself to ideas and concepts that challenge your ability to think, reason, and make decision;
- **Mature emotionally** while interacting in an environment that nurtures awareness and an understanding of yourself;
- **Become a whole person** by learning from people who have made a commitment to your education and special needs;
- **Develop socially** by modeling accepted social attitudes and social skills;
- **Grow physically** by being an active participant in curricular and extracurricular activities that develop your body and sense of fair play;
- **Express yourself creatively** by sharing your talents and abilities in the Arts;
- **Allow yourself to be helped** through a challenging period in your growth by people with a sincere understanding of your feelings;
- **Understand your fears** knowing that your concerns are natural and shared by everyone;
- **Seek help when you need it** in order to gain a better understanding of your schoolwork;
- **Be yourself** because you are a *special person*.

Student Responsibilities

- Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most of all, students share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.
- No student has the right to interfere with the education of his or her fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process.
- Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

It is the responsibility of the students to conform to the following:

- Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accord with them. Students should assume that until a rule is waived, altered or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- Dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety and health and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational process.
- Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled within.
- Comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
- Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- Attend school daily and be on time for all classes and other school functions.
- Make up work when absent from school.
- Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the course of study prescribed by Commonwealth and local school authorities.

Upper St. Clair

Fort Couch Middle School Philosophy

Our strength as an educational community stems from students, teachers, parents, staff, administrators, and Upper St. Clair citizens working together with a common mission - educational excellence. The entire Fort Couch community strives to create a secure environment where each student, treated with trust and respect, can assume responsibility for his or her own education.

The student is the center of Fort Couch Middle School. Our staff is trained to effectively deal with the sweeping social, emotional, and physical needs of this transitional period. This includes understanding the wide array of mental and physical changes that occur and how they influence readiness to learn.

Students are encouraged to take the "risks" necessary for individual growth. Our curriculum is designed to develop the communication and critical thinking skills needed for success in life. By paying close attention to the *whole* student, we are able to free young minds for academic challenge and ignite a lifelong adventure in learning.

Fort Couch Middle School advocates a positive atmosphere where each student can achieve to the fullest, and each individual feel like a unique, but integral, part of the overall school community.

The Upper St. Clair Community

Fort Couch Middle School is situated in Upper St. Clair Township fifteen miles south of Pittsburgh. Upper St. Clair is a small, residential community with a population of 20,000 and covers an area approximately 10 miles square. Median income is the third highest in the Pittsburgh area and ninety percent of the homes are owner-occupied. Roughly half of the residents over the age of 25 have four or more years of college education. New residents often cite the quality of the schools as one of their primary reasons for moving to Upper St. Clair. Because of this, Upper St. Clair has become a community where excellence in education is an expectation rather than a goal.

Support for the school district budget comes from earned income and property taxes. The district receives little state and federal funding. A variety of programs, projects and events are supported by the PTSO, parent volunteers, partnerships formed with local businesses including St. Clair Hospital, and other local civic groups such as the Jaycees, Lions and Rotary. In 1993 a Community Foundation (CEF) was formed to raise monies to support educational activities for all community residents through the schools and township programs.

The Fort Couch Community

Presently, the enrollment at Fort Couch Middle School is approximately 660 students. Students representing many different national heritages form a culturally and ethnically rich society. Team teaching is the cornerstone of organization here at Fort Couch. Each of the six teams works together to provide age-appropriate learning activities during these crucial early adolescent years. An Academic Team of four teachers provides instruction in the basic academic disciplines: English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The Expressive Arts Team explores subjects in the fine and practical arts area: Art, Music, STEAM Design, Keyboarding Technology, Public Speaking, and Information Literacy. The World Language Team offers instruction in French, German or Spanish while the Physical Education Team provides training in basic team sports, lifetime sports, and fitness. Instrumental music is available to all students and includes Band, Orchestra and Jazz Band.

Students are assigned to an Academic Team. As part of their Academic Team, the student interfaces with four other instructional teams including the Expressive Arts Team, the World Language Team, and the Physical Education Team. Each Academic Team is divided into four sections. In general, students stay together within their individual section for their core subjects: English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students may mix with other students in their Academic Team during World Language, Physical Education classes and in Expressive Arts classes. Students quickly develop a sense of security and belonging because the integrity of their Academic Team is maintained as they move between classrooms.

Awards

Tradition at Fort Couch has been founded on the uniqueness of the middle level learner. For more than twenty years books and articles have been written about the program. Perhaps the three most significant milestones were when Fort Couch was recognized as one of 94 blue ribbon "School of Excellence" middle

schools by the President's Secondary School Recognition Program in 1987, 1993, and 2002. Fort Couch was awarded its fourth Blue Ribbon award in 2013 solidifying its commitment to excellence in education. The national recognition and the opportunity to share their commitment to the middle school movement with other school districts energized teachers, parents and staff. In 1991, the Pennsylvania Middle School Association's Donald Eichhorn Award for Middle School Excellence was awarded to Fort Couch. More recently, Fort Couch was recognized as a 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2017 Don Eichhorn "School to Watch." The award was presented by the Pennsylvania Middle Schools Association for Fort Couch's practices to strive for academic excellence, social equity, developmental responsiveness, and organizational structures and processes. Fort Couch received both State and National recognition for this accomplishment. Fort Couch takes pride in the many awards that its students and faculty have received. Fort Couch Middle School continually scores well among the middle schools on State assessments.

History

The middle school concept in Upper St. Clair originated with Dr. Carl R. Streams, the late USC Superintendent of Schools. He proposed a new intermediate-grade level configuration with an innovative organization of buildings district-wide. As in the past, students in kindergarten through 5th grade would continue to be housed in elementary schools. 6th through 8th grade students would be grouped in a middle school program at Fort Couch and the high school would now address the needs of 9th through 12th grade students. The impetus for reorganization originated out of a study that showed that the traditional junior high structure did not meet the needs of students during the transition period from primary to secondary school. Dr. Streams argued, "the social maturity of the ninth-grade student more nearly parallels that of the older students" and expressed concerns that ninth grade social "patterns" were too advanced for younger students. The Pennsylvania Department of Education granted Upper St. Clair permission to conduct a two-year pilot of the alternate grade configuration. The area's first middle school (grades 6-8) was opened in 1962. Fort Couch then became home to the township's 6th through 8th grade students. In conjunction with the district's restructuring, the high school was moved from Fort Couch to its present location on McLaughlin Run Road. In 1968, a second middle school known as Boyce Middle School (grades 6-8) was opened in the township.

The sixties brought many innovations in the organization and the curriculum design of American schools. Dr. Donald Eichhorn, who served as Assistant Superintendent in Upper St. Clair from 1962-79, was a leader in the middle school movement. He helped to define the unique development and learning needs of transescence. After noting the chronological variations for students in this age group, Dr. Eichhorn based this transescent designation on "physical, social, emotional and intellectual changes that appear prior to puberty." In 1969, the district joined a research initiative with Allan L. Drash, M.D. of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, to further study characteristic data on middle school students. Two buildings in Upper St. Clair were designated as "middle schools" both housing 6th-8th level students. Dr. Drash's findings validated many of the middle school's founding principles offering new insight for future consideration, and served as a baseline for subsequent comparisons.

In 1981, the school district, in addition to its annual review of all school programs and practices, sponsored a faculty survey regarding the middle school concept and its' perceived degree of implementation in Upper St. Clair. The committee's report, submitted in the summer of 1983, reaffirmed district-wide middle school principles and priorities, while also calling for instructional groupings that would enhance student self-esteem, teacher training in middle school strategies and tactics, public relations activities to foster parent and community understanding of middle school concepts, and further study of curriculum, climate and organizational issues identified by the faculty.

On the basis of this review, then Upper St. Clair School Superintendent Dr. Robert Christiana established a "reorganization" steering committee in 1984. This task force recommended discontinuing the geographical division of the township's middle level students (grades 6-8) and establishing the current structure. All 5th and 6th grade students are brought together in a middle school program at Boyce and all 7th and 8th grade students are accommodated in a second middle school program at Fort Couch. Both programs are based on numerous interdisciplinary and exploratory enrichment activities that nurture the uniqueness of each age group.

Thus, Fort Couch became a school specifically intended for 7th and 8th grade students. The school was designed to meet the student's educational needs with a curriculum taught by highly skilled teachers while addressing the social needs of this age group through age-appropriate activities. The characteristics and needs of the emerging adolescent learners are central to the school's program development. A continued general education with opportunities for exploration, teacher-based guidance and flexible scheduling promotes continuous educational progress for all concerned. Based on the pioneering efforts of Dr. Eichhorn, the district broadened the curriculum. The student is actively involved with knowledge. Knowledge is retained through understanding and use while the student also acquires the process necessary for continued life-long learning. The curriculum creates opportunities for students to work collectively developing social skills and personal independence.

Academics

Teaming

Teaming is the foundation of Fort Couch Middle School. All students are assigned to one of the six teams. All teams are composed of a science, math, social studies, and English language arts teacher. In addition to these core classes, students will have a World Language, Expressive Arts, Guidance, and Physical Education class. Students will also take part in the advisory program.

Daily Routine

A typical school day at Fort Couch is designed to take advantage of the traits that are characteristic of a middle school student. Students can focus on the academic challenge in an atmosphere supportive of their developmental needs. Students have approximately one hour in each of the core disciplines with no more than two consecutive core academic subjects. In addition, classes in Expressive Arts, World Language, and Physical Education, along with Advisor and Guidance Class, are offered. The afternoon mirrors the morning with two more core academic subjects mixed with other course offerings.

The day includes two student resource periods: one opposite lunch and one at the end of the day. Instructional support is available for all students during these times. Students may take advantage of the activities offered by their team as well. Students may also use participate in chorus, student council, extracurricular, or team activities.

Period 7 / Panther Time

The purpose of the resource periods is to address social, emotional, and academic related matters. Additional instructional support representing every academic area is available for students to receive additional help. The gifted resource center, the expressive arts classrooms, and world languages all offer time for students to receive additional instruction or make up exams. Chorus and team activities occur during this time as well.

Curriculum

Excellence in education for all students is a reality at Fort Couch Middle School.

Curriculum Development

In Upper St. Clair, curriculum development is action-oriented where the individuals who are responsible for implementing the curriculum also have ownership in the development process. A suggestion to change or further the curriculum may come from a staff member, parent, student or community member. There is a curriculum leader for each major academic subject area at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Department chairmen at the three levels guide other subject areas. Curriculum leaders and department chairmen are full-time, middle school teachers who receive additional compensation and administrative status for curriculum development. Recommendations for change are studied and reviewed before a decision is made to present the recommendation to a preliminary panel composed of curriculum leaders and administrators in that grade grouping. The appropriate administrator supervises the first meeting. Once the idea is clarified or a pilot test done, the recommendation may be sent to a second panel chaired by the Superintendent and attended by all the curriculum leaders of every grade level and other administrative staff. All recommendations approved by the final panel are reviewed by the school board. Suggestions requiring a change in board policy are formally reviewed by the school board. Once approved, the recommendations are

shared with teachers before the onset of the school year. During the summer months, district curriculum leaders and teachers work together to develop comprehensive guides and supplementary resources.

Curriculum Implementation

School administration, with the support of curriculum leaders, assumes total responsibility and act as the instructional leaders in the implementation of curriculum recommendations. Besides regular staff meetings, the principals seek to maximize the objective central to each recommendation by working with several teacher committees. In addition, there are three other major provisions for collegial planning and curriculum implementation. Each Academic Team has 50 minutes of daily, common planning time to develop interdisciplinary activities and to address students' needs. The school counselor attends at least one of these meetings each week. The once-a-month curriculum meetings serve not only as a vehicle to develop new curriculum but to implement and enhance existing curriculum. Additionally, teachers of the same discipline and same grade level will meet weekly to review curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments.

Continuous Education

Fort Couch continues the district's philosophy of continuous education. Each level builds on and reinforces the previous level while preparing students for future academic challenges. Students enter the middle school program at Boyce with a three-teacher team model. Here at Fort Couch, a four-teacher team and an increased course selection prepares students for the transition to a departmentalized high school. Students receive instruction in a variety of curriculum areas. An intentional mix of curriculums ensures that a student is not preassigned to a "track" based upon previous performances or stated interests. As a result, students have an opportunity to discover areas of interest and abilities that have not yet emerged.

Interdisciplinary teaching and cooperative learning

These are key words used to describe our curriculum. *Interdisciplinary teaching* first introduced in the elementary schools continues at Fort Couch. Units designed specifically to integrate the various curriculum areas reinforce the importance to construct links between what the student already knows and values and the information that they are expected to learn. Skills learned in English language arts are applied in social studies and science presentations. Mathematical theory is exercised in science, industrial arts and home economics. The Fort Couch *interdisciplinary* curriculum is implemented using a multi-text approach. In addition to traditional instruction and classroom activities, students are provided enrichment or remedial activities as necessary. Teachers from different core academic and resource areas work together to define projects that will further engage the students in the learning process requiring the student to apply the knowledge being learned. Working together as a team, the teachers have the flexibility in their schedule to move and regroup students as needed. Research which has shown that the more meaningful, the more deeply or elaborately processed, the more situated in context and the more rooted in cultural, background, cognitive and personal knowledge the curriculum is, the more readily the child will understand, learn, and remember. The curriculum allows teachers to educate by repeating, re-enforcing and extending similar objectives at each grade level. In science, specific areas of Earth, Life and Physical Sciences are revisited each year beginning in 5th grade with an emphasis on skills, processes, critical thinking and problem solving. Teachers spark the imagination of an unusually large number of talented and motivated Fort Couch students through specialized grouping and student choice. Each student is looked at individually and provided for as needed.

Course Offerings

English Language Arts

At Fort Couch, we believe the ability to communicate is one of the most important tools students need to live effectively in our society. Language is the means by which we communicate both to express and to receive thoughts. To receive a message, you must perceive the words and comprehend the idea. In our curriculum, emphasis is put on vocabulary expansion through the use of context clues, dictionaries and word analysis. Appreciation and comprehension of written language evolves from the study of various types and styles of written work. Students analyze short stories and informational articles for main ideas, deeper meaning, and author's craft. The author's use of specific details or the manner in which she/he has organized the work, help a student to predict the outcome of a story. The primary objectives are to instruct students in the skills and

processes of language which will make them efficient readers, listeners, speakers, and writers, and to make students aware of language as a vehicle through which interests, attitudes and understanding can be developed.

The English Language Arts curriculum is language rich and integrates language arts in the total educational program of our students. The language program includes instruction in reading skills, process writing, literature, language structure, and oral communications.

Reading instruction provides students with extensive work in fiction and nonfiction pieces. Four to eight complete works of fiction are read at each level. Works of fiction are read for vocabulary development, reading comprehension and to develop higher-order, critical thinking skills. Students also use a published vocabulary series. Further, to better meet students' needs, teachers will utilize multiple novels when providing reading instruction. The program is multi-text and exposes the student to a variety of real literatures. Teachers may choose from a list of resources, literature texts and activities established by the department to teach the objectives for each level.

English Language Arts is divided into four parts: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Teachers use activities involving each element of language to teach the lesson's objective. Students may dramatize a scene in the story as a way of feeling the intensity of conflict the author creates, or play the role of a character in a novel to better understand the author's use of character traits. What better way to learn the art of persuasion than to write your own newspaper editorials and advertisements? Structure and effectiveness are clarified when a student rewrites a familiar story from a different point of view. Radio and television shows may be used to distinguish fact from fiction.

Students learn different techniques required to preview a work, read for leisure or for detailed study. Students read, write and listen to different types of poetry. Narrative, lyrical and descriptive poetry are also compared. Blank verse, free verse, odes and ballads are studied too. To further their ability to express thought, students are taught sentence patterns, some grammar usage, and how to organize longer works. Grammar is taught as a means to produce effective writing. Emphasis is placed on function rather than terminology.

A process approach to writing is used to develop students' writing skills. This approach includes composing, rewriting, conferencing, revising, editing, and publishing. Students are required to produce prose and poetry that reflect narrative, expository and argumentative modes. All English Language Arts classes at each grade have one instructional level. Teachers will place an emphasis on differentiating their instruction, as multiple texts will be utilized for reading instruction. Students will be assigned text based on their ability level and learning style.

Math

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards for middle level learners recognizes the need for all students living in the twenty-first century to have broad expertise in mathematics. The NCTM standards advocate improving a student's math performance by devoting more attention to conceptual development, by encouraging independent thinking and by demonstrating math's usefulness through the use of real-life problems and hands-on support materials. The Upper St. Clair Math Program places all students on the same pathway with the possibility of taking calculus by their senior year in high school.

We have found that our curriculum meets the needs of most of our students. However, we know that students all learn at different rates. To accommodate these various learning rates, we have a program to help identify students who might need enrichment in math or who may need additional support. Pre-testing occurs at the beginning of each unit to determine enrichment needs. This enrichment may occur for an entire unit or it may occur for individual lessons within that unit. Teachers utilize Panther Time and Period 7 to provide remediation help for students who may need concepts retaught or who may need other second chance learning interventions.

Seventh Grade Math

Students in 7th grade Pre-Algebra study the following three major topics: applied arithmetic, pre-algebra and pre-geometry. The transition to algebra is done by examining three uses of variables: pattern generalizes, abbreviations in formulas and unknowns in problems. Variables on the number line and coordinate plane are represented.

Lessons in geometry focus on measurement, relationships involving lines, angles and polygons and the connection between arithmetic, algebra and measurement. Large and small numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, zero and negative numbers, powers, decimals, percents, scientific notation are revisited. Problem solving strategies, graphs, combining operations, the Distributive Property, and basic algebra skills complete the transition to Algebra.

An integrated approach lets students focus on one strand while reiterating and introducing others. The curriculum implements the NCTM standards by emphasizing applications, reading and writing, problem solving and technology throughout. Students learn how and when to use math skills, the properties and relationship of numbers, the use of mathematical ideas and how to physically picture mathematical concepts.

Emphasis on the application of math skills to real life problems motivates students and provides a context for learning concepts and skills. Students learn to speak the language of math, and skill reinforcement is an integral part of problem-solving practice and review.

Eighth Grade Math

Algebra I is a first year course in algebra that employs geometry, statistics and probability to illustrate the algebra of linear equations and inequalities. Models for arithmetic operations are extended to equations involving variables. Students learn to solve linear sentences and define functions. Probability concepts are studied along with algebraic fractions while heavy manipulative techniques are postponed to later courses. Contemporary applications in science and personal finance explore curvilinear functions depicting exponential growth and decay, compound interest, parabolas and Quadratic Equations. Graphing, the properties of lines and slopes are important to visualizing and organizing data. Reading and problem solving continue to be emphasized throughout the curriculum. Problem-solving strategies are embedded in application settings.

At both grade levels, students who do not demonstrate mastery will be designated to receive a second math lesson during the school day. Teachers will identify these students and will provide these interventions on a daily basis. Conversely, students excelling in math are provided enrichment activities per their pretest results and rate of acquisition. As an integral part of the program, USC incorporates modern technology including the use of the scientific calculator, computers, iPads, and function graphers. Beginning in the first chapter, scientific calculators are required of all students. Calculators allow students to study a variety of problems in greater depth. Students with computational deficiencies are able to further their mastery of math concepts while building their computational skills. Accelerated and remedial courses are offered at both grade levels depending on student needs.

Science

At Fort Couch, students not only learn science but experience it through hands-on activities. The program strives to stimulate and foster student interest and excitement for a subject that has become part of daily living in an expanding technological society. As part of the regular curriculum, students explore the impact science has on the world. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) is a focus for learning in the integrated curriculum.

Fort Couch Students learn science through the use of hands-on activities, in classroom labs, in science related computer applications, and in a wide variety of multi-media materials. Each year the students are exposed to at least three different topics. During the four years in the middle school students will study 15 different but related topics. The year is broken into four nine-week units. Each grade has at least one life, one physical and one earth science unit. Over the course of four years, the students in middle school cover sixteen different but related topics. The 5th and 6th grade program is integrating ASSET (Allegheny School Science Education & Technology) units into existing science units. The new materials enhance the curriculum through a hands-on-minds-on approach. In addition to this curriculum, lab skills, microscope usage, the scientific method, and lab

safety are reinforced and extended each year.

Science objectives and activities are regularly integrated with other content areas. Students are required to write reports and give oral presentations throughout the year. Topics for English Language Arts assignments often follow science themes. Vocabulary development is a shared responsibility with the English Language Arts Department. Many science activities correlate with social studies objectives through interdisciplinary team studies involving manufacturing, world trade, automation, and global issues, e.g. the value of rain forests and the greenhouse effect. Mathematical reasoning is given real life significance through the development of formulas to calculate the work done by simple machines, measuring heart rates, chemicals and other objects in the environment, by graphing information, balancing chemical equations, estimating and calculating real distances to the planets and stars, measuring the specific gravity of rocks, calculating buoyancy in salt water solutions and estimating time, speed and costs.

7th Grade Science Units:

- **Scientific Method/Light:** The scientific method will be introduced to the students to begin the nine weeks. Students will be able to set up their own experiments and control variables. Light is a standards-based, inquiry-centered unit that was developed by the Smithsonian and the National Academies. This unit allows students to explore the properties of light. Students will understand the origin of light, how it travels, and what happens when it is blocked. Pinhole cameras will be created to help understand the principles studies. An exploration of different types of mirrors and how light acts when it strikes a mirror completes the unit.
- **Cells:** This unit will introduce students to the cell. Students will be taught the correct process in using a microscope to explore cells in animals and plants. Objectives include the parts of a cell and cell functions. This experience and information on the cell will be a building block for the next nine weeks, Genetics.
- **Genetics and Evolution:** Theories concerning the origin of plants and animals along with the production of mutations, the inheritance of traits and the prediction of a pattern of inheritance and natural selection are explored. Students have the opportunity to discover how their own physical characteristics have been passed down through generations.
- **Earth's Changing Surface & Man's Impact:** Man's impact on the earth's changing surface is explored in this unit. Students examine earthquakes, volcanoes, and other earth processes. Types of faults and the causes of earth movements are deduced. The students will explore the impact of agriculture and pollution on the earth.

8th Grade Science Units:

- **Astronomy:** Students begin their study with the globe, the Law of Gravitation, Foucault Pendulum, earth measurement, rotation and tilt before flying out into the galaxy where they measure the brightness and magnitude of other stars and galaxies, explore earth's moon and our own sun's family, and learn of people's attempts to explore the universe.
- **Intro to Chemistry:** Matter is defined and classified. The effects of temperature and volume on the states of matter are explored. The Bohr Theory of Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table are used as the students take their study of matter down to the sub-atomic level. Once inside the atom, they learn about electrons, protons, neutrons, electron energy levels, element properties, ions, isotopes and oxidation states. This is the basis for understanding the difference between acids, bases and salts and the reasoning behind some basic chemical reactions.
- **Intro to Physics:** The unit will focus on understanding the physical world. This unit includes simple machines and the students will calculate work and power. The students will explore the Laws of Motion and kinetic and potential energy. Engineering is a focus of this unit with the students designing, building, evaluating and revising engineering challenges.

Social Studies

A unique feature of the Social Studies Curriculum is the integration of four key Social Studies disciplines (geography, economics, civics, and history). The curriculum is organized into knowledge and skill objectives that engage the student through problem solving, analytical reasoning and writing. Many Social Studies activities are integrated with other curriculum areas.

7th Grade Social Studies:

- **European Foundations of America:** Students will learn about the major groups and individuals which led to the European exploration and colonization of North America.
- **Creation of the United States:** Students will study the establishment of the Thirteen Colonies and their growing tension with Britain. The course will explore the Revolutionary War and the establishment of an independent United States, focusing in particular on the structure and function of the United States Constitution.
- **Expansion of a Nation:** Students will understand the growth of the United States, including the causes and effects of territorial expansion across the continent in the early 1800s. The debate over slavery in newly acquired land will be a key point of focus.
- **Civil War and Reconstruction:** Students will investigate the war which tore apart the United States, including major events, individuals, and costs of the Civil War. After the conflict, students will learn about various attempts to rebuild the nation during the period of Reconstruction.

8th Grade Social Studies:

- **Industrialization and Immigration**
This unit will center on industrialization in the late 1800s and its transformative effects on America and the world. Students will also learn about various factors which led to increased emigration to the United States.
- **Emerging Power and World War I**
Students will study the ways in which various nations developed world empires. In addition, students will investigate the steps which led to the outbreak of the Great War and the effects of the conflict itself.
- **The Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression**
This unit will explore various changes in the decade after the Great War before turning to the Great Depression, in which students will learn the causes of and responses to the economic disaster of the 1930s.
- **Prewar Years and World War II**
In the last unit of the year, students will focus their attention on World War II, starting with events and individuals which led to its beginning. The unit will also discuss major events from the war across the globe as well as its lasting impact on the postwar world.

World Language

The middle school World Language program begins with an exploratory program in 5th Grade. Students continue with the language of their choice (French, German, or Spanish) in 6th, 7th and 8th grades to complete the equivalent of two semesters of high school work. The classes actively involve the students in listening exercises, vocabulary building, reading, writing, grammar and the development of oral proficiency through specific topics of conversation.

The program is also designed to give students cultural insight into the beliefs and behaviors of the people and cultures represented by each language. Art, history, music, dance, cuisine and the customs of each society are examined through videos, games, cultural event projects and activities.

Each year the advancements in technology help to bring the students even closer to the people of the world they are studying. The resource programs provide facts and figures instantly to supplement their knowledge of history and geography. The Internet offers opportunities to tap information on any number of topics in English and in the world language. The faculty makes every effort to be aware of new technology and to make it accessible to the students wherever possible.

The middle school program hopes to inspire each student to pursue the study of world language throughout their life with education, travel and a continued awareness of the world and its people.

Expressive Arts

The Expressive Arts curriculum affords Fort Couch students the opportunity to learn skills needed to meet the challenges of living in today's global society. The Expressive Arts curriculum incorporates practical, fine

and performing arts into one program blending the subject content in each area with required levels of student activity in the form of product and personal performance, fostering art awareness and self-esteem. Each area retains its identity as a unique discipline, but by unifying the program opportunities are provided for social interaction while integrating the skills and objectives of a more traditional program.

7th & 8th Grade Expressive Arts:

- **Art:** The focus of art at Fort Couch lies more in process than product. Students will have an opportunity to experience a variety of media and artistic processes, allowing for a more encompassing idea of what it means to create art. Working individually and collaboratively, students will investigate creative projects involving painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics and various forms of digital art.
- **Music:** Vocal training is used as a basis to cultivate concepts of beat, rhythm, articulation, melody, harmony, tone color, dynamics, form and to develop an appreciation for a variety of styles of music. Students compose a melody. They study the four families of instruments and sound production through the use of oscilloscopes and balloon experiments. Students are encouraged to extend this musical training by joining such extracurricular activities as Band, Chorus or Orchestra.
- **STEAM Design:** STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) Design is a way to teach how all things relate to each other, in school and in life. Using the design process, students will follow a series of steps to come up with a solution to a problem. Incorporated in this process are creativity and innovation. Students will be given the opportunity to make and create in the Innovation Hub and the Maker Space. The Innovation Hub is a room designed to promote collaboration, communication, problem solving and creativity. The Maker Space allows students to create, make, test, and improve upon their designs.
- **Keyboarding Technology:** This course is designed to prepare our students to be successful contributors to an ever-changing global world. Students will learn computer skills that will enable them to thrive in a complex, highly technological competitive economy for the 21st century in a collaborative environment. The course allows students to learn how to organize their digital world, create computer games, develop computer programming skills, keyboard, and continue to develop their MS/Google software skills.
- **Public Speaking:** Students will learn how to properly prepare and deliver a speech. The three pillars of public speaking that will be emphasized are ethos, pathos, and logos.
- **Information Literacy:** Students in 7th grade will participate in this course to extend their learning of information literacy. Included in the course will be the study of research and presentation skills.

Physical Education

Grouped with members of their academic team, a student spends two hours each week in Physical Education classes. Both sexes learn and participate together in a manner that encourages mutual respect for their similarities and differences. When an activity does not lend itself to co-ed instruction or the activity would expose either sex to danger or embarrassment, retarding skill development, the sexes are separated. The department is staffed with two certified health and physical education teachers.

The broad objective of the Physical Education curriculum is to further develop each student physically, mentally and socially to the extent his or her potential ability and interest will allow. Skills and attitudes learned in elementary school are extended. New skills are introduced preparing the student to effectively participate in the appropriate physical activities in the regular school program, extra-curriculum program, and activities of special interest in the community and school. Adaptive physical education activities are provided for students needing additional assistance in developing muscular growth, coordination and rehabilitation.

Instruction focuses on three areas: basic team sports, lifetime sports, physical fitness. The physical fitness program is an integral part of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to compete against themselves in developing and maintaining good physical fitness. Additional activities are offered before school, during the activity period and as part of the after-school extracurricular activities.

Technology

Technology is an integral part of the curriculum at Fort Couch rather than a separate course of study. Students' technology instruction occurs as part of each curriculum areas' objectives. All Fort Couch students will be given iPads as part of the 1:1 initiative. In addition to the iPads, there are also computer labs in the building. Students are encouraged to expand their capacity to access, comprehend and interpret information independently and use it efficiently.

Students receive a password that enables them to save classroom assignments to the server. Students and parents must review and sign a usage agreement that encourages the proper and ethical use of the Internet before access is permitted. Computer usage varies from team to team and is dependent on the need to teach and reinforce curriculum skills.

All teachers have access to a computer and Promethean boards in their assigned work areas. All equipment is networked and has Internet access for classroom research and study. In addition, all internet-accessible technology is filtered using the district's network at all times.

Library Science

Breaking away from the traditional meaning of the word "Library," the Fort Couch Information Center lights the spark of imagination and empowers all students and staff to be effective users of information. The planned course includes both literary appreciation and a sequential library skill development program that enables students to find, generate and apply information.

The Information Center prepares students for the 21st century by learning information retrieval skills. Every student receives hands-on instruction in the use of various electronic resources that make up the Library Resource Network. Included in this network are the online card catalog, a multimedia encyclopedia, and a full-text magazine database. In addition to the volumes on campus, students have access to materials from other libraries across the State of Pennsylvania through an interlibrary loan program known as **Access PA**. Internet access provides a world of primary and secondary resources available to the student for research. The library functions as an integral support component to the total school. The librarian and teachers work together planning, teaching and evaluating assignments. The curriculum inspires life-long reading and learning.

International Baccalaureate - Middle Years Program

This international program has several unique characteristics that may interest some students. While insisting upon thorough study of the various disciplines, the International Baccalaureate MYP accentuates the interrelatedness of them and so advances a holistic view of knowledge. International Baccalaureate has all units of instruction designed via one of the five areas of the interaction: human ingenuity, environments, community and service, approaches to learning, and health and social education. Further, students are encouraged to develop intercultural and international awareness along with a genuine understanding of their own history and traditions. The International Baccalaureate Program places great emphasis on mastery of one's own language as well as another language. Students are required to perform community service as a component of their participation in the program. The MYP spans from grades five through ten.

Homework

The Upper St. Clair School District homework policy is based on educational research. Homework is a necessary supplement that supports and enriches the instructional program. It is most meaningful when it is corrected, discussed, and returned to the students, and when it relates to the concepts and objectives that have already been thoroughly explained and understood by the students.

Students in 7th and 8th grades may spend up to two hours a day on homework. In order to meet the needs of individual students and their ability to perform independent study, homework assignments are gradually increased from the elementary levels to the high school. If you find that your child's workload regularly exceeds this recommended amount, we encourage you to contact your student's teacher. Teachers may deem some assignments as long-term assignments. Such assignments will be due on the date requested by the teacher, unless approval is granted by the teacher prior to the date that the assignment is due.

Because it is important for students this age to have time to explore other outside activities, time is set up within the daily schedule for students to begin their homework. Teachers are available during this study time for students who are having trouble with a concept.

Homework Requests

Prior to contacting the school to request homework; please check your team's webpage / Canvas for this information. Because all students are permitted time to make up missed work when they return to school, *homework should only be requested if the student is expected to be absent two or more days.* Homework for absences due to an educational trip is handled on an individual basis. Parents may access the team webpage to view current assignments and projects for the week. Requests for homework can be made by calling the school office at 412-833-1600 extension 3000. Homework will be available for pickup at the end of the day only if the request is made before 9:00 a.m. Requests received after 9:00 a.m. will be available at the end of the following day. Homework may be picked up in the Office.

Field Trips

Our teams are encouraged to use community resources. Field trips are developed with clear instructional goals in mind. Teachers may charge students for the cost of student field trips.

Homebound

Parents or Legal Instruction guardians may ask for their student to be instructed in the home if the student will be absent from school for a period of two weeks or more due to illness. The request should be presented by the parent/legal guardian to the building principal and accompanied by a physician's certification for the need. The Director of Student Support Services must certify each request.

Report Cards & Interim Reports

Students receive report cards each nine weeks. All report cards are delivered to parents and students electronically. Parents must register for MMS accounts to receive this information. The Fort Couch report card provides parents with a wealth of information. The report card is divided into the following categories:

- **Daily Performance** – student performance on class activities and homework (formative assessments)
- **Academic Knowledge** – student achievement of curricular goals based on various types of summative assessments
- **Attributes of a Successful Learner** – student demonstration of work and behavior habits
- **Overall Performance** – An overall summary of the student performance

Progress reports/grades are updated at least every two weeks via MMS. Through MMS, parents and students also have access to view their grades.

Guidelines for Use of the O-G-S-N Grading System

The following characteristics must be kept in mind when utilizing O-G-S-N Grading System.

This grading system values:

- PERFORMANCE that reflects achievement based on the student's ability as opposed to achievement based on an external measurement.
- SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENT of the student that is substantiated with objective measures as evidence, and sensitive to the student's growth.
- PROGRESS that reflects a comparison with the student's past individual work.
- GLOBAL IMPACT that presents the child not in an isolated instance, but a continuation of an ongoing developmental process.

This grading system does not value:

- Evaluation on daily work that uses the O-G-S-N marks. These marks should only be used on report cards and major projects.
- Direct or subtle connections between the O-G-S-N marks and scores received on tests.
- Direct or subtle connections between the O-G-S-N marks and the traditional A-B-C-D marks, percentage points or point breakdowns.
- Direct or subtle connections between the O-G-S-N marks and behavior modifications needs.

It is acceptable to use total number correct out of total number; percentage points; computer grade book; and other methods of recording the objective data for the teacher's grade book. These recording procedures should not be equated to the O-G-S-N marks, but should be accompanied by a written comment.

Planned Program of Standardized Testing

The planned program of standardized testing by the District is collected and maintained by representational consent and is shown below. The results of these tests, as well as the results of aptitude and achievement tests taken by the individual student on a voluntary basis and required for admission into post-secondary education institutions, are maintained and made a part of the record. Should you wish to examine the record, you may arrange to do so by making an appointment with your child's principal or counselor. For specific information regarding matters pertaining to school records, parents or eligible students may contact the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that all school districts participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment.

Students are administered the PSSA English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessments in 7th and 8th grades. The PSSA Science Assessment is given in the 8th grade. Results of these tests are used to give parents an indication of the academic achievement of their child. Students taking Algebra I, regardless of their grade level, will take the Pennsylvania Algebra I Keystone Exam.

The assessment windows for the 2019-2020 school year are as follows:

English Language Arts	Grades 7 & 8	April 21, 22, 24, 2020
Mathematics	Grades 7 & 8	April 28 - 29, 2020
Science	Grade 8	May 5 - 6, 2020
Keystone	Algebra I	May 11-22, 2020

Attendance

The School Day

The school day at Fort Couch is from 8:30 A.M. until 3:20 P.M., Monday through Friday. Students should not be in the building before 8:00 A.M. or after 3:30 P.M. unless requested by a teacher, participating in a supervised activity, arriving on an early bus, or waiting for a late bus.

- **Library** - The Library is open from 8:20 A.M. to 3:20 P.M. if the librarian is available. A note will be posted on the library door should the hours change.
- **Nutrition Center** - The Nutrition Center is open for students beginning at 8:00 A.M. Breakfast can be purchased. All students should remain in the nutrition center until 8:20 A.M.

Time Schedule for 2019-2020

Begin	End	Class
8:30	8:40	Homeroom
8:43	9:29	Period 1
9:32	10:18	Period 2
10:21	11:07	Period 3
11:10	11:40	Grade 7 Lunch
11:10	11:47	Grade 8 Panther Time
11:50	12:20	Grade 8 Lunch
11:43	12:20	Grade 7 Panther Time
12:23	1:09	Period 4
1:12	1:58	Period 5
2:01	2:47	Period 6
2:50	3:20	Period 7 (Resource Time)

*Students will go to their lockers and out to the buses at 3:20 P.M.

Fort Couch Middle School operates on a six-day cycle in order to efficiently use resources and maximize student-learning opportunities.

Core academic classes meet daily. Expressive Arts, Physical Education, World Language, and Guidance meet at various times throughout the six-day cycle.

Address Change: Any student having a temporary or permanent address change during the school year should notify the Fort Couch attendance office.

School Attendance

Regular attendance in school is vital to a student's success. **Compulsory school age** in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires that all students between the ages of 8 and 17 attend school regularly. The compulsory school attendance law also binds students who are enrolled in school, but are not within this age range. Parents/guardians are expected to encourage their children to attend as many school days as possible. The local education agency and parents/guardians will work collaboratively to support student school attendance.

Personal illness, death in the family, religious holiday, an approved educational trip and other urgent reasons affecting the child may necessitate an excused absence. An absence for any other reason is considered an unlawful/unexcused absence. When in doubt of the legality of an absence, parents are requested to contact the child's school principal.

After a student's absence from school, parents must send a signed note with the student explaining the reason and date(s) of the absence. The student must present this excuse to the Attendance Office upon returning to school. If the excuse is not provided within three (3) school days, the absence will be labeled **unexcused**.

When a student misses three (3) consecutive days and no communication from the parent/guardian has occurred, the school nurse or counselor will call home to check on the student to determine if the school can take steps to support the student during his/her absence and/or support transition back to school

When a student misses more than ten (10) cumulative days, parents will receive written notice that an official doctor's excuse will be required for all subsequent absences for the remainder of the school year. Absences that have official doctor excuses will not count towards the 10 cumulative days. Failure to obtain an official doctor's excuse will result in an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences will be addressed in the manner described under the truancy section of school attendance.

Definitions of Truancy

- A student is considered "truant" after three (3) or more unexcused absences during a single school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.

- A student is considered “habitually truant” after six (6) or more unexcused absences during a single school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.
- Occurrence is defined as the first, second, third, etc. time that an excuse is not provided when a student returns to school after a period of school absence.

Parents/guardians will be notified following each unexcused absence/occurrence. When a student is considered truant (**three unexcused absences/occurrences**) the school principal will notify the parents.

This notification:

- Will be in writing to the person of parental relation with a child within ten (10) school days.
- Will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future.
- Will include steps to arrange an attendance improvement conference.

If the child continues to be truant and incurs additional unexcused absences that accumulate six (6) unexcused absences/occurrences becoming “**habitually truant,**” the procedures to follow are based on the age of the child.

- Habitually truant children **under 15 years of age:**

The school must refer the child to either:

- A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program OR
- The county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act
- The school may file a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under 15 years of age in a magisterial district court.

- Habitually truant children **15 years of age and older:**

The school must refer the child to either:

- A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program OR
- File a citation against the student or parent in a magisterial district court
- If a habitually truant child aged 15 or older incurs additional absences after a school refers that child to an attendance improvement program or the child refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, the school may refer the child to the local CYS agency for possible disposition as a dependent child.

School Attendance Improvement Plan Conference

Schools must create attendance improvement plans prior to referring truancy to the courts. A school attendance improvement conference is defined as a conference where the child’s absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services. The conference will include the following individuals:

- The child
- The person in parental relation to the child
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource (e.g., grandparent, sibling, family friend, advocate, etc.)
- Appropriate school personnel
- Recommended service providers (case managers, behavioral health providers, etc.)

The school must hold the conference even if the parent or guardian declines to participate or fails to attend after the school provides advance written notice and makes attempts to communicate via telephone. A legal requirement does not exist for either the child or parent to attend the conference. The school must document the outcome of any attendance improvement conference in a written attendance improvement plan. Schools may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled attendance improvement conference has passed.

Magisterial Referral

After all necessary steps have been taken to foster a collaborative relationship between the local education agency and parents/guardians, a citation may be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled if a student continues to be habitually truant from school. Judges have considerable discretion to impose appropriate penalties in individual cases.

Tardies

Any student entering school after the official beginning time must report to the attendance office to obtain a class admission slip. Any student who is tardy more than ten (10) days without proper medical documentation may be required to submit a doctor's note for subsequent excused tardiness. The school principal will notify parents when the child has accumulated four unexcused tardies. Disciplinary consequences may be assigned.

Early Dismissals: Parents are asked to schedule all medical and dental appointments for their children after 3:20 p.m. If this is not possible, parents must submit a note to the attendance office requesting an early dismissal. The student will receive an early dismissal form at this time. It is the responsibility of the student to remind the teacher when it is time for his/her early dismissal. The early dismissal form must be presented to the attendance office before the student leaves the building.

The parent/guardian must come into the building in the Office and sign off custody of the student.

Students should submit the appropriate documentation for early dismissals, bus passes, and absence excuses prior to the start of classes. *Should an emergency arise and it becomes necessary for a parent to notify the school by phone that they will pick up their child by the end of the school day, the school should be notified whenever possible by 1:00 P.M.*

School Activities

Students will not be permitted to participate or attend any school activities on days they have been marked absent for a half-day. Any special circumstances or situations should be discussed with one of the principals.

Conduct Information

Discipline Code

All pupils are expected to abide by the necessary discipline regulations since they facilitate the operation of the educational process. These regulations are in effect during the school day, at all school-sponsored activities, and on school buses. Violations of school rules and regulations generally are classified into two categories - minor and major. Minor infractions are treated through the Out-Of-Order system, while major infractions may justify immediate suspension from school. The faculty and administration may elect other disciplinary responses and options including: verbal reprimand, special assignment, behavioral contract, withdrawal of privileges, modified day, peer counseling, referral to an outside agency, detention, in-school suspension, temporary removal from class, possible assignment to an alternative school, classroom contract, parent conference, withdrawal from extra-curricular activities, or a hearing with the superintendent. Furthermore, a pupil's privilege to participate in an activity may be terminated if the participant violates any of the *Reasonable and Necessary Rules and Regulations* during the activity. Parents will be contacted whenever appropriate.

Copies of the disciplinary code are given to each student at the beginning of the school year with a return sheet to be signed by both student and parent that they have reviewed the code. The code is also reviewed with the student during guidance time. **School rules are in effect during all school-sponsored activities, field trips, and other school related events including transportation.**

Explanation of Terms

Discipline Report - Written report to the office of a violation of the Discipline Code or for repeated disruptive behavior.

Expulsion - Permanent removal from the total educational program. Expulsion may be recommended because of a particularly serious offense or repeated suspensions. Recommendations for expulsion are made through the Superintendent's Office after conferral with the parent and student. The Board of School Directors can only invoke expulsions.

Major Violations - These are actions that are unlawful and/or constitute a threat to the safety of people or property. Major infractions of the discipline code are referred to school administration.

Minor Violations - These are actions that are a distraction to the educational process, but do not endanger the safety of people or property. Depending on the degree or the number of offenses, minor violations may be reclassified as major.

Suspension - Temporary removal from the total educational program from one to ten days after conferral with both student and parent. Suspensions may be in-school suspensions or out-of-school suspensions. During a suspension period, a student is forbidden to attend any school function such as socials and athletic events. Repeated suspensions may result in expulsion hearing by the Board of School Directors.

In-School Suspension - The administration will assign a pupil for the entire school day to an in-school suspension room. Students report first to the attendance secretary and then to homeroom before proceeding to their suspension. Students who are suspended have an opportunity to receive and complete academic work assignments.

Out-Of-School Suspension - A pupil is denied access to the school and school activities. The student is placed under parental supervision.

As it would be impossible to identify and list all types of inappropriate behavior or action, disciplinary consequences will be administered based on an individual basis for violations not covered in the policy at the discretion of the building principals.

Reasonable and Necessary Rules and Regulations for Fort Couch Middle School	
<i>Minor Violations</i>	<i>Administrative Action</i>
Excessive Noise	Out-of-Order, Detention
Disturbing class	Out-of-Order, Detention
Unjustified tardiness to assigned place	Out-of-Order, Detention
Disorder in classes or halls	Out-of-Order, Detention
Losing or damaging books or other materials	Payment, possible suspension
Failure to be in homeroom on time	Out-of-Order, Detention
Poor nutrition center conduct	Assignment to alternative eating area, Out-of-Order, parent contact
Class cutting	Out-of-Order, parent contact, suspension
Failure to pay library, nutrition center and other financial obligations, return school books, equipment and supplies	Payment, possible suspension of MMS account
Failure to report to the office when told to do so	Out-of-Order, detention, possible suspension
Any behavior which is a distraction to the educational process, but does not endanger the safety of people or property	Out-of-Order, detention, possible suspension
Inappropriate use of an electronic or mobile device	Out-of-Order, confiscation until parents pick up items
Violation of activity rules	Out-of-Order, suspension from activities

REASONABLE AND NECESSARY RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR FORT COUCH MIDDLE SCHOOL	
Major Violations	Administrative Action
Engaging in conduct contrary to the Criminal Code, the laws of Pennsylvania, Upper St. Clair Township ordinances or its published-posted policies and regulations.	Suspension, possible expulsion and/or possible criminal prosecution.
Possession or use of any weapon	Suspension, possible expulsion
Unauthorized possession of key(s) to the school	Suspension, possible expulsion
Cheating, Plagiarism	Failure for that piece of work and suspension
Possession or use of an form of tobacco	Suspension, possible expulsion, referral to SAP
Possession, use, transportation or being under the influence of drugs on school property, buses or at school sponsored events.	Suspension, D&A program, possible criminal prosecution, possible superintendent's hearing, possible recommendation for expulsion.
Sale of drugs	Suspension, D&A program, possible criminal prosecution, possible superintendent's hearing, possible recommendation for expulsion.
Throwing objects at vehicles, school or people	Suspension, possible expulsion
Possession, use or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages on school property, buses or at school sponsored events	Suspension, police notified
Truancy - repeated cutting classes and leaving school grounds without permission	Suspension, possible expulsion, magistrate hearing, police notified
Vandalism and defacing school property and/or the property of others	Payment, suspension, possible expulsion, police and fire marshal notified
Fighting or rowdy behavior that disturbs and threatens the safety of others	Suspension, possible expulsion
Profanity/disrespectful speech or action	Suspension, possible expulsion
Tampering with fire safety equipment	Payment, work, suspension, possible expulsion, police and fire marshal notified
Any behavior that results in unsafe conditions or that interferes with the rights of others	Suspension, possible expulsion
Theft	Restitution where possible, suspension, police notified
Possession/use of look-alike chemicals or paraphernalia associated with the use of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances	Suspension, D&A program, possible criminal prosecution, possible superintendent's hearing, possible recommendation for expulsion, confiscation, detention

Major Violations	Administrative Action
Possession, display and/or sale of pornography or any sexually explicit materials	Suspension, possible expulsion
Repeated minor infractions	Suspension, possible expulsion
Possession, and/or ignition of any fireworks, smoke bombs, matches, lighters, incendiary devices, etc.	Confiscation, suspension, possible expulsion and/or possible criminal prosecution
False alarm/bomb threats	Suspension, possible expulsion and/or possible criminal prosecution
Misuse/abuse/forgery of early dismissals, hall passes, excuses, or other school communications	Suspension, possible expulsion
Possession/use of electronic devices such as beepers, cellular phones, etc.	Confiscation, suspension, possible expulsion
Verbal or Non-Verbal Threat	Suspension, possible expulsion, possible notification to the Police and/or Superintendent

Miscellaneous other offenses	Discretion of the principals
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**** ANY INCIDENT DEEMED A MAJOR INFRACTION MAY RESULT IN ADDITIONAL ACTIONS AS WELL AS NOTIFICATION TO THE TOWNSHIP POLICE.**

Dress Code for Students

The students, faculty and administration believe that student dress is the responsibility of the family with support from the school. As outlined in the Pennsylvania School Code, students have the responsibility to “dress and groom to meet the fair standards of safety and health and not cause substantial disruption to the educational process.” We have confidence in our students and parents in making the decisions as to what constitutes appropriate school attire and appearance. However, Fort Couch is an academic institution and students are expected to dress accordingly. It remains the final decision of the school in cases of dress code abuses. As part of the learning and decision-making process, students need to be aware of choosing clothing that is appropriate for various situations. The following guidelines are in place to assist with the dresscode process. The guidelines are as follows (including, but not limited to):

- no hats, unnecessary head coverings, or bandanas worn or carried in school
- appropriate undergarments worn and not be visible
- no bare midriffs
- shorts and skirts of reasonable length
- no clothing displaying inappropriate messages e.g. apparel that demeans or degrades another, suggests sexual activity (innuendo) or refers to violence, alcohol, drugs or tobacco

Upper St. Clair School District Student and Parent iPad User Agreement

Educational Use

- I will only use my iPad for educational purposes.
- I will use my iPad in ways that are appropriate and meet the Upper St. Clair School District expectations and policies.
- I will only use my iPad in ways that demonstrate academic integrity (i.e. not copying answers).
- I will follow the policies outlined in the school handbook and the Acceptable Use Policy while at school, as well as outside the school day.
- I understand that my iPad is subject to inspection at any time without notice and remains the property of the Upper St. Clair School District.

General Care

- I will know where my iPad is at all times.
- I understand that my iPad is my device and is not to be loaned out to others.
- I will ensure that my iPad be placed in a secured location when not being used.
- I will handle my iPad carefully (i.e. avoid throwing or dropping device, not placing heavy objects on top, etc.)
- I will keep food and beverages away from my iPad.
- I will not place anything (such as stickers, drawings, marks, etc.) on the iPad or cover.
- I will charge my iPad’s battery daily to be prepared for school.
- I will agree to return the District, cover, and charger in good working condition. Individual school iPads and accessories must be returned to the school at the end of this school year. If a student withdraws from the district, they will return the iPad at that time.

Specific Restrictions

- I understand that my iPad is not to be taken in to a restroom or locker room.
- I understand that pictures, video, apps & other media that are not educational do not belong on my iPad.
- I understand that taking pictures or videos of others without their clear permission, is a clear violation of their privacy and school rules.
- I understand that copying another’s work from the Internet and claiming it as my own constitutes plagiarism and is not acceptable.

Repairs/Damage

- I will not modify or change settings/configurations of the iPad.

- I understand that the USCSD Technology Department is responsible for repairing my iPad, and I will not attempt to repair or disassemble my iPad for any reason.
- I will be responsible for all damage or loss caused intentionally, or for damage caused by neglect or abuse.
- I will file a report in the Principal's Office in the case of theft, vandalism or damage.

Counseling Services

School Counselors

Counseling services are designed to help all students discover their own assets, needs, and interests. The curriculum addresses developmental issues faced by adolescents. The course is non-graded. Guidance class, which meets twice in a six-day rotation, gives the counselors an opportunity to meet individual students. Moreover, the counseling program has an open-door policy to satisfy individual and small group needs.

The role of the counselor is to advocate for students and to serve as the liaison between students, teachers, parents and administration. The counselor may perform duties such as attending team meetings, teaching classes, intervening in a crisis, coordinating test administration, attending parent conferences, scheduling students, and coordinating S³. During 7th grade, sample guidance class topics include study skills, computer safety, diversity and tolerance, drug and alcohol education, and peer pressure refusal skills. During 8th grade, sample guidance class topics include drug and alcohol education, diversity and tolerance, career exploration, human growth and development, and transitioning to the high school.

Student Support Services

The Upper St. Clair School District provides for students as mandated by and in compliance with Chapter 14 and Chapter 342 of the Pennsylvania School Code. The district provides for students qualifying for special education supports and services. Related services necessary to assist a student with special needs include transportation, speech, audiology services, physical and occupational therapy, psychological, counseling services, social work, school health services, and early identification and assessment. Additional laws that affect the education and services a child can receive are: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Public Law 92-603), the American's with Disabilities Act (Public Law 101-596) and the Education of the Handicapped Act (Public Law 94-142).

Students with an IQ in excess of 130, and demonstrate a need for Gifted programming, have the possibility of being placed in the Challenge Program for the Gifted and Talented. In the past, students in the Challenge Program have been offered the following options: Chinese Language Class, Computer Fair, Drama Study, Entrepreneurial Studies, Fine and Performing Arts, Future City Competition, Future Problem Solving Competition, Geography Bee, K'Nex Challenge, Literature Study, Mathematics Problem Solving, Mathematics Competitions, Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Competition, Stock Market Game, U.S. Department of Energy Science Bowl, and Writing Workshop.

In addition to the support provided by the school district, the Fort Couch PTA sponsors parent programs and support groups along with student workshops through their Special Education Committee in cooperation with PTA Council and the other units at the elementary and middle schools.

The ***Student Support Services Team*** (S³) works with students in need of a more creative, intensive and systematic approach in over-coming obstacles to their learning. This team is composed of the principals, two counselors, nurse, teachers, and a mental health worker. Through our Student Support Services team, "at-risk" students are monitored and guided by a plan determined to meet the students' needs.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-Curricular Activities

Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities before school, in school, and after school. There is a “no cut” policy for extra-curricular sports and most other activities to encourage students to develop lifelong interests.

Socials

The PTSO sponsors school socials throughout the year. Check the website for the dates. Socials are from 7:00 PM to 9:00 P.M. Students must stay at the social until dismissal at 9:00 P.M. unless a parent, or responsible sibling, comes into the school to pick up the student. Socials usually include a D. J., refreshments, and open gymnasium for other activities. Students may purchase an Activity Card or pay an entrance fee for each PTA Evening Social.

Athletic Program

Fall Sports Sept-Oct

- 7th Grade Football
- 8th Grade Football
- 7th and 8th Grade Boys & Girls Swimming
- 7th and 8th Grade Boys & Girls Cross Country
- 7th and 8th Grade Girls Volleyball
- 7th and 8th Grade Girls Field Hockey (Club)

Winter 1

- 7th and 8th Grade Boys Basketball (Nov-Dec)
- 7th and 8th Grade Wrestling (Dec-Jan)

Winter 2

- 7th and 8th Grade Girls Basketball (Jan-Feb)

Spring (Apr-May)

- 7th and 8th Grade Boys & Girls Track and Field
- 7th and 8th Grade Girls Fast Pitch Softball
- 7th and 8th Grade Boys Volleyball
- 7th and 8th Grade Boys Lacrosse (Club)

At Fort Couch the Athletic Program's major emphasis is to provide broad-based intramural and extramural activities that are an outgrowth of the physical education program. Intramural activities provide exploratory experiences for all students including flag football, soccer, cross country, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, track and softball.

Any student can participate in the after-school extramural activities. The purpose of the program is to provide wholesome physical activity with emphasis on the physical and emotional welfare of the participants. All practices, scrimmages and contests are considered teaching situations. Students have an opportunity to develop skills, sportsmanship, and self-discipline. There is a "no-cut" policy. All students who wish to participate will be assigned to a team. While an attempt is made to give all team members playing time, it is not always possible to give all players equal playing time. The coaches are responsible for using their own discretion. Students who wish to participate in these activities must be in good academic standing and must adhere to team rules. Medical examinations are required for participation. Physical forms and schedules on the Fort Couch website. ***** Participation in all sports requires a participation fee. Please see the costs and registration forms on the District website. *****

Orchestra, Band and Chorus

The school also offers Orchestra, Band, and Chorus with over half of the students participating in at least one of these activities. Although many of our students begin studying their instruments in 3rd and 4th Grade, no

previous experience is necessary. Small group lessons are provided for students playing a string or band instrument. These weekly 30-minute lessons are offered during the academic day. The String Orchestra practices each week. The 7th and 8th Grade Band practices on designated days. The Jazz Band also meets twice a week. Additionally, members of the Orchestra may try out for String Ensembles, while Band members have the option of playing in the Jazz Band and a Symphony Orchestra including strings, winds and percussion. The Fort Couch Middle School Orchestra and Band have annual evening performances.

Fort Couch also offers an extensive Choral Program that provides for students of all abilities and interest levels. The Choral Director designs a schedule so that the various choral groups meet as needed throughout the six-day rotation. Students have the opportunity to study and perform a variety of choral music and participate in smaller vocal groups. The smaller vocal groups meet during the afternoon activity period. Choreography, solo singing, and more extensive part-singing are a component of the program as well. The entire choral music department performs a winter and spring concert, while the smaller group also perform at local malls and for local hospitals and organizations.

General Information

Health Issues

Medical & Dental Exams - Each USC student is required to have a **medical exam** during the year of their original entry in the school system and before entering 6th and 11th grades. Parents may choose to have their family doctor or the school doctor perform the examination. All students are checked for scoliosis in 6th and 7th grade.

Dental examinations are mandated by the State of Pennsylvania upon original entry to the school system, in Kindergarten or 1st, and 3rd, and 7th grades. In lieu of school examinations, the family dentist may perform these examinations.

The school nurse will administer a vision screening in addition to height, weight, and BMI measurements to each child in 7th and 8th grade. The students in 7th grade will also have a hearing and scoliosis screening done by the school nurse.

The immunization requirements for students in grades 7-12 are as follows: 4 doses of tetanus, 4 doses of diphtheria (often seen as DT or DPT on the immunization record); 3 doses of polio; 1 dose of rubella; 2 doses of measles; 2 doses of mumps (often written MMR); 3 doses of hepatitis B; 2 doses of varicella or written statement from a physician/designee indication month and year of disease or serologic proof of immunity; 1 dose Tdap (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis); 1 dose of meningitis vaccine (MCV4).

Sport Medical Exams - Students participating in school-sponsored sports are required according to the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) Constitution and by-laws to have a physical examination. Sports physicals will no longer be available at schools. The new sport physical forms can be obtained from the USC website by selecting parent information/athletics. A sport physical is valid for **1 year** from the date of the medical exam. If more than one sport is played, submit Section 5 of the physical form to the coach for each subsequent sport. If your child suffers a serious illness or injury, you must complete Section 5 of the physical form. The medical examiner completes Section 6 for final medical approval prior to your child's returning to a sport.

Medical Emergency Form: The nurse at Fort Couch keeps a medical emergency form on file for each student. The form indicates the child's doctor and the person(s) to contact in the event of an emergency. *Please keep this information current by notifying the nurse (x3005) of any changes during the school year.*

Medicine Policy

Assisting a student in taking medication is a responsibility that the school district views with considerable concern. Providing assistance to students in taking medication during school hours in accordance with the direction of a parent and physician will be permitted only when failure to take the medication would jeopardize the health of the student or the student would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not made available during school hours. Permission forms and instructions can be obtained from the health office. Necessary forms must be completed and on file in the health office before the medication can be taken at school. The forms are available in the nurse's office.

Medication is to be registered and kept in the health office. This includes prescription medication and over the counter medication. All medication must be in a properly labeled container. Prescription labels must include the name and telephone number of the pharmacy, the student's name, the physician's name, the name of the medication, prescribed dosage, the interval of distribution, the prescription number, and the date of the prescription. Over the counter medication must be in the original package/container along with any instructions packaged with them. Doctors' orders and parental permission must be renewed at the start of each school year and within six months from the date of each prescription. Any medication which must be taken immediately due to a life-threatening concern, i.e. inhalers, EpiPen, etc., may be carried by the student with written permission of the parent and physician.

For all medications, parents are required to provide a written request to the school district specifying the medication and when and how it is to be administered. The request must also ask that school personnel take custody of the medication, release it to the student at appropriate time, and provide assistance in taking it. Accompanying the request should be a written order from the physician with the lawful power to prescribe, specifying the doses and time the medication should be taken, and the doctor's assurance that the medication is appropriate for the child under the circumstances. For elementary or middle school students, parents are requested to deliver the medication to the school office. High school students may carry their own medication to school but are to take their medication to the health office. High school students will be provided with lock-up facilities for their medication in the health office. High school students are permitted to carry on their person a single day's dose of medication and may assume responsibility for self-administration. To self-administer the student must be able to: Respond to and visually recognize his/her name; identify his/her medication; measure, pour, and administer the prescribed dosage; sign his/her medication sheet to acknowledge having taken the medication; and demonstrate a cooperative attitude in all aspects of self-administration. Students who do not follow this procedure will be subject to discipline.

School personnel may remind a student to take medication if requested in writing by the student's parents. The parental request shall be in such form as to relieve the school personnel from all responsibility in the event of the school personnel's failure to remind the student. A form is available from the nurse for students who must take prescribed medication for short-term or long-term periods of time.

School Nurse - The school nurse is on duty every day. Please feel free to phone the school office if you would like to speak with the nurse. A student who becomes ill or injured during the school day should report to the school health office. Students with a health-related problem will be dismissed from school only to persons identified in the student's emergency form. If your student is absent for more than three days, the nurse or will contact you regarding his or her health status.

Communicating with Parents

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled with teachers on an as-needed basis. Conferences can be initiated by the teacher or parent. Teachers will generally initiate contact with a parent once they develop a concern relative to student academic performance or student behavior. Parents are encouraged to monitor MMS upon receiving an e-alert message that a new report is available. Time is available most school days for parent conferences. Common planning time makes it possible to interface with all of the teachers in a student's academic team at one time.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to call the school at (412) 833-1600 and arrange a parent-teacher conference at any time to discuss a student's needs or a topic of mutual interest. The school secretary will schedule the meetings at a time that is mutually convenient to both the parents and teachers. School counselors, all faculty members, and the principals are available to meet with parents. Parents are asked to refrain from impromptu conferences at such times as PTSO meetings, class trips, and open houses. Experience has indicated that a conference in a formal setting is more productive.

Voice Mail

Each teacher has voice-mail. Parents can leave a message with the teacher. A directory is provided at the beginning of each year as well as on the Fort Couch webpage. **In order to not interrupt teachers during class, please call the secretary to be connected directly to the individual teacher's voicemail.**

E-Mail

Each teacher has access to e-mail. In addition, some teachers may set-up user groups to distribute team e-mail. Parents are encouraged to use this form of communication. The Fort Couch website is also used as vehicle to communicate with parents.

Open House

Fall and spring open houses are held during the school year. Parents are invited during the evening to view the school and meet the teachers. Brief programs are held in each classroom to outline the curriculum and programs. Parents are asked to refrain from impromptu-individualized conferences at this time. Fall Open House will be on October 3, 2019. Spring Celebration of Learning will be on May 21, 2020.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are active participants involved in the daily functioning of Fort Couch Middle School. Volunteers offer assistance in seasonal activities and assist with the instrumental program and chorus. The Fort Couch PTSO Executive Board serves on the Principal's Advisory Committee.

Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)

The Fort Couch Middle School PTSO boasts nearly 600 members. Annual membership is \$5.00 per person. Portions of the membership dues are allocated to local, State and National PTA, as well as USC PTC. The majority of PTSO energies are directed towards the students. Recognizing the need for students of this age to socialize, PTSO tries to give them every opportunity to interact and have fun. PTSO sponsors student government, and events such as charity activities, *Caught Ya Being Good* and various evening socials. PTSO advisors work with students on projects such as Reach Out and the Year Book. In cooperation with USC PTC, they sponsor seminars with the Special Education Committee and the Together In Parenting (TIP) Committee as well as Open Mikes with the superintendent. The PTSO also hosts such events as Fall and Spring Open Houses and Winter and Spring Choral and Instrumental Concerts.

There are **no fund-raisers** at Fort Couch. The student's dues are \$30.00. The dues provide students free admission to all PTSO evening socials, a photo ID, and many school and classroom activities. Students not purchasing an activity card are charged an entrance fee of \$5.00 for each PTSO social. Monthly PTSO meetings are open to everyone interested in their common objectives. Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Check the school website or Student Directory for times and dates.

USC PTC

USC Parent Teacher Council meets the first Wednesday of each month at various locations in the USC School District. PTC is comprised of representatives from each USC middle and elementary school, PTA and PTSO unit Presidents, the Superintendent of Schools and School Board members, for the purpose of sharing news, ideas and concerns.

Acting as the core of PTA and PTSO activities in the school district, PTC coordinates common projects such as the Partners In Education Committee, the T.I.P. or Together In Parenting Committee and the Reflections Program.

School Visitations

Parents are welcome to visit in the schools. However, school district policy requires that all visitors report to the main office before going to any part of the building. This policy has been created to avoid unnecessary interruption of classes and to protect the students in the building from strangers.

The school principal decides whether or not to permit an unscheduled or impromptu visit to take place.

Parents making lengthy visits in the schools will be issued a visitor pass and are requested to sign the guest log.

Other Means of Communication

Upper St. Clair schools appreciate the role of the parent in a student's education and extend great effort to keep parents and residents informed.

All USC Board of School Directors general meetings and committee meetings are open to the public with time for public comment. Copies of the minutes for the Board of School Directors monthly meetings are available on the District's website. A synopsis of each general meeting is aired on School Access Comcast Channel 19 and Verizon Channel 41.

The School District's weekly recap is sent via eAlert to all subscribers. The School District and USC Township have combined efforts to produce a Township magazine published four times a year. The *USC Today* magazine covers a broad range of community interest topics and is completely funded by advertising.

Many public forums exist for parents to voice their opinions and concerns to administration and faculty in a relaxed atmosphere. Monthly PTSO meetings are attended by the principals and a teacher representative. In addition, Fort Couch Open Mikes hosted by the PTSO are held each year. Parents from each Academic Team are invited to participate in open discussions with the principals, representative team teachers, and school counselors. Inquiries specific to team teaching and curriculum can be addressed at these sessions.

Safety and Security

Safety and security of the Upper St. Clair School District's students, staff, visitors and facilities is a high priority and is one of five pillars of the District's Strategic Plan. The District is committed to following best practices in the area of school safety. The Chief of School Police leads the security function and is the school safety and security coordinator. Experienced, armed school police officers who are all Act 120 certified are located in every elementary and middle school building. In addition, two assigned school police officers and two Act 235 certified school security officers are located at the high school. School police contact information can be found on the District website under the Safety banner. Chief of School Police Sean Bryson can be reached at 412-833-1600 ext. 2560.

School Safety - Visitors

The safety of students and staff is a priority. The school maintains a comprehensive security plan. Preferred entrance to the building should be made through the front doors. The building has been equipped with entrance cameras and entrance buttons. Visitors must identify themselves and the purpose of their visit before being admitted. Visitors will be registered through the Raptor system to obtain a visitor pass.

Students will only be released to parents or guardians. All visitors will be required to show identification.

Emergency Drills

Fire Drills

A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with it. When the fire alarm sounds, students will immediately stand and form two lines as they leave the room. No one is to pass another person or break the line. Running is not permitted. The first students to reach an outside door are to hold it open until everyone has left the building.

Students are not permitted to talk during a fire drill and are to remain at least 50 feet away from the building until the signal is given to re-enter. No one is to return to the building until a principal authorizes such. Students must stay with their assigned teacher in an assigned area during the drill.

Emergency Drills

The school has an emergency response plan. Various emergency situations including severe weather, evacuations, and lock-downs are included in this plan. Students will be informed and instructed by their teachers as to the appropriate response and action to take during these drills. Emergency codes will be communicated to the entire building to inform them of the emergency situation.

Emergency School Closing

The USCSD Parent Alert System, District Website E-Alerts, and Emergency School Closings – The USCSD Parent Alert System will be used to communicate weather-related as well as non-weather-related delays and/or cancellations. Emergency phone numbers for the Parent Alert System were requested when you completed your “Back to School Online” information. If you have additions or changes to your emergency numbers, please contact your child’s school. Also, please be sure that you are registered for E-Alerts on the District website www.uscsd.k12.pa.us. These systems help us to communicate unanticipated schedule changes to you.

The School District will also communicate delays and cancellations through the media listed below:

- School Access Comcast Channel 19 and Verizon Channel 41
- USCSD website: www.uscsd.k12.pa.us
- USCSD voicemail: [412-833-1600](tel:412-833-1600)
- Local television stations: KDKA, WTAE, WPXI
- Local radio stations: AM1020, AM1410
- Media websites: kdkaradio.com, kdka.com, thepittsburghchannel.com, wpxi.com

Transportation

The School District provides regular daily transportation to and from school for all students participating in the regular curriculum during the school year. However, parents must provide transportation for their children when they participate in other activities. After regular school hours, including extramural and intramural sports and summer school.

Bus assignments and bus stops based on the student's home address are sent home in August. Requests for consideration of unique transportation needs such as students wishing to walk, and handicapped students must be made in writing to the building principal. Forms are available in the school office.

Students should ride assigned buses, boarding and departing only at their designated bus stop. It is important that students be at their assigned stop *at least five minutes before pick-up time*. School buses may be delayed at times due to heavy traffic, severe icing conditions or other unexpected problems. Students should generally remain at the bus stop until the bus arrives.

School buses will complete their scheduled run no matter how late it may become. If weather conditions are severe, students may return to their homes *after waiting 20 minutes*. Parents are urged to arrange transportation to school in these emergency situations for their children if possible. Students absent because of lack of transportation will be excused under the urgent reason clause of the Pennsylvania School Code. Concerns regarding bus policies should be forwarded to the Transportation Department at the Bus Garage. When writing to the Transportation Department, please include your name, school, date, bus number and bus stop. The telephone number for the bus garage is 412-833-1600 ext. 3450.

Walker & Car Riders

Parents who choose to drive their children to or from school during regular school hours, should drop off/pick up their student in the front of the school. If this is done on a regular basis the parents should submit the necessary written form requesting special transportation needs. For parents picking their students up on an *irregular basis*, the student should bring a written note from the parent to the Attendance Office that morning. Parents choosing to have their student walk home from school should follow the same procedure as those choosing to drive their students.

Bus Passes

If there is space, students may ride home on a bus other than the bus assigned by the school district. A written permission slip from the parent *must* be submitted to the Attendance Office in order to obtain a bus pass. Students may only travel on established bus routes and get off at regular designated bus stops. The issued bus pass is given to the bus driver as the student boards.

Bus Rider Rules: All school rules apply while on school district buses.

1. Students should be on time at their designated school bus stops and should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter.
2. Students should keep their hands and heads inside the bus at all times while on the bus.
3. Students should talk in a quiet and polite manner refraining from loud talking and laughing that might distract the driver's attention and cause a hazardous driving situation.
4. Students should never tamper with the bus and related equipment.
5. Students should remain seated in their seats at all times.
6. Students should not throw anything in or out of the bus windows.
7. Students are expected to act in a courteous and respectful manner to other riders including their fellow students and to the bus driver.

Fort Family / Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Olweus is the most research based and best-known bullying prevention program available to schools. Olweus is a whole-school program that has been proven to reduce and prevent bullying throughout a school setting. Olweus has three main goals to its program: reduce existing bullying problems among students; prevent the development of new bullying problems; and to achieve better peer relations at school. Fort Family is Fort Couch's intergration of Olweus into Fort Couch programming.

Nutrition Center

An A la Carte breakfast is available for the students Monday through Friday from @ 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced lunch is offered at a reasonable price. Nutrition Center menus for breakfast and lunch are published monthly for students to view on the website. A hot entree and sandwich are offered daily as well as soup and salads, bagels, cold cuts, yogurt and milk. A la Carte items can also be purchased from the snack line. Students may also bring their own lunches.

The Nutrition Center operates a debit card system. Parents may send money to the manager who will place the money into individual student accounts. Parents can establish spending and food limits by notifying the nutrition center manager.

Nutrition Center rules have been set up so that students may eat in a clean, orderly, and relaxed climate.

Rules for the Nutrition Center:

1. Do not cut in line.
2. Do not pressure other students for money.
3. Dispose of all lunch litter in wastebaskets.
4. Behave courteously. Talk in a normal tone and refrain from disruptive behavior.
5. Clean your table for the next group before leaving the nutrition center.
6. Students must stay on the bottom floor during their lunch period.

If the above rules are not followed, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken.

Photo Refusal

Photos and videotape footage of Upper St. Clair students involved in various school activities are often used as part of the district's community relations program. Photographs/videotape may be used in district publications, video productions, newspapers, television and the district and individual classroom web sites. On websites, if the student is identified at all, just the first name will be used. If for any reason you do not want photographs or videotape of your child used in publications, video production or web sites, please notify the school office.

Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance

Every citizen maintains a responsibility to show proper respect for one's country and its flag. Students may decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the flag on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions. Students who choose to refrain from such participation shall respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.

Hall Passes

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain a hall pass from a teacher/supervisor prior to leaving a classroom or activity.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker and a lock. Students should not tell other students their locker combinations. If valuables are taken from a student's locker, the student should report it to the office. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her locker clean. Students should not force the doors closed. **Lockers are for the use of a single occupant. Students are not permitted to share their lockers.**

While students are allowed the private use of a locker at Fort Couch, the **lockers remain the property of the school**. Lockers may be opened by authorized personnel as necessary for the safety and well being of the school community. Locks should be returned at the conclusion of the school year. If students lose their lock, a fee will be assessed.

School Materials

Texts, library books and other school materials used by the students become their responsibility. All school materials are expected to be treated with care. If a book is damaged or lost, the student will be assessed a sum of money to cover the cost of repair or replacement.

Student Pictures

A professional photographer takes pictures of Fort Couch students during the fall and spring of each year. Parents will receive instructions about the procedure to purchase these pictures if there is an interest. There is a make-up session for students absent the day pictures are originally taken.

Student Records

Student *Cumulative Records* include report cards and progress reports as well as copies of standardized assessment scores, other test scores, a picture of the student, and other pertinent educational information. A student's *Permanent File* includes only the student's standardized assessment scores, final grades for each level, attendance records including records of tardiness and record of graduation. Parents have the right to view or copy these records.

Health records are kept as part of the cumulative records and passed on to other schools in the district. Parents are responsible to provide the school with all pertinent legal information including child custody.

Student Property

Fort Couch students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money, iPods, cell phones, cameras or anything else valuable to school. Students, not the school, are responsible for their personal property.

Building Use

The school district encourages the use of facilities by community organizations. Permits can be obtained from the central office. Many groups and organizations use the facility throughout the evening. People who are in the building beyond the school day and do not have a permit will be asked to leave.

School Board Policies

The following policies are only a sampling of board policies which are in place to govern the school system.

3015 Nondiscrimination/Discriminatory Harassment – School and Classroom Practices

Authority

The District shall provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex/gender (including identity, expression, and orientation), ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or disability.)

[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19]

The District strives to maintain a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination. Discrimination is inconsistent with the educational and programmatic goals of the District and is prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities and on any conveyance providing transportation to or from a school entity or school-sponsored activity.

The District shall provide to all students, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, any opportunities for employment, athletics and extracurricular activities. The District shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

The Board encourages students and third parties who believe they or others have been subject to discrimination to report such incidents promptly to designated employees, even if some elements of the related incident took place or originated away from school grounds, school activities or school conveyances.

The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of discrimination shall be investigated promptly and that appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of discrimination brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven discriminatory under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with this policy and the District's legal and investigative obligations. When a parent/guardian requests confidentiality and will not consent to the alleged victim's participation in an investigation, the building principal or designee will explain that the school shall take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with that request for confidentiality as long as doing so does not preclude the school from responding effectively to the discrimination and preventing discrimination of other students.

Retaliation

The Board prohibits retaliation against any person for making a report of discrimination or participating in a related investigation or hearing, or opposing practices the person reasonably believes to be discriminatory. A complaint of retaliation shall be handled in the same manner as a complaint of discrimination.

If it is concluded that a student knowingly made a false complaint under this policy, such student shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Definitions

Responding party is defined as the person identified by the report.

Discriminatory Harassment

Harassment by students, employees or third parties on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex/gender (including identity, expression, and orientation), ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, disability or for participation in reports or investigations of alleged discrimination is a form of discrimination and is subject to this policy. A person who is not necessarily an intended victim or target of such harassment but is adversely affected by or witnesses the offensive conduct may file a report of discrimination on his/her own behalf.[20][21][22][23][24][25][26]

For purposes of this policy, **harassment** shall consist of unwelcome conduct such as graphic, written, electronic, verbal or nonverbal acts including offensive jokes, slurs, epithets and name-calling, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, or other conduct that may be harmful or humiliating or interfere with a person's school or school-related performance and which relates to an individual's or group's race, color, age, creed, religion, sex/gender (including identity, expression, and orientation), ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or disability when such conduct is:

1. Sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive; and
2. A reasonable person in the reporting party's position would find that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment such that it deprives or adversely interferes with or limits an individual or group of the ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or opportunities offered by a school.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex and is subject to this policy. For purposes of this policy, **sexual harassment** shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's status in any educational or other programs offered by a school; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for educational or other program decisions affecting a student; or
3. Such conduct deprives a student or group of individuals of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or
4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that a reasonable person in the reporting party's position would find that it unreasonably interferes with the reporting party's performance in school or school-related programs, or otherwise creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school or school-related environment such that it unreasonably interferes with the reporting party's access to or participation in school or school-related programs.

Federal law declares sexual violence a form of sexual harassment. **Sexual violence** means physical or sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent. An individual may be unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Sexual violence includes but is not limited to rape, sexual assault, sexual battery and sexual coercion.

Delegation of Responsibility

In order to maintain a program of nondiscrimination practices that is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, the Board designates the Deputy Superintendent as the District's Compliance Officer. All nondiscrimination notices or information shall include the position, office address, telephone number and email address of the Compliance Officer.

The Compliance Officer shall publish and disseminate this policy and complaint procedure at least annually to students, parents/guardians, employees and the public to notify them of where and how to initiate complaints under this policy.

The Compliance Officer is responsible for ensuring adequate nondiscrimination procedures are in place, for recommending new procedures or modifications to procedures and for monitoring the implementation of the District's nondiscrimination procedures in the following areas:

1. Curriculum and Materials - Review of curriculum guides, textbooks and supplemental materials for discriminatory bias.
2. Training - Provision of training for students and staff to prevent, identify and alleviate problems of discrimination.
3. Resources - Maintain and provide information to staff on resources available to alleged victims: the school complaint procedure, making reports to the police, available assistance from domestic violence or rape crisis programs and community health resources including counseling resources.
4. Student Access - Review of programs, activities and practices to ensure that all students have equal access and are not segregated except when permissible by law or regulation.
5. District Support - Assurance that like aspects of the school program receive like support as to staffing, compensation, facilities, equipment, and related areas.
6. Student Evaluation - Review of tests, procedures, and guidance and counseling materials for stereotyping and discrimination.
7. Complaints - Monitor and provide technical assistance to building principals or designee in processing complaints.

The building principal or designee shall be responsible for completing the following duties promptly upon receipt of a report of discrimination or retaliation from a student, employee or third party:

1. If the building principal is the subject of the complaint, refer the reporting party to the Compliance Officer to carry out these responsibilities.
2. Inform the reporting party about this policy including the right to an investigation of both oral and written complaints of discrimination.
3. Notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim(s) and responding party(ies) that the school will be investigating the complaint as set forth in this policy, that their child's participation in the investigation is completely voluntary and that students may decline to participate at any stage of the investigation. The parent/guardian of the alleged victim should be notified that the failure to participate may limit the completeness of the investigation and make a finding of a violation difficult. The parent/guardian of the responding party should be notified that failure to participate may limit the completeness of the investigation and result in the finding of a violation without considering information known only to the responding party. Parents/Guardians may be granted the opportunity to accompany their child during an investigatory interview if there is not an immediate health, safety or welfare concern necessitating an immediate interview and their participation does not unreasonably delay the interview. The notices required by this section shall be provided in writing on a form specified by the Compliance Officer or designee. Provide relevant information on resources available to alleged victims: the school complaint procedure, how to report to the police, available assistance from domestic violence or rape crisis programs, and community health resources

including counseling resources.

4. Immediately notify the Compliance Officer of the complaint. The Compliance Officer shall assess whether the investigation should be conducted by the building principal, another District employee, the Compliance Officer or an attorney and shall promptly assign the investigation to that individual.
5. After consideration of the allegations and in consultation with the Compliance Officer and other appropriate individuals, promptly implement interim measures as appropriate to protect the reporting party and others as necessary from violation of this policy during the course of the investigation.

Guidelines

Complaint Procedure – Student/Third Party

Step 1 – Reporting

A student or third party who believes s/he has been subject to conduct by any student, employee or third party that constitutes a violation of this policy is encouraged to report the incident immediately to the building principal or school employee. Any person with knowledge of conduct that may violate this policy, is encouraged to report the matter immediately to the building principal or school employee.

A school employee who suspects or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the building principal, as well as properly make any mandatory police or child protective services reports required by law.[27]

If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the student, third party or employee shall report the incident directly to the Compliance Officer.

The reporting party or reporting employee may be encouraged to make the complaint in writing or to use the District's report form available from the building principal, Compliance Officer, and the District website; however, oral complaints shall be accepted, documented and the procedures of this policy implemented. The person accepting the written or verbal complaint may provide the reporting party with factual information about the investigative process, the impact of choosing to seek confidentiality and the right to file criminal charges. In all other respects, the person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the reporting party or those accused of a violation of this policy.

Step 2 – Investigation

The Compliance Officer shall ensure that the individual assigned to investigate the complaint has an appropriate understanding of the relevant laws pertaining to discrimination issues and this policy and how to conduct investigations.

The investigator shall work with the Compliance Officer to assess the anticipated scope of the investigation, who needs to be interviewed and what records may be relevant to the investigation.

The investigator shall conduct an adequate, reliable and impartial investigation. The reporting party and the responding party may suggest additional witnesses and provide other evidence during the course of the investigation. When the initial complaint involves allegations relating to conduct which took place away from school property, school-sponsored activities or school conveyances, the investigation may include inquiries related to these allegations to determine whether they resulted in continuing effects such as harassment in school settings.

The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the reporting party, the responding party, and others with knowledge relative to the allegations. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation. The person making the report, parties, parents/guardians and witnesses shall be informed of the prohibition against retaliation for anyone's participation in the process and that conduct believed to be retaliatory should be reported. All individuals providing statements or other information or participating in the investigation shall be instructed to keep the matter confidential and to report any concerns about confidentiality to the investigator.

If the investigation reveals that the conduct being investigated may involve a violation of criminal law, the investigator shall promptly notify the Compliance Officer, who shall promptly inform law enforcement authorities about the allegations.[27][28][29]

The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal or child protective services investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded. The investigator should coordinate with any other ongoing investigations of the allegations, including agreeing to requests for a short delay in fulfilling the District's investigative responsibilities during the fact-finding portion of a criminal or child protective services investigation. Such delays shall not extend beyond the time necessary to prevent interference with or disruption of the criminal or child protective services investigation.

Step 3 – Investigative Report

The investigator shall prepare and submit a written report to the Compliance Officer within thirty (30) days of the initial report of alleged discrimination, unless the nature of the allegations, anticipated extent of the investigation or the availability of witnesses requires the investigator and the Compliance Officer to establish a different due date. The parties shall be notified of the anticipated date the investigative report will be completed and of any changes to the anticipated due date during the course of the investigation.

The report shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint has been substantiated as factual, the information and evaluation that formed the basis for this determination, whether the conduct violated this policy and of any other violations of law or Board policy which may warrant further District action, and a recommended disposition of the complaint. An investigation into discriminatory harassment or sexual harassment shall consider the record as a whole and the totality of circumstances in determining whether a violation of this policy has occurred, recognizing that persistent and pervasive conduct, when taken together, may be a violation even when the separate incidents are not severe.

The reporting party and the responding party shall be informed of the outcome of the investigation, for example, whether the investigator believes the allegations to be founded or unfounded, within a reasonable time of the submission of the written report to the extent authorized by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other applicable laws. The responding party shall not be notified of the individual remedies offered or provided to the reporting party.[30][31][32]

Step 4 – District Action

If the investigation results in a finding that some or all of the allegations of the complaint are established and constitute a violation of this policy, the District shall take prompt, corrective action designed to ensure that such conduct ceases and that no retaliation occurs. The District shall promptly take appropriate steps to prevent the recurrence of the prohibited conduct and to address the discriminatory effect the prohibited conduct had on the reporting party and the school or school program environment. District staff shall document the corrective action taken and, where not prohibited by law, inform the reporting party. The Compliance Officer shall follow up by assessing the effectiveness of the corrective action at reasonable intervals.

If an investigation results in a finding that a different policy was violated separately from or in addition to violations of this policy, or that there are circumstances warranting further action, such matters shall be

addressed at the conclusion of this investigation or through disciplinary or other appropriate referrals where further evaluation or investigation is necessary.

Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, Board policies and administrative regulations, District procedures, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and state and federal laws.

Appeal Procedure

1. If the reporting party or the responding party is not satisfied with a finding made pursuant to the policy or with recommended corrective action, s/he may submit a written appeal to the Compliance Officer within fifteen (15) days of the date of the disposition notice. If the Compliance Officer investigated the complaint, such appeal shall be made to the Superintendent.
2. The individual receiving the appeal shall review the investigation and the investigative report and may also conduct or designate another person to conduct a reasonable supplemental investigation to assess the sufficiency and propriety of the prior investigation.
3. The person handling the appeal shall prepare a written response to the appeal within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written appeal. Copies of the response shall be provided to the reporting party, the responding party and the investigator who conducted the initial investigation.

Legal

1. 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq
2. 22 PA Code 12.1
3. 22 PA Code 12.4
4. 22 PA Code 15.1 et seq
5. 22 PA Code 4.4
6. 24 P.S. 1301
7. 24 P.S. 1310
8. 24 P.S. 1601-C et seq
9. 24 P.S. 5004
10. 29 U.S.C. 794
11. 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq
12. 42 U.S.C. 1981 et seq
13. 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq
14. 43 P.S. 951 et seq
15. Pol. >
16. Pol. >
17. Pol. >
18. Pol. >
19. U.S. Const. Amend. XIV, Equal Protection Clause
20. 29 CFR 1604.11
21. 29 CFR 1606.8
22. Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629 (1999)
23. Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools, 503 U.S. 60 (1992)
24. Office for Civil Rights - Guidance on Schools' Obligations to Protect Students from Student-on-Student Harassment on the Basis of Sex; Race, Color and National Origin; and Disability (Oct. 26, 2010)
25. Office for Civil Rights - Resources for Addressing Racial Harassment
26. Office for Civil Rights - Revised Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students or Third Parties Title IX (January 2001)
27. Pol. >
28. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2709
29. Pol. >

30. 20 U.S.C. 1232g
31. 34 CFR Part 99
32. Pol. >
28 CFR Part 35
28 CFR Part 41
34 CFR Part 100
34 CFR Part 104
34 CFR Part 106
34 CFR Part 110

3027 Use of the District's Internet and Computer Networks

The Board supports use of the Internet and other computer networks in the District's instructional and operational programs in order to facilitate learning, teaching and daily operations through interpersonal communications and access to information, research and collaboration.

For instructional purposes, the use of network facilities shall be consistent with the curriculum adopted by the School District as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of students.

The electronic information available to students and staff does not imply endorsement by the District of the content, nor does the District guarantee the accuracy of information received. The District shall not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable when using the network or for any information that is retrieved via the Internet.

The District shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet.

The District reserves the right to log network use and to monitor fileserver space utilization by District users in order to address School District concerns. A log on banner in the form attached as Appendix A, as may be amended from time to time by the Administration, will put users on notice of the District's access right.

The Board establishes that network use is a privilege, not a right; inappropriate, unauthorized and illegal use may result in suspension and/or cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action. The frequency and severity of violations, among other things, will determine the level of suitable discipline.

The District shall make every effort to ensure that this resource is used responsibly by students and staff, and that it complies with the Federal Communications Commission's Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

This Policy 3027 and Policy 3014 (Information Systems Policy) applies to all students, employees, ECA positions, visitors and volunteers using the School District's internet service or computer network, or any School District owned device, software, application, digital technology or system whether on the school district premises or in any location away from the school district premises, including at home. In addition, this policy applies to any non school district owned device using the District's network, systems or Internet connection.

Administrators, teachers and staff have a professional responsibility to work together to help students develop the intellectual skills necessary to discriminate among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels, and to evaluate and use the information to meet their educational goals.

Students and staff have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of every other user in the District and on the Internet.

The administrators shall have the authority, in the first instance, to determine whether activity violates this policy. The determination is subject to review by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for recommending technology and developing procedures used to determine whether the District's computers are being used for purposes prohibited by this policy, by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The procedures shall include but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access for minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, including child pornography, or harmful to minors with respect to use by minors.
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log.
3. Monitoring online activities on the District network or with District equipment in order to address School District concerns.
4. Educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Network accounts shall be used only by the authorized owner of the account for its approved purpose. All network users shall only use their own password and shall not disclose password information to any other person.

Prohibitions

Students and staff are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with District policy, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law.

Personal use of the District's internet and email system by staff must be strictly limited. To the extent possible, staff should not use the District's network or computers to transmit personal communications.

Specifically, the following uses are prohibited:

1. Facilitating illegal activity.
2. Commercial or for-profit purposes.
3. Nonwork or nonschool related usage.
4. Product advertisement or political lobbying.
5. Bullying/Cyberbullying.
6. Hate mail, discriminatory remarks, or offensive or inflammatory communication.
7. Communication by staff to students which do not entirely concern necessary and appropriate School District matters.
8. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials.
9. Access to materials, images or photographs that are obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal.

10. Access by students and minors to material that is determined by the District to be harmful to minors or is determined by the District inappropriate for minors in accordance with the CIPA and Board policy adopted pursuant thereto, or the student code of conduct.
11. Inappropriate language or profanity.
12. Transmission of material likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
13. Intentionally obtaining or modifying of files, passwords, and data belonging to other users.
14. Impersonation of another user, anonymity, and pseudonyms.
15. Fraudulent copying, communications, or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws.
16. Loading or using of unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media.
17. Disruption of the work of other users.
18. Destruction, modification, abuse or unauthorized access to network hardware, software and files.

Security

System security is protected through the use of passwords. Failure to adequately protect or update passwords could result in unauthorized access to District files. To protect the integrity of the system, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Employees and students shall not reveal their own password or the password of any other system user to any other individual.
2. Users are not to use a computer that has been logged in under another student's or employee's name.
3. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the network.

Consequences For Inappropriate Use

The network user shall be responsible for damages to the equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.

Illegal use of the network; intentional deletion or damage to files of data belonging to others; copyright violations; and theft of services will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.

General rules for behavior and communications addressed elsewhere in Board policy and the student code of conduct apply when using the Internet, in addition to the stipulations of this policy. Suspension or loss of access and other disciplinary actions shall be consequences for violations of this policy.

Vandalism will result in cancellation of access privileges and disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any intentional attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet or other networks; this includes but is not limited to uploading or creating computer viruses.

Copyright

The illegal use of copyrighted software by students and staff is prohibited. Any data uploaded to or downloaded from the network must be authorized by fair use guidelines or consent.

Safety

To the greatest extent possible, users of the network will be protected from harassment and unwanted or unsolicited communication. Any network user who receives threatening or unwelcome communications shall report such immediately to a teacher or administrator.

Any District computer/server utilized by students and staff shall be equipped with Internet blocking/filtering software.

Developmentally appropriate internet safety measures shall be implemented that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications.
2. Prevention of unauthorized online access by minors, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities.
3. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
4. Restriction of minors' access to materials determined by the District to be harmful to them pursuant to the CIPA and Board policy.

APPENDIX "A"

LOG ON BANNER

The Upper St. Clair School District ("District") reserves the right to view or scan any file or software on its computers or passing through its network at any time for any purpose in order to address School District concerns. All electronic messages contain no right of privacy or confidentiality except where Pennsylvania or Federal law provides for it. The District may inspect the usage of any electronic communications made by any person at any time utilizing District hardware or passing through the District's network as deemed necessary to address School District concerns to the full extent not expressly prohibited by applicable law.

This Policy completely supersedes the interim Addendum adopted by the District on September 24, 2012.

ADOPTED: December 14, 2009

REVISED: November 26, 2012

Policy 3029 – School Building and Grounds Security Monitoring

Purpose

The Board recognizes the need to enforce standards of conduct for the safety of students, staff and visitors. The use of a video recording is intended to assist the administration in the safe and orderly operation of the District, including observing conduct; preventing and addressing violations of Federal, State, or local laws, District policies or school rules; maintaining physical security and safety; and reviewing and releasing video recordings when necessary or required for disciplinary, civil and/or criminal matters.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the oversight of the video system and video media. The video system and media shall remain in the possession of the Superintendent or designee provided that administrators may be authorized in writing by the Superintendent or designee to extract, review and/or maintain the video media. The Superintendent, or designee, shall oversee the implementation of this policy and any necessary procedures for the videotaping of District schools and property.

Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall have the authority to determine the District's video monitoring needs.

Video recorders may be placed in and around any and all District property. All students, staff and visitors are subject to being videotaped on District property, including inside and around District schools, at any time. The District does not record audio except as specifically designated on District school buses and vehicles. Notification to students, parents/guardians and staff will be made through District communications or visible notice in/on all buildings or property equipped with video monitoring.

The Superintendent, or designee, may review the video media as necessary, including periodic reviews, and in response to allegations of improper conduct. If an incident is reported, the video may be reviewed and extracted if necessary and useful. If an incident is captured on video and extracted prior to being overwritten, the tape may be preserved by District officials for internal purposes and may be disclosed to law enforcement for conduct that may be criminal. If no such incidences are reported and the video is not requested or extracted, the video media will typically be recycled and overwritten within forty-five (45) days.

The video media is intended for the safe and orderly operation of the District. Video media is not intended for general viewing by a student, employee, parent/guardian, or the public and shall not be made available for general viewing purposes; nor is the video media intended to relieve District personnel of their responsibilities for submitting disciplinary reports and/or written statements.

Staff and students are prohibited from tampering, or otherwise interfering with, video media, camera equipment, and/or any records related to school monitoring and/or the implementation of this policy. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Review and Release

Video media may be viewed only with the proper written authorization of the Superintendent or designee. All requests must be made through the Superintendent or designee. In no event shall video media be reviewed or released in any manner without explicit authorization of the Superintendent or designee, unless otherwise required by law.

The District shall comply with applicable laws, regulations and District policies relating to the maintenance, disclosure and destruction of records. Video recordings may be reviewed and used in the context of student, employee, contractor or visitor misconduct.

Video recordings may be considered part of a student's education record if the recording relates directly to a student, has been extracted and is being centrally maintained by the District for educational or disciplinary purposes. Such recordings shall be maintained in accordance with laws, regulations and District policies governing access, review and disclosure of student records.

In the event of use, or proposed use, of a video media in connection with a student disciplinary proceeding, confidentiality considerations shall be enforced. Only those relevant portions of the video media shall be subject to review and/or admitted into evidence, and any such review/use shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its implementing regulations and any other applicable law. The District shall not be required to modify or alter a video recording in order to facilitate a request for disclosure.

The video media may be subject to review and release to law enforcement personnel, if duly requested in writing by police, other members of law enforcement, or other individuals, or permitted by law or pursuant to a subpoena. If applicable, the notice requirements for the release of an education record pursuant to a subpoena shall be followed.

ADOPTED: October 23, 2017
REVISED: February 25, 2019

3030 – Transportation-Video-Audio Monitoring

Please review the text of this policy on the District website under School Board Policies on the School Board Webpage at <https://www.uscsd.k12.pa.us/Page134>

3032 – Food Services

Please review the text of this policy on the District website under School Board Policies on the School Board Webpage at <https://www.uscsd.k12.pa.us/Page134>

4006.1 - English as a Second Language Instruction

Purpose

In accordance with the Board's philosophy to provide quality educational programs to all district students and to increase the English language proficiency of students who are English Learners (EL), the district shall provide an effective Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) that meets the needs of English Learners. The goal of the LIEP shall be to demonstrate success in increasing English language proficiency and student academic achievement so that EL students can attain the academic standards adopted by the Board and achieve academic success. EL students shall be identified, assessed and provided appropriate instruction in accordance with the LIEP, and shall be provided an equitable opportunity to achieve their maximum potential in educational programs and extracurricular activities, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

Authority

The Board shall approve a LIEP to provide English Language Development instruction (ELD) to EL students as part of the approved curriculum, in order to develop the English language proficiency of EL students. The district shall provide EL students with both planned ELD instruction and modifications in content instruction and assessments for all curricular areas, based on the provisions of the LIEP. The LIEP shall be thoughtfully and deliberately planned and evaluated in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, and shall meet the needs of the district's EL students. The LIEP shall be based on effective research-based theory, implemented with sufficient resources and appropriately trained staff, and shall meet the following requirements:

1. Aligned to state academic content standards for the appropriate grade levels of EL students.
2. Include ELD instruction delivered by properly certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, and other certified content area teachers working in conjunction with ESL certified teachers.
3. Incorporate the use of state assessments and ELD criteria.
4. Provide equitable access to content for EL students at all proficiency levels.
5. Provide equitable access to enrollment in courses or academic programs for which EL students are otherwise eligible.

The Board directs the LIEP to be evaluated for effectiveness based on student outcomes at least annually, and the results documented in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, and state guidelines.

The district's LIEP and evaluation results of the LIEP shall be made available to district staff working with EL students and parents/guardians of EL students.

The Board may address EL students and programs in the district's comprehensive planning process.

If necessary, the Board may contract with Allegheny Intermediate Unit No. 3 for ELD services and programs.

The Board shall ensure that eligible EL students who are enrolled in nonpublic schools are identified, assessed, evaluated, provided with equitable LIEP services and programs and monitored in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The district shall coordinate with nonpublic schools in the provision and monitoring of services and programs for eligible EL students.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall implement and supervise a LIEP that ensures appropriate instruction in each school and complies with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district complies with all federal and state laws and regulations, and program requirements, for ELD program funding, including required reports in the form prescribed by the state.

The Superintendent or designee, in conjunction with appropriate stakeholders, shall develop administrative regulations regarding the LIEP and provision of services to EL students.

Guidelines

Identification and Placement of EL Students

The district shall establish procedures for identifying and assessing the needs of students whose dominant language is not English. In order to identify which students are potential English Learners, the Home Language Survey shall be completed for each student upon enrollment in the district, and shall be maintained as part of the student's education records.

EL students shall be appropriately placed in accordance with the LIEP within the first thirty (30) days of the school year, or within fourteen (14) days of enrollment.

Program Access

EL students shall have equitable access to and be encouraged to participate in all academic and extracurricular activities available to district students.

Assessment

The district shall annually administer required assessments to EL students to measure students' English Language proficiency and progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening/understanding. Assessment results shall be maintained in the student's education records. Parents/Guardians may not opt students out of English language proficiency assessments.

EL students shall participate in all annual state or locally required assessments, with accommodations where applicable, and meet established academic standards and graduation requirements, in accordance with law, regulations and Board policy.

Program Exit

The district shall include uniform provisions in the LIEP, in accordance with state required criteria, for:

1. Reclassifying EL students as former EL students when they attain English language proficiency.
2. Actively monitoring and reporting the progress of former EL students for a period of two (2) years following reclassification and program exit, and reporting students to the state in a monitor status for an additional two (2) years, to ensure students are meeting academic standards.
3. Re-designating former EL students as active EL students if they struggle academically based on persistent language barriers.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

Certified employees and appropriate support staff, when necessary, shall provide the LIEP. The district shall ensure that all teachers providing ELD instruction hold the appropriate certification and can demonstrate academic language proficiency both in English and in the language used for instruction in their classroom.

Non-ESL staff shall incorporate ELD into all classes for EL students, as well as provide supports, modifications and accommodations for curricular content to enable EL students to achieve academic standards.

The district shall provide appropriate training in ELD for all professional staff as part of the Professional Development Plan.

Special Education and Gifted Education Services

EL students may be eligible for special education services when they have been identified as a student with a disability and it is determined that the disability is not solely due to lack of instruction or proficiency in the English language.

EL students may be eligible for gifted education services, when identified in accordance with law, regulations and Board policy. The district shall ensure that assessment of a student for gifted education services screens for intervening factors, such as English language proficiency, that may be masking gifted abilities.

Students participating in ELD instruction who are eligible for special education services shall continue receiving ELD instruction, in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP), at the appropriate proficiency and developmental level.

Parent/Family Engagement and Communication

Communications with parents/guardians shall be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the parents/guardians.

Within thirty (30) days of the beginning of each school year, or within fourteen (14) days of enrollment during the school year, the district shall notify parents/guardians of students identified as EL about the process for identifying their children as EL, the results of that process, and the recommended program placement. The district shall also provide parents/guardians with detailed information regarding the LIEP, the benefits of ELD instruction for their children, and an explanation of the program's effectiveness.

Parents/Guardians shall be regularly apprised of their child's progress, including achievement of academic standards and assessment results.

The district shall maintain an effective means of outreach to encourage parental involvement in the education of their children.

Parental Right to Opt Out of ELD Programs and Services -

Parents/Guardians of EL students have the right to refuse specialized programs and services that may be part of the LIEP for their child. A parent's/guardian's decision to refuse programs or services must be informed and voluntary; the district shall not influence a parent's/guardian's decision in any way, or make any program or placement determinations without parental notification and an opportunity to opt the student out of programs and services.

The district shall make a parental waiver form available for parents/guardians to opt their EL child out of ELD programs and services.

The district shall document all notifications made to parents/guardians regarding assessment and recommended placements and programs for EL students, and whether or not a parental waiver form is received. When a waiver form is not received from the parent/guardian, the district shall proceed with the recommended placement.

EL students who have a parental waiver for ELD programs and services shall be assessed on English language proficiency annually, and shall be provided with supports and accommodations to participate in general curricular and extracurricular programs, in order to meet academic standards and graduation requirements.

Parents/Guardians of EL students who have been opted out of ELD programs and services shall be notified of their child's progress, including achievement of academic standards and assessment results, and shall be provided with opportunity and a form to opt their child back into ELD programs and services.

ADOPTED: February 12, 1979
REVISED: February 24, 2003
REVISED: October 22, 2018

4016 - Behavior Support Policy

Purpose

Students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment and shall only be placed in settings other than the regular education class when the nature or severity of the student's disability is such that education in the regular education class with the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The IEP team for a student with a disability shall develop a positive behavior support plan if the student requires specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning. The identification, evaluation, and plan or program shall be conducted and implemented in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

Authority

The Board directs that the district's behavior support programs shall be based on positive rather than negative behavior techniques to ensure that students shall be free from demeaning treatment and unreasonable use of restraints or other aversive techniques. The use of restraints shall be considered a measure of last resort and shall only be used after other less restrictive measures, including de-escalation techniques. Behavior support programs and plans shall be based on a functional assessment of behavior and shall include a variety of research-based techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance students' opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment.

Definitions

The following terms shall have these meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Aversive techniques - deliberate activities designed to establish a negative association with a specific behavior.

Behavior support - development, change and maintenance of selected behaviors through the systematic application of behavior change techniques.

Behavior Support Plan or Behavior Intervention Plan - plan for students with disabilities who require specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning. A positive Behavior Support Plan shall be developed by the IEP team, be based on a functional behavioral assessment, and become part of the individual student's IEP. These plans must include methods that use positive reinforcements, other positive techniques and related services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

Positive techniques - methods that utilize positive reinforcement to shape a student's behavior, ranging from the use of positive verbal statements as a reward for good behaviors to specific tangible rewards.

Restraints - application of physical force, with or without the use of any device, designed to restrain free movement of a student's body, excluding the following:

1. Briefly holding a student, without force, to calm or comfort him/her.
2. Guiding a student to an appropriate activity.
3. Holding a student's hand to escort him/her safely from one area to another.
4. Hand-over-hand assistance with feeding or task completion.
5. Techniques prescribed by a qualified medical professional for reasons of safety or for therapeutic or medical treatment, as agreed to by the student's parents/guardians and specified in the IEP.
6. Mechanical restraints governed by this policy, such as devices used for physical or occupational therapy, seatbelts in wheelchairs or on toilets used for balance and safety, safety harnesses in buses, and functional positioning devices.

Seclusion - confinement of a student in a room, with or without staff supervision, in order to provide a safe environment to allow the student to regain self-control.

Students with disabilities - school-aged children within the jurisdiction of the district who have been evaluated and found to have one or more disabilities as defined by law, and who require, because of such disabilities, special education and related services.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this Board policy is implemented in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide regular training, and retraining as needed, of staff in the use of specific procedures, methods and techniques, including restraints and seclusions, that will be used to implement positive behavior supports or interventions in accordance with students' IEPs and Board policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain and report data on the use of restraints, as required. Such report shall be readily available for review during the state's cyclical compliance monitoring. Procedures shall be established requiring reports be made to the district by entities educating students with disabilities who attend programs or classes outside the district, including private schools, agencies, intermediate units and vocational schools.

Guidelines

If the IEP team determines that a student's behavior impedes the student's learning or the learning of others, a positive Behavior Support Plan must be developed. The positive Behavior Support Plan must be based on a functional behavior assessment. Parental consent for a functional behavior assessment is required.

When an intervention is necessary to address problem behavior, the types of intervention chosen for a student shall be the least intrusive necessary.

Physical Restraints

Restraints to control acute or episodic aggressive behavior may be used only when the student is acting in a manner that presents a clear and present danger to the student, other students or employees, and only when less restrictive measures and techniques have proven to be or are less effective.

The Director of Student Services or designee shall notify the parent/guardian by phone and in writing within 24 hours of the use of restraints to control aggressive behavior of the student and shall convene a meeting of the IEP team within ten (10) school days of the use of restraints, unless the parent/guardian, after written notice, agrees in writing to waive the meeting. At this meeting, the IEP team shall consider whether the student needs a functional behavioral assessment, re-evaluation, a new or revised positive Behavior Support Plan, or a change of placement to address the inappropriate behavior.

The use of restraints shall not be included in the IEP for the convenience of staff, as a substitute for an educational program, or employed as punishment. Restraints may be included in an IEP only if:

1. The restraint is used with specific component elements of a positive Behavior Support Plan.
2. Restraint is used in conjunction with teaching socially appropriate alternative skills or behaviors.
3. Are authorized to use the restraint and have received appropriate training.
4. Behavior Support Plan includes efforts to eliminate the use of restraints.

Mechanical Restraints

Mechanical restraints, which are used to control involuntary movement or lack of muscular control of students when due to organic causes or conditions, may be employed only when specified by an IEP and as determined by a medical professional qualified to make the determination, and as agreed to by the student's parents/guardians.

Mechanical restraints shall prevent a student from injuring him/herself or others or promote normative body positioning and physical functioning.

Seclusion

The district permits involuntary seclusion of a student in accordance with the student's IEP or in an emergency to prevent immediate or imminent injury to the student or others, but the seclusion must be the least restrictive alternative.

The district prohibits the seclusion of students in locked rooms, locked boxes and other structures or spaces from which the student cannot readily exit.

Aversive Techniques

The following aversive techniques of handling behavior are considered inappropriate and shall not be used in educational programs:

1. Corporal punishment.
2. Punishment for a manifestation of a student's disability.
3. Locked rooms, locked boxes, other locked structures or spaces from which the student cannot readily exit.
4. Noxious substances.
5. Deprivation of basic human rights, such as withholding meals, water or fresh air.
6. Suspensions constituting a pattern as defined in state regulations.
7. Treatment of a demeaning nature.
8. Electric shock.
9. Methods implemented by untrained personnel.
10. Prone restraints, which are restraints by which a student is held face down on the floor.

Referral to Law Enforcement

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report required incidents and may report discretionary incidents committed on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity by a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies. The Superintendent or designee shall respond to such incidents in accordance with the district's Special Education Plan and, if applicable, the procedures, methods and techniques defined in the student's Behavior Support Plan.

Subsequent to notification to law enforcement, an updated functional behavioral assessment and Behavior Support Plan shall be required for students with disabilities who have Behavior Support Plans at the time of such referral. The Upper St. Clair School District will request professional development and technical assistance from the Intermediate Unit, PATTAN, and the Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education as needed.

If, as a result of such referral, the student is detained or otherwise placed in a residential setting located outside the district, the Director of Student Support Services or designee shall ensure that the responsible school district or intermediate unit is informed of the need to update the student's functional behavioral assessment and Behavior Support Plan.

For a student with a disability who does not have a Behavior Support Plan, subsequent to notification to law enforcement, the district shall convene the student's IEP team to consider whether a Behavior Support Plan should be developed to address the student's behavior, in accordance with law, regulations and Board policy.

Relations With Law Enforcement

The district shall provide a copy of its administrative regulations and procedures for behavior support, developed in accordance with the Special Education Plan, to each local police department that has jurisdiction

over school property. Updated copies shall be provided each time the administrative regulations and procedures for behavior support are revised by the district.

The district shall invite representatives of each local police department that has jurisdiction over school property to participate in district training on the use of positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques and appropriate responses to student behavior that may require intervention, as included in the district's Special Education Plan and positive behavior support program. District school police officers will participate in district training that is in compliance with positive behavior supports.

ADOPTED: December 10, 2018

4017 - Use of Force – School Police Officers

Purpose

It is the policy of the Upper St. Clair School District that School Police Officers shall only use force when authorized by law and shall only use the amount of force reasonably necessary to mitigate an incident while protecting themselves and others from harm. School Police Officers are advised that the priority of the School District is the safety of students. This includes the safety of any student who is the perpetrator of a crime or the subject to be controlled by the officer. Officers shall not retaliate, taunt, or engage in any malicious behavior towards a student.

Authority

In order to preserve a safe school environment for students and staff, the Upper St. Clair School District has appointed School Police Officers with all of the powers and duties set forth by 24 P.S. § 13-1306-C. School Police Officers who are properly trained in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth may possess weapons on their person. This policy shall set forth guidelines for School Police Officers who have been authorized and approved by the Board to carry weapons while on duty. 24 P.S. § 5-510; 24 P.S. § 13-1305-C.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and this policy relating to the use of force by School Police Officers. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain administrative regulations, as necessary, to ensure proper implementation of this policy.

The Chief of School Police shall establish and maintain a training program under which all School Police Officers are adequately and properly trained on this policy and the continuum of force set forth herein. The Chief of School Police shall conduct a periodic analysis of incident reports regarding the use of force and make recommendations relating to training or policy modification that may be necessary. The Chief of School Police may recommend additional law enforcement policies for the operation and management of the School Police force consistent with this policy and subject to Board approval, as applicable.

Definitions

Objectively Reasonable – The reasonableness of a particular use of force is based on the totality of the circumstances known by an officer at the time of the use of force. Circumstances may include, but are not limited to, the seriousness of the crime, the level of the threat or resistance presented by the individual, and the danger to the school community.

Physical Force – Any physical strike or instrumental contact with a person, application of pain compliance techniques or any significant physical contact that restricts movement of a person. This term does not include escorting or handcuffing a person with minimal or no resistance.

Proportional Force – Proportional force is the use of force that is proportional to the law enforcement objective at stake and is generally force that is one level higher than the force used by the subject. Application of proportional force must reflect the circumstances, including the presence of imminent danger to officers or others, and be reasonably proportionate to the threat. Proportional force does not require officers to use the same type or amount of force as the subject presents.

Serious Physical Injury – An injury that creates a substantial risk of death, causes serious permanent disfigurement or results in long term loss or impairment of the functioning of a body part or organ.

Guidelines – Use of Force

In using any level of force with respect to students, a School Police Officer shall at all times be cognizant of the age, perceived age, grade level, size and physical and mental capacity of the student. In general, the District's policy is to avoid the use of any law enforcement device, such as O.C. (Pepper) Spray or restraints, with respect to any student whose actions do not constitute an immediate threat to himself or another, unless the School Police Officer determines the use of a law enforcement device is justified under the circumstances. O.C. Spray shall not be used for crowd control. The School District does not envision the use of any such law enforcement devices with respect to any student in Grades K-8 under any but the most unusual circumstances and the Officer can justify such use for the protection of the student or others from serious bodily injury.

The levels, or continuum of force, School Police Officers use shall include officer presence, verbal commands, de-escalation, empty-hand controls, less-lethal force, and lethal force. The continuum of force is further defined herein.

De-escalation

Prior to using force, when safe and without compromising law enforcement objectives, School Police Officers shall use de-escalation techniques to attempt to slow down and/or stabilize a situation to allow for more time, options, and resources for incident resolution. De-escalation techniques include, but are not limited to:

1. Mitigating the immediacy of the threat by containing or reducing exposure by moving to a safer position;
2. Establishing communications from a safe position;
3. Use of verbal techniques to promote rational decision making; and
4. Avoidance of physical confrontation, unless immediately necessary.

When safe and feasible, School Police Officers should consider whether a subject's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist or an inability to comply based on factors such as, but not limited to, a medical condition, mental impairment, developmental disability, language barrier, influence of drug or alcohol use, perceived age, and/or behavioral crisis. School Police Officers should accept information and recommendations from school staff regarding individual students and any disability or behavioral needs that may be relevant.

Use of Force

School Police Officers have the right to use force in achieving lawful objectives, as delineated within this policy and consistent with 18 Pa. C.S. § 508 (Use of Force in Law Enforcement) and § 509 (Use of Force by Persons with Special Responsibility for Care, Discipline or Safety of Others). School authorities may use reasonable force to quell a disturbance, to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects, for the purposes of self-defense, or for the protections of persons or property. 22 Pa.Code § 12.5. School Police Officers must only use the amount of force that is objectively reasonable and necessary under the circumstances and proportional to the threat or resistance of the individual. Use of force that is objectively unreasonable or unnecessary may subject the Officer to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as civil and criminal liability.

Use of Lethal Force

School Police Officers are authorized to use lethal force upon another person when it appears reasonably necessary to: (1) protect the Officer or another person from the use or imminent use of lethal physical force; (2) to prevent the escape from custody of a person if, based on the objective and reasonable belief that:

1. The suspect has committed or is in the process of committing a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious physical injury or death; and
2. The escape of the subject would pose an imminent danger of serious physical injury or death to the officer or another person unless the suspect is apprehended without delay and all other reasonable means of apprehension have been exhausted.

In determining whether lethal force is warranted, the Officer shall act upon their reasonable belief. Prior to the use of lethal force, where safe and feasible, Officers will identify themselves as law enforcement and order the subject to stop the activity which authorizes the use of lethal force.

Restrictions on the Use of Lethal Force

Officers will not use lethal force to subdue persons whose actions are a threat only to property or against persons whose conduct is a threat only to themselves.

Officers will not fire any weapon from or at a moving vehicle except to counter an imminent threat of death or serious physical injury to the Officer or another person, and when no other means are available at the time to avoid or eliminate the danger. Officers will consider the following factors in determining whether shooting at or from a moving vehicle is justified:

1. An occupant of the vehicle is using or threatening to use lethal force by means other than the vehicle.
2. The vehicle is being operated in a manner deliberately intended to strike a person.
3. All other reasonable means of defense (including taking cover or moving out of the path of the vehicle or other evasive action) have been exhausted, are not practical or are not present.

Warning shots are prohibited.

Officers will not fire any weapon to humanely destroy an animal unless this is objectively reasonable to prevent potential bodily harm to other persons.

Officers will avoid the use of the following unless lethal force is reasonably believed to be necessary within the guidelines and in compliance with law and this policy:

1. Choke holds; and/or
2. Strikes with an instrument other than hands or fists above a person's shoulder.

Where lethal force is not authorized, Officers may use less lethal methods, empty hand control and only that level of force that is objectively reasonable to bring an incident under control according to the use of force continuum.

Rendering Aid

Following any use of force, Officers shall evaluate the subject for injuries. Officers must immediately request an ambulance, paramedics or other appropriate medical personnel for all subjects who show signs of injury or complain of injury following any use of force. Officers shall proceed to render appropriate medical aid within their training as soon as practicable.

Reporting Requirements

School security or School Police Officers involved in a use of force incident must notify the Chief of School Police and Superintendent as soon as practicable after the situation has been brought under control. If a student is injured during the use of force, the injury shall be reported to ChildLine as required by the Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa.C.S. § 6301 *et seq.* If an eligible student under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is restrained as that term is defined by 22 Pa.Code § 14.133, the School Police Officer shall cooperate with all restraint reporting requirements.

When a firearm is discharged the Chief of School Police, the Superintendent and/or designee, and the Upper St. Clair Township Police shall be notified immediately.

A School Police incident report containing reasons and type of force used must be completed for the following:

1. Whenever a School Police Officer's actions result in, or are alleged to have resulted in, the injury or death of another person.
2. Whenever a School Police Officer applies force through the use of a lethal weapon.
3. Whenever a School Police Officer applies physical force as defined in this policy, including the use of empty-hand control and less-lethal methods.
4. Whenever a School Police Officer discharges a firearm other than for authorized training purposes.

Lethal Force and Serious Injury Incident Response

The Chief of School Police will respond to the scene of all reportable incidents involving the use of lethal force or serious injury and immediately notify the Upper St. Clair Township Police and/or other external law enforcement. Where the use of force by a School Police Officer results in death or serious physical injury of any individual, the Chief of School Police or designee shall request that a separate law enforcement entity of competent jurisdiction conduct a comprehensive investigation.

The Chief of School Police will participate in the collection of information and cooperate with external law enforcement investigation as directed by the external law enforcement agency. If the Chief of School Police is the individual directly involved in the use of lethal force or serious injury, the incident will be immediately referred to external law enforcement for response and investigation. All incidents will simultaneously be referred to the Superintendent or designee (Human Resources) for employment investigation purposes, subject to any limitation on internal investigation imposed by external law enforcement.

While the above investigation into the incident of death or serious physical injury is pending, the School Police Officer involved shall be removed from active duty pursuant to applicable personnel procedures and consistent with laws, regulations and District policy.

Any School Police Officer whose actions or use of force results in death or serious physical injury shall be referred to the appropriate mental healthcare professional or Employee Assistance Program for support.

Guidelines – Firearms

School Police Officers authorized to carry firearms shall have the firearm under their control at all times. Firearms shall be holstered, except when in use by the officer.

Firearms shall be properly and routinely cleaned and maintained in proper working order. Firearms will be inspected by the Chief of Police on a periodic and random basis.

Firearms utilized by School Police shall include an internal safety mechanism to prevent accidental discharge.

Storage –

School Police Officers are responsible for the general safekeeping and handling of their firearms at all times. No District authorized firearm shall be stored in any school building area, whether locked or unlocked. When on school premises, traveling between sites on school business and/or when traveling to and from work, the firearm shall be safely placed in a school-issued gun holster. The Officer is personally responsible for maintaining the firearm in a safe manner at all other times when the equipment is in the Officer's possession. In the event that there is a need to store a District authorized firearm on District property, the firearm shall be emptied of ammunition, stored unloaded in a locked gun safe, and the ammunition should be stored in a separate locked gun safe. All gun safes shall be capable of safely storing weapons in a manner prohibiting access by unauthorized persons and ensuring the safety and welfare of staff and students. Access to the school safes shall be limited to assigned Administrators, School Police Officers and the Chief of School Police.

Use –

When in use, the firearm shall remain under strict control of the School Police Officer.

All weapons shall be loaded and unloaded in a safe, secure and private environment, unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise. The School District shall provide and designate such safe, secure and private environments to be used for loading and unloading of firearms.

Weapons shall be worn and used only while the School Police Officer is performing his/her normally assigned duties.

Weapons shall not be worn while the School Police Officer is off duty or while traveling out of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, except for the following circumstances:

1. To and from home as a School Police Officer when such route is direct.
2. To and from off-site locations to conduct official school business.
3. To and from interschool district locations and interschool district locations in order to conduct official school business.
4. With expressed written permission of the Chief of School Police and the Superintendent or designee.

Discharge of a Firearm –

Firearms may be discharged only in a manner consistent with the use of lethal force provisions of this policy.

Damage or Loss of Firearms –

In the event that a firearm is lost or damaged, the Officer must:

1. Make an immediate verbal report to the Chief of School Police, who shall immediately notify the Superintendent and/or designee.
2. Follow up his/her verbal report with a written police report no later than the end of the officer's tour of duty.

When a firearm is lost or damaged in the performance of an official duty and not due to Officer negligence, the District shall be responsible for the expense of repair or replacement. If loss or damage is found to be the result of Officer gross negligence, the Officer may be responsible for repair or replacement.

Loss or theft of a firearm shall be reported to Upper St. Clair Township Police or other jurisdictionally appropriate police department by the Chief of School Police without delay.

Disciplinary consequences may be imposed upon the offending Officer where loss or damage of a firearm is caused by Officer negligence.

Force Continuum

Officer presence – No force is used. This method shall be the preferred method of control. The mere presence of a School Police Officer works to deter crime or diffuse a situation. The Officer's attitude shall be professional and non-threatening.

Verbal direction – Force used is not physical. School Police Officer issues a calm, nonthreatening command, such as "Let me see your hands." The School Police Officer may increase voice volume and shorten commands in an attempt to gain compliance. Commands issued to students shall appropriately reflect a student's age and developmental level, and shall not consist of taunting, name calling, threats, racial or ethnic slurs, or cursing directed at the student.

De-escalation techniques – Techniques that seek to minimize the likelihood of the need to use force during an incident and increase the likelihood of gaining voluntary compliance.

Empty-hand control – School Police Officers use bodily force to gain control of a situation.

1. Soft technique is utilized when an officer uses grabs, holds, and joint locks to restrain an individual.
2. Hard technique is utilized when an officer uses punches or kicks to restrain an individual.

Less-lethal methods – School Police Officers use less lethal technologies to gain control of a situation. An example of less-lethal methods School Police Officers are authorized to use OC Spray to restrain a combative person.

Lethal force – School Police Officers use lethal weapons to gain control of a situation. Lethal force shall only be used when a suspect uses or poses the imminent use of lethal physical force or to prevent the escape from custody of a person who is using or poses the imminent use of lethal physical force if not apprehended without delay.

Training

School Police Officers are only authorized to use department approved devices, tactics or weapons for which they have been trained and demonstrated proficiency.

All School Police Officers authorized to carry a lethal or less-lethal weapon must be issued copies of, and be instructed in, the use of force policy and de-escalation techniques before being authorized to carry such a weapon or device.

All School Police Officers who carry a firearm while performing their duties for the School District shall be properly qualified for the use of said firearm at least twice per year with said weapon in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Weapons qualifications and proficiency training shall be monitored by a certified weapons instructor.

Firearms proficiency requirements are outlined in the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) standards for police certification.

In the event the School Police Officer fails to complete the necessary training to maintain their status as a certified School Police Officer, the School Police Officer shall immediately notify the Chief of School Police.

Review of Policy; Liability

This policy shall be reviewed on at least an annual basis and revisions recommended as necessary. The District shall be adequately insured at all times for all duties and obligations contained in this policy. In the event it is necessary, all such authorized School Police Officers who are subject to the rules and regulations of this policy shall be represented by legal counsel at the sole cost and expense of the District, except in the event that the Officer commits a willful, intentional or grossly negligent act with any lethal or less-lethal weapon while on duty or acts outside the scope of the Officer's employment. All costs and expenses necessary for the implementation of this policy shall be borne solely by the District, which shall include the required periodic training of School Police Officers and other authorized personnel

ADOPTED: January 14, 2019

5313 - Student Communication Policy

This Student Communication Policy is designed to provide employees with the School District's expectations for communicating with all students in K-12 inclusive. The expectation is that student communications are only used to support the educational mission of the School District with regard to teaching and learning. Communication should be related to educational issues and meet the ethical standards set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the School District. Communication tools such as social networking websites, e-mail, instant messaging, and other emerging technologies should be used only to extend teaching and learning opportunities. Any communication tools approved by the School District or provided via its systems may be utilized freely inside or outside of the school setting for teaching and learning-related issues. However, communication with students outside of school via any communication tools that are not approved by the School District or provided via its systems (e.g., social networking sites, Twitter, texting, personal e-

mail, instant personal messaging, blogs, discussion boards, etc.) requires written notification to the students' parent(s) or guardian(s) in advance. A suggested form for parental notification and administrative approval is attached. Inappropriate communications of any kind with students, regardless of setting, are strictly prohibited. All ethical expectations set forth in Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators apply with regard to any communication with a student. This subparagraph applies to communications using the School District's systems as well as privately owned systems. Violation of this Policy could result in appropriate disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Employees are expected to report any violations of this Policy to their supervisors, the Director of Human Resources, or the Superintendent.

ADOPTED: June 20, 2011

6001.1 - Alcohol and Other Controlled Substances

The School District recognizes that student sanctioned use of alcohol and other controlled substances are illegal. This use has an adverse effect on the ability of all students of the school community to achieve personal and School District Goals. The use of alcohol and other controlled substances is a major problem affecting young people. Often, it leads to chemical dependency, an illness requiring intervention and treatment. In order to insure for all students the highest standards for learning, the school district will assist students in abstaining from the use of alcohol and other controlled substances, intervene early when use is detected, refer to appropriate source and provide support for students with chemical problems. Students will also receive support in coping with a parent, guardian, or significant person who has a chemical problem. The Board recognizes these issues as legitimate concerns of the School District and wishes to address these needs as part of a comprehensive education program.

The School District adopts the position that students must be chemically free to learn and develop in the most productive and healthy manner. It is the School District's policy to prevent and prohibit the use of alcohol and other controlled substances, to maintain a caring environment within the system, and to intervene in situations when a student may be harmfully involved.

Therefore, a prevention program shall be instituted which will promote a positive self esteem, develop effective skills in decision making, nurture successful interpersonal relationships, teach accurate information, establish appropriate staff training, and provide supportive services.

A program to prohibit chemical use shall be enforced by setting clear limits of student behavior. Harmfully involved students will be assisted to seek appropriate supportive and rehabilitative services.

The School District's preference is to help students address their harmful involvement with alcohol or other controlled substances while continuing in the regular school setting. When treatment becomes necessary outside the school setting, every effort will be made to affect a successful reentry into school.

It is sometimes necessary to use the full force of disciplinary regulations to achieve appropriate student participation in order to assist them in resolving their problems. Some students may be required by the School District to secure adequate medical treatment, rehabilitative counseling, alternative education or other services. Other students may need to be expelled from the school community by the Board of School Directors.

This policy will be implemented through appropriate administrative regulations and the cooperative efforts of the faculty, administration, school employee groups, students, parents/guardians, and community agencies.

ADOPTED: January 11, 1971
REVISED: November 11, 1974
REVISED: November 12, 1984
REVISED: September 26, 1994

6008.4 - Weapons and Safe Schools

Supplementing Policies 6008, 6008.2 and 6008.3, and superseding those policies to the extent of any inconsistency:

A. The School District shall comply with the provisions of:

1. Section 4 of Act 26 of 1995 (24 P.S. § 13-1317.2) providing for, inter alia, (a) the expulsion for one year of a student who brings a weapon (as defined in the Act) onto any school property, any school sponsored activity, or any public conveyance providing transportation to a school or a school sponsored activity, except as otherwise provided in the Act and in this policy; and (b) the report of such incidents to the Superintendent, the Upper St. Clair Township Police, and the Department of Education; and 2. Section 7 of Act 26 of 1995 (24 P.S. §§ 13-1301-A et seq.) relating to Safe Schools and requiring (a) the reporting of acts of violence and possession of a weapon to the Office of Safe Schools of the Department of Education; (b) a memorandum of understanding between the School District and the Upper St. Clair Township Police relative to acts of violence and possession of weapons on school property; (c) prior to admission of a student to school, the sworn statement of the parent or other person having control or charge of the student stating whether the student has been expelled from another school for an offense relating to weapons (as defined in the Act), alcohol or drugs or the willful infliction of injury to another person or an act of violence on school property; (d) the transmission of disciplinary records of a pupil who has transferred to another school; and, (e) the availability and maintenance of student discipline records.

B. The policy set forth above in Section A.1, being limited in scope to "weapons" as therein defined and limited in its application to students who have "brought a weapon onto school property, any school sponsored activity, or any public conveyance providing transportation to a school or a school sponsored activity," the following provisions shall apply in all cases where the provisions contained in Section A.1 do not apply:

1. The possession, use or storage of Weapons (as defined below) by students at, in, or on school property, or the bringing of a weapon to school property, any school related or school sponsored activity, a school bus stop, a school bus, or any public conveyance providing transportation to or from school or a school related or school sponsored activity is prohibited.
2. For the purpose of this policy, a Weapon includes a "Weapon look-alike." The Administration will act reasonably and exercise good judgment in determining what constitutes a Weapon, particularly when interpreting the danger presented by a Weapon look-alike."

3. Definitions:

"Weapon" shall include "Firearms" (as defined below), as well as any substance or object which, when combined with the conduct or intent of its possession or with the circumstances in which it is being used, attempted to be used or threatened to be used, is capable of or does in fact, harm, intimidate, threaten or harass a person or those persons in the vicinity of its possessor.

"Firearms" shall include firearms as defined in Section 921 of Title 18, United States Code, Section 621 of the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act or Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, and any shotgun or rifle or any ammunition for the same.

"Weapon look-alike" shall include any implement which is designed to look like a weapon.

4. This policy shall be applicable regardless of whether the Weapon has been registered or whether the individual against whom this policy is being enforced has been issued a permit to possess the Weapon.
5. Any student violating this policy shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion, as appropriate. The Superintendent may recommend to the Board discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In the case of an exceptional student, the Superintendent shall take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Title 18 P.S. § 912 provides as follows:

(a) DEFINITION.-- Notwithstanding the definition of "weapon" in section 907 (relating to possessing instruments of crime), "weapon" for purposes of this section shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchuck stick, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

(b) OFFENSE DEFINED.-- A person commits a misdemeanor of the first degree if he possesses a weapon in the buildings of, on the grounds of, or in any conveyance providing transportation to or from any elementary or secondary publicly-funded educational institution, any elementary or secondary private school licensed by the Department of Education or any elementary or secondary parochial school.

(c) DEFENSE.-- It shall be a defense that the weapon is possessed and used in conjunction with a lawful supervised school activity or course or is possessed for other lawful purpose.

Exception: Law enforcement officials may carry weapons on school property. The Superintendent or authorized staff may issue exceptions for items such as cutting instruments used in art, drama, technology education, or music classes, or Weapons or Weapon look-alikes used in an instructional program.

ADOPTED: August 26, 1996

REVISED: November 24, 2008

6008.5 - Terroristic Threats

The School District recognizes the danger that terroristic threats and acts present to the safety and welfare of District students, staff, officials, volunteers and the local community. The District prohibits any student, staff member, volunteer or official from communicating terroristic threats or committing terroristic acts directed at any student, employee, Board member, community member, school buildings or District property.

A "terroristic threat" is a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize another, to cause evacuation of a building, or to cause serious public inconvenience, in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.

A "terroristic act" shall mean the carrying out of a terroristic threat against a person or property.

Staff members and students shall be responsible for informing the building principal regarding any information or knowledge relevant to a possible or actual terroristic threat or act.

When an administrator has evidence that a student has made a terroristic threat or committed a terroristic act, the following guidelines shall be applied:

1. The building principal may immediately suspend the student.
2. The building principal shall promptly report the incident to the Superintendent.
3. Based on further investigation, the Superintendent or principal may report the student to law enforcement officials and bring charges against the student.
4. Based on further investigation, the Superintendent may recommend expulsion of the student to the Board of School Directors.

ADOPTED: November 24, 2008

6008.6 - Bullying & Cyberbullying

Bullying/Cyberbullying

Purpose

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for District students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by District students.

Definitions

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:[1]

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education;
2. Creating an environment that a reasonable person in the reporting party's situation would find threatening;
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

For the purpose of this policy, District student includes an individual that is enrolled in a District school, attends class in a District school building, participates in school activities, or rides school District-provided transportation.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.[1]

Responding party is defined as the person identified by the report.

Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by District students in all school settings. The Board also prohibits all forms of bullying by District students in non-school settings, and will enforce consequences provided under this policy to acts of bullying occurring in a non-school setting to the fullest extent permitted by law.[1]

The Board encourages students who believe they or others have been bullied to report promptly such incidents to the building principal or designee or a school counselor, teacher or other adult District employee, who shall then promptly report such incident to the building principal or designee.

Students are encouraged to use the District's report form, available from the building principal and online on the District's website, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may

not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

Discrimination/Discriminatory Harassment

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws prohibiting discrimination and discriminatory harassment shall be investigated under both the bullying and nondiscrimination policies with the participation of the Compliance Officer. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination or discriminatory harassment are identified, the Compliance Officer shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[3]

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of the complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with this policy and the District's legal and investigative obligations.

Retaliation

Reprisals or retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible for respecting the rights of others and for ensuring an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.[1]

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1]

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:[1]

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.[1]

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the District website.[1]

Incidents of bullying by District students, as defined in this policy, that occur outside the school setting and result in an arrest, citation or conviction that is reported to school authorities by law enforcement or official authorities shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The filing of knowingly false bullying reports will be punishable under the Student Code of Conduct.

Education

The District may develop, implement and evaluate bullying prevention and intervention programs and activities. Programs and activities shall provide District staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.[1] [2]

Consequences for Violations

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:[1]

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
5. Detention.
6. Suspension.
7. Suspension from School District-provided transportation.
8. Expulsion.
9. Counseling/Therapy outside of school.
10. Referral to law enforcement officials.
11. Transfer to another classroom or school bus.

Original Adoption – November 24, 2008
Revised – August 2012, August 2015, August 2017
Last Revised and Adopted – June 19, 2019

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A
2. 24 P.S. 1302-A
3. Policy 3015

6011 - Child/Student Abuse

The Board requires District employees, independent contractors and volunteers to comply with identification and reporting requirements for suspected child abuse, as well as the training requirement for recognition and reporting of child abuse in order to comply with the Child Protective Services Law and School Code.

Definitions

The following words and phrases, when used in this policy, shall have the meaning given to them in this section:

Adult – an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Bodily injury – impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

Certifications – refers to the child abuse history clearance statement and state and federal criminal history background checks required by the Child Protective Services Law and/or the School Code.

Child – an individual under eighteen (18) years of age.

Child abuse – intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
3. Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
4. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
5. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
6. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
7. Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
8. Engaging in any of the following recent acts:
 - a. Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
 - b. Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
 - c. Forcefully shaking a child under one (1) year of age.
 - d. Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one (1) year of age.
 - e. Interfering with the breathing of a child.
 - f. Causing a child to be present during the operation of methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.

- g. Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender, has to register for life, or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.
- h. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
- i. Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined in the law.

The term child abuse does not include physical contact with a child that is involved in normal participation in physical education, athletic, extracurricular or recreational activities. Also excluded from the meaning of the term child abuse is the use of reasonable force by a person responsible for the welfare of a child for purposes of supervision, control or safety, provided that the use of force:

1. Constitutes incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact in order to maintain order and control;
2. Is necessary to quell a disturbance or remove a child from the scene of a disturbance that threatens property damage or injury to persons;
3. Is necessary for self-defense or defense of another;
4. Is necessary to prevent the child from self-inflicted physical harm; or
5. Is necessary to gain possession of weapons, controlled substances or other dangerous objects that are on the person of the child or in the child's control.

Direct contact with children – the possibility of care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.

Independent contractor – an individual who provides a program, activity or service who is otherwise responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children pursuant to a contract. The term does not apply to administrative or other support personnel unless the administrative or other support personnel have direct contact with children.

Perpetrator - a person who has committed child abuse and is a parent/guardian of a child, a spouse or former spouse of the child's parent/guardian, a paramour or former paramour of the child's parent/guardian, a person responsible for the child's welfare, an individual fourteen (14) years of age or older who is responsible for the child's welfare or who has direct contact with children as an employee of child-care services, a school or through a program activity or service; an individual fourteen (14) years of age or older who resides in the same home as the child; or an adult who does not reside in the same home as the child but is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity by birth or adoption to the child; or an adult who engages a child in severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined in the law. Only the following may be considered a perpetrator solely based upon a failure to act: a parent/guardian of the child; a spouse or former spouse of the child's parent/guardian; a paramour or former paramour of the child's parent/guardian; an adult responsible for the child's welfare; or an adult who resides in the same house as the child.

Person responsible for the child's welfare – a person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, mental health diagnosis or treatment, training or control of a child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control.

Program, activity or service --any of the following in which children participate and which is sponsored by a school or a public or private organization:

1. A youth camp or program.
2. A recreational camp or program.

3. A sports or athletic program.
4. A community or social outreach program.
5. An enrichment or educational program.
6. A troop, club or similar organization.

Recent act or failure to act – any act or failure to act committed within two (2) years of the date of the report to the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth or county agency.

Routine interaction – regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person’s employment or volunteer responsibilities.

School employee - an individual employed by a school or who provides a program, activity or service sponsored by a school. The term does not apply to administrative or other support personnel unless the administrative or other support personnel have direct contact with children.

Serious mental injury - a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:

1. Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child’s life or safety is threatened.
2. Seriously interferes with a child’s ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

Serious physical neglect – any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child’s life or health, threatens a child’s well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child’s health, development or functioning:

1. A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child’s developmental age and abilities.
2. The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.

Sexual abuse or exploitation – any of the following:

1. The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in an individual.
 - b. Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - c. Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - d. Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming.

The conduct described above does not include consensual activities between a child who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and another person who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and whose age is within four (4) year of the child’s age.

Any of the following offenses committed against a child: rape; statutory sexual assault; involuntary deviate sexual intercourse; sexual assault; institutional sexual assault; aggravated indecent assault; indecent assault; indecent exposure; incest; prostitution; sexual abuse; unlawful contact with a minor; or sexual exploitation.

Student - an individual enrolled in a district school under eighteen (18) years of age.

Volunteer --an unpaid adult individual, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service is a person responsible for the child's welfare or has direct contact with children.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Require each candidate for employment to submit an official child abuse clearance statement and state and federal criminal history background checks (certifications) as required by law.
2. Require each applicant for transfer or reassignment to submit required certifications unless the applicant is applying for a transfer from one position as a District employee to another position as a District employee of this District and the applicant's certifications are current.
3. School employees and independent contractors shall obtain and submit new certifications every sixty (60) months.
4. Require each volunteer to submit an official child abuse clearance statement and state and federal criminal history background checks (certifications) as required by law.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify District staff, independent contractors, and volunteers of their responsibility for reporting child abuse in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the poster, developed by the PA Department of Education, displaying the statewide toll-free telephone numbers for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect and school safety issues be posted in a high-traffic, public area of each school. The designated area shall be readily accessible and widely used by students.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually inform students, parents/guardians, independent contractors, volunteers and staff regarding the contents of this Board policy.

Guidelines

Aiding and Abetting Sexual Abuse

School employees, acting in an official capacity for this district, are prohibited from assisting another school employee, contractor or agent in obtaining a new job if the school employee knows, or has probable cause to believe, that such school employee, contractor or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student.

This prohibition applies only to assistance that extends beyond performance of normal processing of personnel matters including routine transmission of files or other information. This prohibition shall not apply if:

1. The relevant information has been properly reported to law enforcement officials and any other authority required by federal, state or local law and the matter has been officially closed or the prosecutor or law enforcement officials notified school officials that there is insufficient information to establish probable cause.
2. The school employee, contractor or agent has been acquitted or otherwise exonerated of the alleged misconduct.

3. The case or investigation remains open and no charges have been filed against, or indictment of, the school employee, contractor or agent within four (4) years of the date on which the information was reported to the law enforcement agency.

Training

The School District, and independent contractors of the School District, shall provide their employees who have direct contact with children with mandatory training on child abuse recognition and reporting. The training shall include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

1. Recognition of the signs of abuse and sexual misconduct and reporting requirements for suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
2. Provisions of the Educator Discipline Act, including mandatory reporting requirements.
3. District policy related to reporting of suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
4. Maintenance of professional and appropriate relationships with students.

Employees are required to complete a minimum of three (3) hours of training every five (5) years. The District shall provide each volunteer with training on child abuse recognition and reporting.

Duty to Report

School employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

1. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and the practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
2. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
3. A person makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
4. An individual fourteen (14) years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that s/he has committed child abuse.

A child is not required to come before the school employee, independent contractor or volunteer in order for that individual to make a report of suspected child abuse.

A report of suspected child abuse does not require the identification of the person responsible for the child abuse.

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected child abuse, regardless of whether the report is required, cooperates with an investigation, testifies in a proceeding, or engages in other action authorized by law shall have immunity from civil and criminal liability related to those actions.

Any person required to report child abuse who willfully fails to do so may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Any person who intentionally or knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or intentionally or knowingly induces a child to make a false claim of child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Any person who engages in intimidation, retaliation, or obstruction in the making of a child abuse report or the conducting of an investigation into suspected child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

The District shall not discriminate or retaliate against any person for making, in good faith, a report of suspected child abuse.

Reporting Procedures

School employees, independent contractors or volunteers who suspect child abuse shall immediately make a written report of suspected child abuse using electronic technologies (www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or an oral report via the statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800-932-0313). A person making an initial oral report of suspected child abuse must also submit a written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours after the oral report. Upon receipt of an electronic report, the electronic reporting system will automatically respond with a confirmation, providing the District with a written record of the report.

A school employee, independent contractor or volunteer who makes a report of suspected child abuse shall immediately, after making the initial report, notify the building principal **or** administrator; and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide the building principal or administrator with a copy of the report confirmation. The building principal **or** administrator shall then immediately notify the Superintendent or designee that a child abuse report has been made and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide a copy of the report confirmation.

When a report of suspected child abuse is made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer as required by law, the School District is not required to make more than one (1) report. An individual otherwise required to make a report who is aware that an initial report has already been made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is not required to make an additional report. The person making an initial oral report is responsible for making the follow-up written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours, and shall provide the building principal or administrator with a copy of the report confirmation promptly after the written electronic report has been filed. The building principal **or** administrator shall in turn provide a copy of the report confirmation to the Superintendent or designee.

When necessary to preserve potential evidence of suspected child abuse, a school employee may, after the initial report is made, take or cause to be taken photographs of the child who is the subject of the report. Any such photographs shall be sent to the county agency at the time the written report is sent or within forty-eight (48) hours after a report is made by electronic technologies or as soon thereafter as possible. The building principal or administrator shall be notified whenever such photographs are taken.

If the Superintendent or designee reasonably suspects that conduct being reported involves an incident required to be reported under the Safe Schools Act, the Superintendent or designee shall inform local law enforcement, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

Investigation

The building principal or administrator shall facilitate the cooperation with the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth or the county agency investigating a report of suspected child abuse, including permitting authorized personnel to interview the child while in attendance at school.

Upon notification that an investigation involves suspected child abuse by a school employee, the building principal or administrator shall immediately implement a plan of supervision or alternative arrangement that has been approved by the Superintendent for the school employee under investigation. The plan of supervision or alternative arrangement shall be submitted to the county agency for approval.

ADOPTED: April 10, 1969
REVISED: February 13, 1984

REVISED: April 29, 1996
REVISED: June 18, 2013
REVISED: February 23, 2015
REVISED: October 22, 2018

6020 - Student Wellness

Purpose

The Upper St. Clair School District School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness through proper nutrition, nutrition education and promotion, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

Authority

The Board adopts this policy based on the recommendations of the Wellness Committee and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

To ensure the health and well-being of all students, the Board establishes that the district shall provide to students:

- A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state requirements.
- Access at reasonable cost to foods and beverages that meet established nutrition guidelines.
- Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day.
- Curriculum and programs for grades K-12 that are designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy to ensure each of the district's schools, programs and curriculum is compliant with this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations.

Each building principal or designee shall annually report to the Superintendent or designee regarding compliance in his/her school.

Staff members responsible for programs related to school wellness shall report to the Superintendent or designee regarding the status of such programs.

The Superintendent or designee and the established Wellness Committee shall conduct an assessment at least once every three (3) years on the contents and implementation of this policy as part of a continuous improvement process to strengthen the policy and ensure implementation. This triennial assessment shall be made available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner and include:

- The extent to which each district school is in compliance with law and policies related to school wellness.
- The extent to which this policy compares to model wellness policies.
- A description of the compliance made by the district in meeting the requirements of this policy.

At least once every three (3) years, the district shall update or modify this policy as needed, based on the results of the most recent triennial assessment and/or as district and community needs and priorities change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information and technologies emerge; and new federal or state guidance or standards are issued.

The district shall annually communicate with the public, including parents/guardians, students, and others in the community, about the contents, updates and implementation of this policy via the district website, student handbooks, newsletters, District annual report, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods.

Guidelines

Recordkeeping

The district shall retain records documenting compliance with the requirements of the School Wellness policy, which shall include:

- The written School Wellness policy.
- Documentation demonstrating that the district has informed the public, on an annual basis, about the contents of the School Wellness policy and any updates to the policy.
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the School Wellness policy, including who is involved in the review and methods used by the district to inform the public of their ability to participate in the review.
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the School Wellness policy and notification of the assessment results to the public.

Wellness Committee

The district shall establish a Wellness Committee comprised of, but not necessarily limited to, at least one (1) of each of the following: School Board member, district administrator, district food service representative, student, parent/guardian, school health professional, physical education teacher, Parent Teacher Council member and member of the public. It shall be the goal that committee membership will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee regarding student health issues and shall be responsible for developing, implementing and periodically reviewing and updating a School Wellness policy that complies with law to recommend to the Board for adoption.

The Wellness Committee shall review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques in establishing goals for nutrition education and promotion, physical activity and other school based activities that promote student wellness as part of the policy development and revision process.

Nutrition Education

The goal of nutrition education is to teach, encourage and support healthy eating by students. Promoting student health and nutrition enhances readiness for learning and increases student achievement.

Nutrition education will be provided within the sequential, comprehensive health education program in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and the academic standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences.

Nutrition education lessons and activities shall be age-appropriate.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs and shall include:

- Consistent nutrition messages shall be disseminated and displayed throughout the district, schools, classrooms, cafeterias, homes, community and media.
- District schools shall offer resources about health and nutrition to encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals for their children.
- Nutrition content of school meals shall be available to students and parents/guardians. An annual notification will be included with the back-to-school information.

Physical Activity

The district shall promote physical activity through the following:

- Age-appropriate physical activity opportunities, such as outdoor and indoor recess, before and after school programs, during lunch, clubs, intramurals and interscholastic athletics, shall be provided to meet the needs and interests of all students, in addition to planned physical education.
- A physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students shall be maintained.
- Students and their families shall be encouraged to utilize district-owned physical activity facilities, such as playgrounds and fields, outside school hours in accordance with established district rules.

Physical Education

Physical education classes shall be the means through which all students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity. Physical education shall be taught by certified health and physical education teachers.

A sequential physical education program consistent with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and Health, Safety and Physical Education academic standards shall be developed and implemented.

A local assessment system shall be implemented to track student progress on the Health, Safety and Physical Education academic standards.

Students shall be moderately to vigorously active as much time as possible during a physical education class. Documented medical conditions and disabilities shall be accommodated during class.

Safe and adequate equipment, facilities and resources shall be provided for physical education courses.

Other School Based Activities

Safe drinking water shall be available and accessible to students, without restriction and at no cost to the student, at all meal periods and throughout the school day.

Nutrition professionals who meet hiring criteria established by the district and in compliance with federal regulations shall administer the school meals program. Professional development and continuing education shall be provided for district nutrition staff, as required by federal regulations.

District schools may implement alternative service models to increase school breakfast participation where possible, such as breakfast served in the classroom, "grab & go breakfast" and breakfast after first period to reinforce the positive educational, behavioral and health impacts of a healthy breakfast.

Students may be involved in menu selections through various means, such as taste testing and surveys.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods/Beverages at School

All foods and beverages available in district schools during the school day shall be offered to students with consideration for promoting student health and reducing obesity.

Foods and beverages provided through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs shall comply with established federal nutrition standards.

Competitive Foods - Competitive foods available for sale shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School). These standards shall apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold to students, which may include, but are not limited to: a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, snack carts and fundraisers.

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages offered or sold to students on school campus during the school day, which are not part of the reimbursable school breakfast or lunch.

For purposes of this policy, school campus means any area of property under the jurisdiction of the school that students may access during the school day.

For purposes of this policy, school day means the period from midnight before school begins until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the official school day.

The district may impose additional restrictions on competitive foods, provided that the restrictions are not inconsistent with federal requirements Food Fundraiser Exemptions - Fundraising activities held during the school day involving the sale of competitive foods shall be limited to foods that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless approved by exemption.

Exempt fundraisers are fundraisers in which competitive foods are available for sale to students that do not meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education allows each school year: up to five (5) exempt fundraisers in elementary and middle school buildings, and up to ten (10) exempt fundraisers in high school buildings. The district will not permit exempt food fundraisers during school hours in the elementary and middle school buildings. The district will allow up to three (3) exempt fundraisers at the high school each school year. High school administration will oversee and maintain compliance in accordance with this policy.

Non-Sold Competitive Foods - Non-sold competitive foods available to students, which may include but are not

limited to foods and beverages offered as rewards and incentives, at classroom parties and celebrations, or as shared classroom snacks, shall meet or exceed the standards established by the district. Students/Parents should refer to their school handbook for specific information.

Marketing/Contracting

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School) and comply with established Board policy and administrative regulations.

Exclusive competitive food and/or beverage contracts shall be approved by the Board, in accordance with provisions of law. Existing contracts shall be reviewed and modified to the extent feasible to ensure compliance with established federal nutrition standards, including applicable marketing restrictions.

ADOPTED: June 26, 2006
IMPLEMENTED: July 1, 2006
REVISED: January 200
REVISED: November 19, 2018

6021 - Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.

In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the District's suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the building principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

The District shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.

The District shall notify District employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the District's website.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Education

Protocols for Administration of Student Education

Students may receive age-appropriate education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.

Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development.

Protocols for Administration of Employee Education

All District employees, including but not limited to secretaries, coaches, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers, shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.

As part of the District's professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students

in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.

Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to District mental health professionals and school nurses, guidance counselors, and psychologists.

Resources for Parents/Guardians

The District may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs, and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.

Methods of Prevention

The methods of prevention utilized by the District include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.

Early Identification Procedures

Early identification of individuals with one (1) or more suicidal risk factors or of individuals exhibiting warning signs is crucial to the District's suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, District employees, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicidal risk factors and warning signs.

Referral Procedures

Any District employee who has identified a student with one (1) or more risk factors or who has an indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for further assessment and intervention.

Documentation

The District shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.

Methods of Intervention

The methods of intervention listed in this section are to be utilized by the District when responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school, and completed suicide. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

Procedures for Students at Risk

A District-approved suicide assessment instrument may be used by trained mental health staff such as counselors, psychologists, and social workers.

Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be notified by the school. If the school suspects that the student's risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services.

The District shall identify mental health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance.

Mental health service providers – may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and primary care providers.

The District shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student’s family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

Students With Disabilities

For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

Documentation

The District shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the intervention and assessment process including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.

Methods of Response to Suicide or Suicide Attempt

The methods of response to a suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by the District include, but are not limited to:

1. Identifying and training the school crisis response/crisis intervention team.
2. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.
3. Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians.
4. Working with families.
5. Responding appropriately to the media.
6. Collaborating with community providers.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicidal act or attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event.

Re-Entry Procedures

A student’s excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student’s return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

A District-employed mental health professional, the building principal or suicide prevention coordinator shall meet with the parents/guardians of a student returning to school after a mental health crisis, and, if

appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and applicable next steps to ensure the student's readiness to return to school.

When authorized by the student's parent/guardian, the designated District employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside mental health care providers.

The designated District employee will periodically check in, as needed, with the student to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.

Report Procedures

Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.

When a District employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.

As stated in this policy, District employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Resources

***Please note that the resources listed here are free of charge. There are many more excellent resources for minimal cost.

General Information (many with webinar sessions)

PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative Mission <http://www.payspi.org/>

Mission - The Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative is a multi-system collaboration to reduce youth suicide.

Vision - Youth suicide prevention will be embraced and incorporated into the fabric of every community in Pennsylvania to address the social and emotional needs of youth at risk and survivors of suicide.

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

<http://www.sprc.org/>

SPRC is the nation's only federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*. They provide technical assistance, training, and materials to increase the knowledge and expertise of suicide prevention practitioners and other professionals serving people at risk for suicide. They also promote collaboration among a variety of organizations that play a role in developing the field of suicide prevention.

Toolkit for High Schools

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA12-4669>

Assists high schools and school districts in designing and implementing strategies to prevent suicide and promote behavioral health. Includes tools to implement a multi-faceted suicide prevention program that responds to the needs and cultures of students. Released in June 2012.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

<http://www.afsp.org/>

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has been at the forefront of a wide range of suicide prevention initiatives – each designed to reduce loss of life from suicide. They are investing in groundbreaking research, new educational campaigns, innovative demonstration projects and critical policy work. And they are expanding their assistance to people, whose lives have been affected by suicide, reaching out to offer support and offering opportunities to become involved in prevention.

American Association of Suicidology

<http://www.suicidology.org/home>

AAS is a membership organization for all those involved in suicide prevention and intervention, or touched by suicide. AAS is a leader in the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.

Services for Teens At Risk (STAR Center)

<http://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/>

Services for Teens At Risk (STAR-Center) is a comprehensive research, treatment, and training center. Funded by the State of Pennsylvania's General Assembly in 1986 to address adolescent suicide and depression, the program provides individual assessment and treatment to teens that are experiencing depression and suicidality. They also provide community education services about depression and suicidality to schools, social service agencies, churches and other organizations that request them.**The Trevor Project**

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.

Comprehensive School Guide

Youth Suicide Prevention School-Based Guide <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/>

The Youth Suicide Prevention School-Based Guide is designed to provide accurate, user-friendly information. The Guide is not a program but a tool that provides a framework for schools to assess their existing or proposed suicide prevention efforts (thought a series of checklists) and provides resources and information that school administrators can use to enhance or add to their existing program. First, checklists can be completed to help evaluate the adequacy of the schools' suicide prevention programs. Second, information is offered in a series of issue briefs corresponding to a specific checklist. Each brief offers a rationale for the importance of the specific topic together with a brief overview of the key points. The briefs also offer specific strategies that have proven to work in reducing the incidence of suicide, with references that schools may then explore in greater detail. A resource section with helpful links is also included. The Guide provides information to school to assist them in the development of a framework to work in partnership with community resources and families.

School Policy

Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention –

https://www.afsp.org/content/download/10555/186750/file/Model%20Policy_FINAL.pdf

Written by American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Association of School Psychologists, American School Counselor Association, and The Trevor Project. This modular, adaptable document will help educators and school administrators implement comprehensive suicide prevention policies in communities nationwide.

STAR Center Sample School Suicide Policy and Procedure -

<http://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/Sample-School-Suicide-Policy-And-Procedure/41/Default.aspx>

Training for School Staff

Society for Prevention of Teen Suicide

<http://www.sptsusa.org/>

The mission of the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide is to reduce the number of youth suicides and attempted suicides by encouraging overall public awareness through the development and promotion of educational training programs for teens, parents and educators.

The free, interactive series Making Educators Partners in Suicide Prevention is designed to be completed at the viewer's own pace. Pennsylvania school staff requiring Act 48 hours may submit the certificate of completion to cpaschool@pa.gov or fax it to 717-783-4790, along with your Dept. of Education Professional ID number, to have these hours submitted.

More Than Sad Program

<http://www.afsp.org/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/more-than-sad-suicide-prevention-education-for-teachers-and-other-school-personnel>

The More Than Sad Program of the American Foundation for Suicide prevention provides education about factors that put youth at risk for suicide, in particular depression and other mental disorders. Instructional materials accompany the More Than Sad Program, including a power point presentation.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

<http://www.afsp.org/>

PA AFSP chapters will make the “More Than Sad” DVD available **free** to all high and middle schools in PA that request one. **Contact Pat Gainey to receive your copy.** Patricia Gainey, Regional Director, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Greater Philadelphia Regional Office, 3535 Market Street, Suite 4047, Philadelphia, PA 19104; Office: (215) 746-7256

Suicide Prevention Resource Center – Best Practice Registry

<http://www.sprc.org/bpr>

The purpose of the Best Practices Registry (BPR) is to identify, review, and disseminate information about best practices that address specific objective of *the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*. The BPR is a collaborative project of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). It is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Many of the best practice resources listed have to be purchased.

Material for Students

More Than Sad Program

<https://afsp.org/our-work/education/more-than-sad/>

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American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

The curriculum is not SPRC listed, but does use elements of SOS and Lifelines.

http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_suicideprev main page

Link to Student programs: http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_spstudentprograms

Link to Curriculum:

http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_suicideprevcurriculum

Postvention Assistance

Services for Teens At Risk (STAR Center)

<http://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/>

Services for Teens At Risk (STAR-Center) is a comprehensive research, treatment, and training center. Funded by the State of Pennsylvania’s General Assembly in 1986 to address adolescent suicide and depression, the program provides individual assessment and treatment to teens that are experiencing depression and suicidality. They also

provide community education services about depression and suicidality to schools, social service agencies, churches and other organizations that request them. Any PA school can contact the STAR-Center for assistance in the aftermath of a suicide or other tragic loss. STAR-Center can also provide in-service training and resource materials on a variety of mental health related topics.

Suicide Prevention Resource Center Postvention Toolkit

<http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/AfteraSuicideToolkitforSchools.pdf>

This toolkit is designed to assist schools in the aftermath of a suicide (or other death) in the school community. It is meant to serve as a practical resource for schools facing real-time crises to help them determine what to do, when, and how. The toolkit reflects consensus recommendations developed in consultation with a diverse group of national experts, including school-based personnel, clinicians, researchers, and crisis response professionals. It incorporates relevant existing material and research findings as well as references, templates, and links to additional information and assistance.

Compiled by the: PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative: www.payspi.org

ADOPTED: June 22, 2015

The listing of Board policies is not all inclusive and other Board policies may be applicable. Visit the District's website at <https://www.uscsd.k12.pa.us/Page/134> to review all of the policies.

The information in this Student-Parent Handbook is accurate and in accordance with the existing policies of the Upper St. Clair School District at the time of its printing. If you have any questions regarding the information in this Student-Parent Handbook, please contact school administration for assistance.