

School Committee Policy

Policy # 65

CIVILITY AND CONDUCT OF PARENTS, VISITORS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

The school committee recognizes that education of children is a process that involves a partnership between a child's parent/guardians, teachers, school administrators, and other school district personnel. The school committee recognizes that parental participation in their child's educational process through parent/teacher conferences, classroom visitation, serving as a school volunteer, serving as field trip chaperone, PTO participation, and other such service is critical to a child's educational success. For that reason, the school committee welcomes and encourages parental participation in the life of their child's school.

However, from time to time, parents and other visitors to a school or school district facility sometimes act in a manner that is disruptive, threatening, and/or intimidating to school district employees.

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules of conduct for parents, other visitors and school district employees that permit and encourage communication between parent/guardians, other persons, and school district employees concerning students or other matters, and encourage participation in school district activities, while enabling the school district to identify and deal with those behaviors which are in appropriate and disruptive to the normal operation of a school or school district facility.

Expected Level of Behavior

- a. School district employees shall treat parents and other members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- b. Parent/guardians and other visitors to a school or school district facility shall treat teachers, school administrators and other school district employees with courtesy and respect.

Unacceptable and Disruptive Behavior:

- a. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not necessarily limited to, behavior which interferes with or threatens to interfere with the normal operation of a classroom, an employee's office, areas of a school or district facility that are open to parents/guardians and the general public, and those areas of a school or district facility that are not open to parents/guardians and the general public.

- b. Using loud and/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, profane language, or display of temper.
- c. Threatening to do bodily or physical harm to a student, teacher, school administrator or other school district employee regardless of whether the behavior may constitute a criminal violation.
- d. Damaging or destroying school district property.
- e. Abusive, threatening, or obscene telephone calls, voice mail messages or email.
- f. Any other behavior which disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school district facility.

Parent/Guardian Recourse

Any parent/guardian who believes he/she was subject to unacceptable or rude behavior on the part of a school district employee should bring such matter to the attention of the school district employee's immediate supervisor.

Authority of School District Employees To Direct a Person to Leave a School or School District Facility

A school principal, assistant principal, or in his/her absence a person who is lawfully in charge of the school, or any district-level administrator, including the superintendent of schools, may direct an individual to leave the school or school district facility, if that individual:

- Disrupts or threatens to disrupt the normal operation of a classroom, an employee's office, or any area of a school or district facility;
- Does, attempts or threatens to do physical harm to a student, teacher, school administrator, other school district employee or other person lawfully on the school district premises;
- Threatens the health or safety of a student, teacher, school administrator, other school district employee or other person lawfully on the school district premise;
- Intentionally causes damage to the property of a student, teacher, school administrator, other school district employee or other person lawfully on the school district premise;
- Uses loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing, profane language, or display of temper;
- Enters a school or school district facility without authorization.

If the individual refuses to leave the premises as directed, the administrator or other authorized personnel shall seek the assistance of law enforcement and request that law enforcement take such action as is deemed

necessary. If the school district employee is threatened with personal harm, he/she may contact law enforcement.

Authority of School District Employees To Deal with a Person Who is Verbally Abusive

If an individual uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting and/or demeaning manner, the school district employee to whom the remarks are directed is advised to calmly and politely warn the individual to communicate civilly. If the verbal abuse continues, the employee to whom the remarks are directed may, after giving appropriate notice to the individual, terminate the meeting, conference or telephone conversation. If the meeting or conference is on a school district premises, any employee may request that a principal, assistance principal or other district-level administrator, direct the individual to promptly leave the premises.

If the individual refuses to leave the premises as directed, the administrator or other authorized personnel shall seek the assistance of law enforcement and request that law enforcement take such action as is deemed necessary. If the school district employee is threatened with personal harm, he/she may contact law enforcement.

If a school district employee receives an abusive, threatening or obscene voice mail message or email, he/she is not obligated to respond. The employee should save the voice mail message or email and contact his/her principal. If the message threatens personal harm, the employee may contact law enforcement.

It is the intent of the school committee to promote mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among school district employees, parent/guardians and the community. It is not the intent of the school committee, however, to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression. The intent of this policy is to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for students, teachers, administrators, other school district employees, parent/guardians and the community. The school committee encourages positive communication.

First Reading: **March 24, 2005**

Adopted: **April 7, 2005**