



CAMDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES GUIDE



Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians

Welcome back to the 2015-16 school year!

I believe that schools should be welcoming environments where students feel supported and where students look forward to attending. Students' positive behavior should receive encouragement, and our goal should be to keep students in school and learning as much as possible.

I'll say it again: while student misbehavior needs to be addressed, especially serious incidents involving violence, we need to focus on creating positive school cultures that keep kids in school.



The Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities is our effort to emphasize that focus. We created this policy with feedback from students, parents, teachers, and school leaders. We are learning from our mistakes in the past and planning for a more successful future.

My hope is that the guidelines that are outlined below will significantly reduce the number of situations where we need to resort to consequences. I ask for your help in this work—our students bring to school many habits they learn at home. Please reinforce positive habits.

If you believe your student is receiving a consequence that is different from what is included below or that your school does not have a positive learning environment, I encourage you to talk with your Community School Coordinator and, if needed, your school leader. Changing our school cultures will take time, but it is a necessary and important change.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Paymon Rouhanifard
Superintendent

INTRODUCTION

The 2015-16 Student Rights & Responsibilities Guide explains rights that are guaranteed for all members of the school community, and the rules that all students should follow in order to be respectful, responsible and safe.

The Camden City School District is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment to every student. All teachers, staff, and visitors are expected to:

Be Respectful



- Treat others the way you want to be treated
- Use professional, academic and positive language
- Behave in a way that helps you and others learn

Be Responsible



- Be in school, on time, ready to learn every day
- Follow all school rules (including the electronics policy)
- Complete all of work with honesty and integrity

Be Safe



- Solve problems peacefully and with empathy
- Be drug and alcohol free
- Keep the school community clean and safe for others

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



In order to build a **RESPECTFUL**, **RESPONSIBLE**, and **SAFE** school for all students, all members of the school community—students, parents, families, teachers, and school staff—must work together. All members of the school community have both rights and responsibilities:

STUDENTS

Students have the RIGHT to:

- 1) Receive a free and appropriate public education from ages 5-21, as provided by law
- 2) Feel safe at school
- 3) Be treated fairly at school
- 4) Be respected as an individual and treated with respect by other students and school staff
- 5) Express their opinions verbally or in writing
- 6) Take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, religion, religious practices, sex, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, ethnic group, political affiliation, age, marital status, or disability
- 7) Have access to information about infractions and consequences
- 8) Have access to objective information concerning drug and alcohol abuse
- 9) Have access to individuals or agencies capable of providing direct assistance to students experiencing personal challenges
- 10) Be guaranteed confidentiality in counseling

Students have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- 1) Be respectful, responsible, and safe at all times
- 2) Aim to make the school community better for all
- 3) Understand how to make the most of the educational opportunities at school
- 4) Ask questions about Student Rights & Responsibilities when needed
- 5) Speak honestly about situations when the rules are broken
- 6) Follow all school policies (including electronics, attendance, dress code, and bullying/harassment)
- 7) Be responsible about completing missed school work after being absent

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Parents have the RIGHT to:

- 1) Be actively involved in their children's education
- 2) Feel safe when attending school events
- 3) Be treated fairly by school community members
- 4) Be respected as an individual and treated with respect by students and school staff
- 5) Express their opinions verbally or in writing
- 6) Take part in school events on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, religion, religious practices, sex, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, ethnic group, political affiliation, age, marital status, or disability
- 7) Get regular updates about their child's academic and behavioral progress (including but not limited to report cards, behavior progress reports, and conferences)
- 8) Receive information from school staff about ways to improve their children's academic or behavioral progress (including but not limited to counseling, tutoring, after-school programs, academic programs, and mental health services)
- 9) Have access to information about infractions and consequences
- 10) Have access to objective information concerning drug and alcohol abuse
- 11) Have access to individuals or agencies capable of providing direct assistance to students experiencing personal challenges
- 12) Be guaranteed confidentiality in counseling and peer mediation
- 13) Receive information about services for students with disabilities and English language learners, when applicable
- 14) Receive communication through provided translations

Parents have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- 1) Be respectful, responsible, and safe at all times
- 2) Aim to make the school community better for all
- 3) Communicate with school leaders and teachers about the needs of their children
- 4) Ask clarifying questions about Student Rights & Responsibilities when needed
- 5) Support their children in following the school policies including electronics, attendance, dress code, and bullying/harassment
- 6) Make sure their children attend school regularly and on time and, when children are absent, let schools know why in advance
- 7) Provide updated contact information to their children's school
- 8) Make every effort to give their children a space to complete their homework, or allow participation in an after-school program that permits the completion of homework



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TEACHERS & SCHOOL STAFF

Teachers and School Staff have the **RIGHT** to:

- 1) Be part of a school community that values student safety and success
- 2) Feel safe at school
- 3) Be respected as an individual and treated with respect by students and other school staff
- 4) Communicate concerns and suggestions to the Camden City School District
- 5) Take part in school events on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, religion, religious practices, sex, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, ethnic group, political affiliation, age, marital status, or disability
- 6) Have access to information about infractions and consequences
- 7) Receive timely and applicable feedback after classroom observations
- 8) Be able to refer students to individuals or agencies capable of providing direct assistance to students experiencing personal challenges
- 9) Receive information about how to provide services for students with disabilities and English language learners

Teachers and School Staff have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to:

- 1) Model respect, responsibility, and safety at all times
- 2) Aim to make the school community better for all
- 3) Work towards building a positive learning environment for all students
- 4) Be knowledgeable about the Student Code of Conduct and enforce it fairly and consistently, including documenting Tier I and II violations
- 5) Clearly and proactively communicate information about students' choices and their consequences to students and their families, in a language they understand
- 6) Actively practice conflict resolution as appropriate in the classroom before student discipline infractions are escalated, as appropriate
- 7) Attend work daily, and be punctual
- 8) Use well-planned, creative and engaging instructional plans every day
- 9) Provide work for students who are absent due to illness or suspension in a timely manner

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PRINCIPALS & DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

Principals & District Administrators have the RIGHT to:

- 1) Be part of a school community that values student safety and success
- 2) Feel safe at school
- 3) Be respected as an individual and treated with respect by students and other school staff
- 4) Communicate concerns and suggestions to the Camden City School District
- 5) Take part in school events on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, religion, religious practices, sex, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, ethnic group, political affiliation, age, marital status, or disability
- 6) Have access to information about infractions and consequences
- 7) Receive timely and applicable feedback after classroom observations
- 8) Be able to refer students to individuals or agencies capable of providing direct assistance to students experiencing personal challenges
- 9) Receive information about how to provide services for students with disabilities and English language learners

Principals & District Administrators have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- 1) Strive to be respectful, responsible, and safe at all times
- 2) Aim to make the school community better for all
- 3) Create and implement policies and procedures that encourage safe and orderly schools for all students and school staff
- 4) Protect the legal rights of school staff, students, and parents or guardians
- 5) Work towards building a positive school climate that celebrates student successes
- 6) Clearly and proactively communicate information to students and families about students' choices and their consequences
- 7) Actively practice conflict resolution as appropriate before problems are escalated
- 8) Meticulously document Tier I-IV violations of the Code of Conduct
- 9) Support teachers and staff members in carrying out the Code of Conduct
- 10) Make reasonable attempts to communicate with family members about unexcused absences

INFRACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

INTRODUCTION

When a student makes a choice that impacts the learning community, consequences that reflect the severity of the infraction may be assigned. All consequences should balance the District's goals of minimizing school disruptions and maximizing each student's learning time.

When appropriate, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first infraction will usually have a consequence of a lesser degree than repeated infractions. However, in cases where a student's conduct is dangerous or threatens the safety of others, a more severe form of discipline may be used.



INFRACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

TIERS 1 - 4

Tier	Infraction Examples	Recommended Approaches
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tardy to class• Uniform violation• Unauthorized use of a cell phone or other electronic device• Talking out of turn in class• Speaking to a school community member or guest with disrespect• Excessive noise in the hallway• Missing class materials• Making inappropriate gestures, symbols, or comments, or using profane or offensive language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal correction, reminders and/or redirection• Loaner uniform provided• Confiscation of the electronic device where applicable• 30 minutes of classroom community service (not during student's instructional time)• Written reflection or apology• Seat change• In-class time out• Loss of classroom privileges• Parent phone call• Lunch or after-school detention
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skipping class (on campus)• Persistent or excessive absence from school or individual class periods• Excessive use of profanity• Academic dishonesty/plagiarism• Failure to respond to school staff questions or concerns• Habitual repetitions of Tier 1 behaviors (three or more)	<p><i>All Tier 1 approaches, plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict mediation• One hour of school community service (not during student's instructional time)• Parent conference with teachers• Change in schedule or class• Daily progress report• Lost opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities, including but not limited to field trips and athletic events• Office referral

INFRACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Tier	Infraction Examples	Recommended Approaches
3	<p>Any of the following on school grounds or during school hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale, possession or use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco¹ • Gambling • Stealing • Vandalism • Setting off / dismantling fire alarm inappropriately • Gang activity • Leaving campus without permission • Physical fighting or assault • Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB), including cyber-bullying and sexual harassment • Threatening a member of the school community • Failure to follow directions that directly leads to harm of self or others • Extortion: taking or attempting to take from another by threat of force, expressed or implied • Trespassing/unauthorized school visitation • Habitual repetitions of Tier 2 behaviors (three or more) 	<p><i>All Tier 1 and 2 approaches, plus (principal assigned):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required referral to school nurse and drug/alcohol counseling/treatment (if infraction is drug/alcohol-related) • Required conflict mediation • Functional Behavioral Assessment • Referral to community organizations • Parent conference with administrative team • Parent or guardian accompanies the child to school • Saturday detention • In- or out-of-school suspension for up to 5 days • Alternative placement request (grades 7-12)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bomb threat • Starting a fire • Sale, possession or use of a weapon or firearm² • Inciting a riot or other campus-wide disturbance • A Tier 3 violation that significantly threatens the physical safety of another member of the school community • Habitual repetitions of Tier 3 behaviors (three or more) 	<p>Tier 4 infractions require each of the following consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify police and District office immediately • Administrative Home Instruction • Automatic 10-day out-of-school suspension • Optional: Expulsion hearing • Referral to Child Studies Team for Manifestation Determination meeting (for students with disabilities)

¹If a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, s/he must immediately be referred to the school nurse for evaluation.

²A “weapon” is defined as “an instrument that may be used to cause bodily harm,” including but not limited to razors, knives, and mace.

OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

Attendance

The best way for each student to make the most of his/her education is to be present and on time every day.

Parents and guardians should notify the school as soon as possible if their children need to be absent for an excused reason (such as illness or a family emergency). Notes from parents/guardians will be accepted for up to 15 days after the absence. Doctors' notes will be accepted at any time.

School leaders will make an effort to be in contact with families of absent students to find out why the student was absent, and what supports the student needs when s/he returns to school.



Attendance officers will visit families with students who have unexcused absences:

- **After one unexcused absence, the school will call the student's family.**
- **After three unexcused absences, an attendance officer will visit the family to see what supports the student needs in order to return to school.**
- **After five unexcused absences, the attendance officer will visit again, and bring an official letter to notify the family of the student's excessive absences.**
- **After eight unexcused absences, the attendance officer will visit a third time, and bring a second official letter to notify the family of the student's excessive absences.**
- **After ten unexcused absences, the student is considered truant. New Jersey state law requires that the District refer the student and his/her parents or guardians to court once a student is considered truant. You can avoid this by communicating with the school about absences as soon as possible, and providing notes when appropriate.**

After a student has earned three tardies in a semester, every three tardies after that will be counted as one unexcused absence. This means that attendance officers will work with some students who might never have missed a full day of school, but who are often late.

OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

HIB (Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying)



Any act (written, verbal, or physical) that seems to take place because of any of the following characteristics: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and disability. This act has the effect of physically and/or emotionally harming a student.

If you see HIB, it's important to report it right away. You can report harassment, intimidation, and bullying anonymously through an online form (click on "Report Bullying" on your school's homepage). You can also fill out a paper form—Just visit your school's Main Office to get one. Paper forms can be handed to the Principal or to the school's Anti-Bullying Specialist (listed on each school's website).

Within 10 days of receiving the report, the school's Anti-Bullying Specialist will complete an investigation. During those 10 days, the Anti-Bullying Specialist will interview everyone with information about the incident to determine whether or not this case counts as HIB. The Superintendent will see the results of the investigation and decide what actions to take.

Five days after the next Board meeting, the District will send a letter with information about the investigation to all parents whose children were involved in the case. The letter will include information about what type of investigation took place, whether or not the District found evidence of HIB, and what was done to address the incident.

Even if the investigation does not find an official HIB violation, school staff will work with all involved students to make sure they feel safe and respected.

OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

Out-of-School Suspensions

“Out-of-school suspension” is defined as any time a student is asked to leave the campus because of an infraction. These suspensions may be for part of a day (e.g. the student is sent home early by a school staff member) or a full day. A student who contributed to a Tier 3 infraction may be placed on in-school suspension for up to 5 days. If the school does not have an in-school suspension program, the student may be placed on out-of-school suspension for between 1 and 5 days.

A student who contributed to a Tier 4 infraction will be automatically placed on out-of-school suspension for 10 days. A student who has been referred for expulsion may be placed on out-of-school suspension for up to 30 days before the expulsion hearing.

There are no 6-9 day suspensions.

Absolutely all students who have been suspended must be given work to complete so they do not miss important learning time. A student on a short-term suspension (1-5 days) may be given work to complete independently. A student placed on a long-term suspension (10 days or more) must be placed on Administrative Home Instruction. A teacher will work with the student at home to make sure s/he does not fall behind academically.

A student who is being suspended, and his/her parents or guardians, must receive clear information from the Principal about why the suspension is taking place, the student’s due process rights, and the expectations for the student’s return to school.

OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are expected to be respectful, responsible, and safe. Each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) outlines the supports that the student needs in order to meet these expectations. It is important for teachers and school leaders to be familiar with these supports so that they can set students up for success.

A Tier 1 or 2 infraction, or a Tier 3 infraction that does not result in a suspension, may be handled in the same way as it would be for a general education student.

A student with a disability may not receive a long-term suspension unless a Manifestation Determination meeting is held with the Child Study Team and the student's family. For more information, contact the Child Study Team at your school.

Questions?

If you have questions or comments about Student Rights & Responsibilities, please email conduct@camden.k12.nj.us