

Quick Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities

August 2023 – Middle and High School

Fairfax County Public Schools – Chief Equity Office

Equity & Student Conduct

Schools are communities of people working and learning together. Within FCPS, we value diversity and acknowledge that all people contribute to the well-being of the community. The Student Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) is informed by the belief that all students are capable of achieving their personal best in the context of positive and inclusive school environments that promote safety, belonging, and supportive relationships between and among staff and students. Students are more likely to exhibit positive behavior when they feel that staff members care about them and will help them learn and grow. As a central member of the school community, you have rights, privileges, and responsibilities. These are outlined in detail in Appendix D of the Family Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R), or at www.fcps.edu/SRR, and are highlighted in this guide for your quick reference.

RIGHTS

- ✓ The right to a school and classroom environment that affirms your identity and is responsive, caring, and inclusive.
- ✓ The right to access restroom and locker room facilities and other non-stigmatizing accommodations that are consistent with your gender identity, faith, and for any other reasons as identified in Regulation 2603.
- ✓ Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, shall be provided with reasonable, non-stigmatizing accommodations.
- ✓ The right to non-disclosure of gender identity and/or sexual orientation.
- ✓ The right to be called by chosen names and pronouns.
- ✓ The right to school generated and any lists that are shared like honor roll, graduation programs, yearbooks, and school newspapers, that identify you by your chosen name and gender.
- ✓ The right to receive support to ensure safe and equitable access to all school and school division facilities and activities.
- ✓ The right to have your personally identifiable information and citizenship or immigration status protected from unauthorized sharing.
- ✓ The right to equitable access to the learning environment, educational materials, and extracurricular activities.

PRIVILEGES

Some things at school are privileges, come with certain limitations, and may be suspended or discontinued if you do not use them properly.

- ✓ FCPS Network, computers, and personally owned devices. When using the FCPS Network, you should not do anything that would disrupt the use of the network by others and should demonstrate respect and ethical conduct. You must also follow the teacher's directions about when and how to use devices. On buses, you may listen to music with headphones, play games, or text, but not talk on the phone.
- ✓ Riding the school bus. Listen to the driver, stay in your seat, keep your hands to yourself and inside the bus, keep your voice low, and don't block the aisles.
- ✓ Parking on school grounds. Parking rules must be followed. Understand that your car can be searched if there is reason to believe you might have something that violates school rules or is illegal or dangerous.
- ✓ Participating in sports and activities. The Virginia High School League has rules about participation in sports, including the length of time you must be registered at a school, and the behavior expected. In addition, FCPS requires that students be in good standing to participate in extracurricular activities. You may not participate when you are suspended and may lose the right to participate for a longer period if you violate rules about drugs or alcohol.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Come to school on time and attend all of your classes both in person and in the virtual environment, unless excused due to illness or other emergency.
- Resolve problems with other students in a calm and peaceful manner.
- Have parents bring all medications you need to take to the school health room.
- Do not bring, use, share, or sell alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products, or imitations or synthetic versions of these substances at school or at a school bus stop, on a school bus, or at any school-sponsored trip or activity.
- Do not bring any type of gun or ammunition, any explosive device or firecrackers, or any type of weapon to school.
- Respect the rights and property of all students and staff members.
- If you see any behavior that may be dangerous to someone, tell a teacher or other staff member right away.
- Act with honesty and integrity. Take credit only for your own work.
- Follow class rules and school rules, and directions given by adults throughout the day.
- If an adult asks for your attention, stop, address/respond to the person, and listen.
- When you make a mistake, work to make it right. Pay for or replace the property of others if you break it. Ask a person you may have hurt how you could repair the harm.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, HAZING, AND MISTREATMENT OF OTHERS

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity. Intentional demeaning and intimidating treatment—whether verbal, physical, written, or electronic—can harm an individual and the community. If you are the target of these behaviors, report them. If you witness these behaviors, offer support to the target and reach out for help from a trusted adult. This behavior is unacceptable, whether based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, personal or physical attributes, sexual orientation, or gender identification or expression. Hazing, or inflicting injury on someone, or recklessly endangering them as part of an initiation or condition of joining a club or other organization can result in criminal charges.

Supporting Safe School Communities

All students are expected to contribute to the development and maintenance of healthy, safe school communities. If you witness harmful or unsafe behaviors, you are expected to seek out a staff member and/or trusted adult as soon as possible, alerting them of the concerns. You should not participate in behavior that may serve to escalate harmful or unsafe situations. Examples of such behaviors include the instigation of bullying behaviors and videotaping altercations.

Right to Voice Concerns

If you or your parent/guardian believe that actions or inactions of the school officials are not in your best interests, you may present complaints via written (preferred method) or verbal notice to teachers, counselors, or school administrators who shall make themselves available or schedule appointments to hear these complaints.

If you have any questions or concerns about the right to voice concern, contact the Ombudsman's office at ombudsman@fcps.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about the right to report sexual harassment, contact the [Title IX](#) coordinator at titleixcoordinator@fcps.edu.

Discrimination and Harassment Reporting Tool

A Discrimination & Harassment Reporting Tool has been developed to allow you and your family to report incidents in which you feel you have experienced bias and/or discrimination. The tool is housed within the Let's Talk Platform and can be accessed by (a) launching the application from Student desktops; (b) link on FCPS Website; (c) QR code that is available on posters displayed in schools and offices throughout the division.

School Attendance

School attendance is important to your academic success. You are considered to be chronically absent if you miss 18 or more school days per year, including illness or family emergency, suspensions, and unexcused absences.

- Regular attendance in elementary school improves the chances that a child will read on grade level.
- Students who attend 90 percent or more of the school year are more likely to graduate from high school on time.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with schoolwork, dealing with peer conflicts, or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- The Virginia Department of Education's Standards of Accreditation include chronic absenteeism as one of the school quality indicators.

Your parents and/or guardian(s) are encouraged to contact your school if they are concerned that you are not regularly attending school.

DRESS CODE

You are expected to dress in accordance with the FCPS dress code which is outlined in Regulation 2613.12. It is expected that your choice of clothing is not to be blamed as a distraction to the learning environment.

ATTIRE AND ACCESSORIES

A. Students must wear (required attire):

1. A shirt;
2. A bottom: pants, sweatpants, shorts, skirt, dress, or leggings;
3. Shoes; and
4. Clothing required by specialized courses or activities, as appropriate, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

*A one-piece garment (e.g., romper, dress), regardless of gender identity, that serves the same function as a shirt and bottom is also permissible.

B. Prohibited clothing and accessories, in violation of the FCPS dress code, are those that, regardless of the student's age or gender:

1. Depict or promote illegal, violent, or lewd conduct;
2. Depict or promote the unlawful possession or use of weapons, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, drug paraphernalia, or other controlled substances (regardless of the student's age);
3. Expose genitalia, chest, or buttocks.
4. Expose underwear or undergarments, whether due to the transparency, length, or lack of coverage. Bra and bralette straps on undergarments worn under other authorized clothing as outlined in this regulation are not a violation.
5. Are helmets or headgear that obscure the face such as ski-masks or balaclava masks [except as a religious observance, medically necessary, or otherwise noted as an accommodation in a student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan];
6. Include language, profanity, symbols (e.g., swastikas, KKK references, gang symbols), icons, or images that are reasonably foreseeable to cause a material and substantial disruption or invade the rights of others and that amount to hate speech, are highly offensive or threatening to others, or impede or distract from the School Board's mission of instilling values necessary or appropriate for polite civil discourse or political expression in a school context.
7. Accessories that constitute a health or safety hazard or are harmful to the building or equipment. (i.e., spiked belts)
8. Sunglasses inside the school building except as accommodation for medical use.

DRESS CODE ENFORCEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. School-based staff shall review the dress code expectations and videos with students at least twice annually (one must be at the beginning of the year) and will provide reminders throughout the year as appropriate.
- B. Staff (e.g., teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, etc.) are responsible for communicating and equitably enforcing the division dress code during school hours, after school activities, and school-sponsored activities. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and neutrally in accordance with the dress code requirements.
- C. Discussion regarding dress code violations shall be held privately and respect the dignity of the student.

Your school may have additional rules regarding the dress code.

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS

A healthy learning environment is free of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, inhalants, and look-alike or synthetic drugs. Possession, use, or distribution of these substances is not permitted in school, on school buses, or at any school-sponsored activities.

Students who become angry or frustrated are encouraged to resolve conflicts peacefully. Teachers, counselors, and other school personnel can help you find civil, non-violent ways to handle disputes. Schools can also utilize restorative justice to resolve disciplinary incidents when harm has been caused.

Weapons and items that could be used as weapons, including razor blades, knives, switchblades, machetes, guns, any form of explosives, nunchucks, etc., are never permitted in the school environment. Possession of these items on school grounds will result in significant consequences. If you find you have inadvertently brought one of these items to school, immediately bring it to the office.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Desks, lockers, and storage spaces can be searched and contents, including student belongings, can be examined as part of a general inspection on a periodic or random basis. Student backpacks, coats, electronics, and cars parked on school grounds may also be searched if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the item contains contraband such as drugs, weapons, stolen property, or evidence of a violation of rules or unlawful activity.

This *Quick Guide* is intended as a general overview. In this context, all student behavior is governed exclusively by the SR&R and can be reviewed at www.fcps.edu/srr. In the event of any conflict between the Quick Guide and the SR&R, the SR&R shall control.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Keep in mind that a school principal may impose a short-term suspension, recommend a long-term suspension and/or make a referral to the Division Superintendent for situations involving prohibited conduct as outlined in R2601.

School-Based Consequences¹

- Behaviors that negatively impact the educational setting or interfere with school operations
- Hate Speech
- Fireworks: use or possession
- Forgery, cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty
- Gambling
- Laser devices
- Misuse of portable communication device
- Attendance violation
- Use or possession of nonprescription drugs
- Unauthorized presence on school property
- Tobacco violations
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, inhalants, or nonalcoholic beer
- Being under the influence of marijuana or other controlled substance
- Possession of drug paraphernalia

May Result in Referral to Division Superintendent

- Harassment based on race, disability, etc. (See Appendix D, page 11 for complete list.)
- Hate Speech
- Vandalism of school property; bomb threats
- Hazing
- Distribution of nonprescription drugs for the purpose of abuse
- Possession or use of marijuana, imitation marijuana, synthetic marijuana, or a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance
- Endangering well-being of others, bullying
- Threat or assault of another student
- Possession or display of obscene material; indecent exposure
- Mob assault
- Threatening a staff member or assaulting a staff member without causing injury
- Gang-related activities
- Improper touching
- Unauthorized or illegal use or disruption of information technology
- Distribution of nonprescription drugs for the purpose of abuse

Required Referral to the Division Superintendent

- Physical assault on staff member or members causing injury
- Possession or use of schedule I & II drugs (with the exception of marijuana as detailed above)
- Distribution of marijuana, imitation marijuana, synthetic marijuana, or a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance
- Possession of a statutory weapon, knife with a blade three inches or longer, switchblade, or machete, or using any object as a weapon
- Using an object not generally considered to be a weapon to threaten, intimidate, or attempt to injure school personnel or students
- Sexual assault and/or sexual harassment, malicious wounding, robbery

¹ While a school-based consequence would be typical for these violations, the principal may make a referral to the Division Superintendent if the violation substantially disrupted instruction, endangered others, or followed prior violations.



(Arabic) Please review the Student Right and Responsibilities at www.fcps.edu/srr, and sign and return this form to your child's school by September 29, 2023. You may request a printed copy of the SR&R from the front office of your child's school at any time.

(Chinese) Please review the Student Right and Responsibilities at www.fcps.edu/srr, and sign and return this form to your child's school by September 29, 2023. You may request a printed copy of the SR&R from the front office of your child's school at any time.

(Farsi) Please review the Student Right and Responsibilities at www.fcps.edu/srr, and sign and return this form to your child's school by September 29, 2023. You may request a printed copy of the SR&R from the front office of your child's school at any time.

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