The Policy Committee approved changes in blue at its public work session on November 16, 2023.

CODE OF CONDUCT: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, AND CIVIL BEHAVIOR

Rationale:
Schools have three primary responsibilities. The first responsibility is to foster academic achievement. The second responsibility is to create and maintain a school environment that is safe, orderly, and conducive to teaching and learning. The third responsibility is to promote and support positive community values and standards such as civility, respect for others and self, citizenship, academic integrity, and other constructive character traits and behaviors among adults and students in the school community. Without these values and standards, traits and behaviors, a school's climate inevitably deteriorates and teaching and learning is negatively impacted. Furthermore, students become deficient in the tools that are critical for functioning successfully in community life, regardless of how proficient they are academically.

As we work toward our vision of creating a world-class school system, we understand that focusing on high academic standards and achievement is essential. In order to develop and sustain exemplary schools, we must also focus on high expectations for behavior. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide a framework that will guide staff, students, and parents in promoting excellent behavior among all members of our school community, and create a safe, civil, and nurturing climate in which teaching and learning can take place. It is within such a climate that we will be able to move closer to our vision of becoming a world-class school system.

Code of Conduct:
The code of conduct is divided into six standards. These standards are based on the Josephson Institute of Ethics Character Counts pillars: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. All members of our school community – students, parents, educators, administrators, and support staff – are expected to align their behavior with these standards while they are in school or while engaged in school-related activities.

Respect
- I will respect myself and treat others as I want to be treated.
- I will speak to others in a polite and courteous manner.
- I will respect diversity.
- I will solve problems and express myself toward others in a non-violent manner.
- I will be considerate of others' space and property.
- I will behave in a way that helps others and me to learn.
- I will take pride in my school and community by treating school facilities and materials with care.

Responsibility
- I will attend school regularly and on time.
- I will actively participate in my own education and growth.
- I will put forth my best effort.
- I will follow established school codes and community rules.
- I will be accountable for my behavior.
- I will accept the consequences of my actions.
- I will encourage others to obey school rules and follow the code of conduct.
- I will report any activity that will be harmful to others.

Trustworthiness
- I will be honorable in my words and actions.
- I will be honest and tell the truth.
- I will keep my word and do what I say.

<s>Fairness</s>
<s>- I will treat all people fairly, equitably, and justly.</s>
<s>- I will consider others' perspectives.</s>
<s>- I will be understanding of different opinions.</s>
<s>- I will make decisions without favoritism or prejudice.</s>

<s>Caring</s>
<s>- I will be sensitive to the needs of others.</s>
<s>- I will be kind and considerate.</s>
<s>- I will help people in need.</s>
<s>- I will show compassion, concern, and caring.</s>

<s>Citizenship</s>
<s>- I will comply with authority and the law.</s>
<s>- I will serve as a model for high standards of behavior.</s>
<s>- I will cooperate to make my school a safe place to learn.</s>
<s>- I will make choices that will improve my school and community.</s>
<s>- I will help create a school atmosphere free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment.</s>

I.   PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

A.   Promote a safe and supportive environment where students can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

B.   Promote responsible behavior and citizenship among all members of the school community.

C.   Promote and uphold academic integrity by ensuring that students understand and adhere to ethical standards in their scholarly pursuits.

D.   Promote responsible and respectful use of digital resources and technology.

II.   DEFINITIONS

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

A.   Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, copying, curating information from digital sources and not respecting copyright and intellectual property rights, forging the signature of teacher and/or parent/legal guardian, plagiarizing, altering records, or assisting another in such actions.

B.   Academic Integrity: The commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage in an academic community.

C.   Integrity: Being honest and truthful in one's actions, decisions, and conduct.

III.   POLICY STATEMENT/PROCEDURES

A.   Code of Conduct: Respect and Responsibility and Integrity

The Board of Education commits to the following principles in fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and integrity for all members of the Washington County Public Schools ("WCPS") community:

1. Respect for others: The Board of Education will value and celebrate each member of its school community. Teachers and staff will model respectful and supportive relationships while students engage in responsible and respective behavior.

2. Safe Learning Environment: Every student has the right to learn in an environment free from threats, intimidation, and harm. The Board of Education will take measures to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all students and staff.

3. Positive Behavior and Citizenship: The Board of Education will promote responsible behavior, ethical decision-making, and good citizenship among students. Teachers and staff will model these behaviors and provide guidance to students.

4. Education and Awareness: The Board of Education will provide education and awareness programs to foster respect, empathy, integrity, and understanding among students and staff. This will include promoting inclusion, anti-bullying initiatives, and supporting the well-being of students.

5. Conflict Resolution: The Board of Education will provide conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms to address issues among members of the school community. Restorative practices may be implemented to repair harm and rebuild relationships.

6. Reporting and Response: Established WCPS procedures will be followed for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, academic dishonesty, and/or other violations of this policy. All allegations will be taken seriously, investigated, and verified incidents will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Code of Conduct: Academic Responsibility

The Board of Education commits to the following principles in promoting academic integrity and digital responsibility:

1. Obligation to Act with Integrity: It is expected that students will act with integrity in scholarship and academic work. Expression of original, well-formulated ideas is a fundamental skill for academic and career success.

2. Academic Honesty: Students are expected to complete their academic assignments and assessments honestly and independently, citing sources and ideas that are not their own.

3. Education and Awareness: WCPS will provide education and awareness programs to teach students about academic integrity and digital responsibility. These programs will emphasize the importance of original thought and ethical digital behavior.

4. Responsible Digital Citizenship: Students are expected to maintain a healthy balance between virtual and physical activities while using technology in a responsible, ethical, and respectful manner. This includes evaluating the validity of digital media and curating information from digital sources while respecting copyright and intellectual property rights. Students create safe online spaces as thoughtful, empathetic citizens. (ISTE, 2023)

5. Reporting and Response: Established WCPS procedures will be followed for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, academic dishonesty, and/or other violations of this policy. All allegations will be taken seriously, investigated, and verified incidents will be subject to disciplinary action.

C. The Superintendent is authorized to promulgate an administrative regulation to implement this policy.

Legal References: *Maryland Annotated Code*, Education Article, Section 7-306
~~Board~~ Policy JK, Administrative Regulation JK-R, and Exhibit JK-E – Student Discipline

Policy adopted: June 1, 2004. Revised:
Board of Education of Washington County