

**STAMFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL**  
**Code of Conduct**

***I. Introduction***

Consistent with our mission statement, the Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive, and district personnel may deliver, quality educational services without disruption or interference, without bullying, harassment or discrimination. Responsible and respectful behavior by students, teachers, other district personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

The district has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property (including athletic fields,, playgrounds and parking lots), in school buildings, on a school bus/vehicle and at school functions.

These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, integrity and the new Dignity for all Students Act. The Board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, to identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline when necessary is administered promptly and fairly. To this end, the board adopts this code of conduct ("code").

Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function.

***II. Definitions***

For purposes of this code, the following definitions apply.

**"Disruptive student"** means any student who substantially interferes with the educational process or the teacher's authority over the classroom.

**"Parent"** means parent, guardian or person in parental relation to a student.

**"School property"** means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of the school, or in or on a school bus.

**"School function"** means any school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity.

**"Weapon"** means a firearm as defined in 18 USC §921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act. It also means any other gun, BB gun, pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, machine gun, disguised gun, dagger, dirk, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, sling shot, metal knuckle knife, box cutter, cane sword, electronic dart gun, Kung Fu star, electronic stun gun, pepper spray or other noxious spray, explosive or incendiary bomb, or other device, instrument, material or substance that can cause physical injury or death when used to cause physical injury or death.

**"Bullying"** means a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. Bullying may be premeditated

or a sudden activity. There are at least three types of bullying: verbal, physical and social/relational. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying often includes the following characteristics:

1. **Power Imbalance**-occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a target.
2. **Intent to harm**-the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity.
3. **Threat of further aggression**-the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue.
4. **Terror**-when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance." (Barbara Coloroso, *the Bully, the Bullied & the Bystander*, 2003)

**"Discrimination"** means the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which a person belongs (as listed under Harassment as defined below).

**"Harassment"** means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

- Race
- Color
- Weight
- National origin
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Religious practice
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual orientation, or
- Gender (including gender identity and expression)
  - \* **Gender identity**- is one's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex or sex assigned at birth.
  - \* **Gender expression**-is the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms.

**II.** (cont'd)

“**Hazing**” means an induction, initiation or membership process involving harassment which produces public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule or creates a situation where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is likely to occur.

**III. Student Rights and Responsibilities**

**A. Student Rights**

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all district students have the right to:

1. Take part in all district activities on an equal basis regardless of race, weight, national origin, ethnic groups, religion, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.
4. A challenging education, free of disruption, in a safe and supportive school climate where students can learn and focus, rather than fear being discriminated against and/or verbally and/or physically harassed.
- 5.

**B. Student Responsibilities**

All district students have the responsibility to:

1. Come to school on time and ready and willing to learn.
2. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
3. Be familiar with and abide by all district policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
4. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class on time, and prepared to learn.
5. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
6. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
7. Work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.

8. Ask questions when they do not understand.
9. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
10. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
11. Accept responsibility for their actions.
12. Students must recognize that younger students look up to them and follow their leadership. Therefore, they should hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct.

**IV. Essential Partners**

It is expected that parents, Board of Education members, teachers and administrators will work together to educate the children of Stamford Central School as a collaborative responsibility.

All parents/guardians are expected to:

1. Recognize the importance of their child(ren)'s education and to send them to school regularly, on time and ready to learn.
2. Instill in their children a supportive attitude towards the programs and rules of the school and promote positive relationships with others.
3. Maintain open communication between the home and school.

All school personnel are expected to.

1. Create and maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity which will strengthen a student's self-concept and promote confidence to learn.
2. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning, and an environment free of discrimination or harassment.
3. Maintain open communications between the school and home.

**V. Student Dress Code**

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Parents, teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

Students who violate the Stamford Central School dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to additional discipline.

***VI. Purpose***

The Board of Education expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, district personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The best discipline is self-imposed, and students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of their misbehavior. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

The Board recognizes the need to make its expectations for student conduct while on school property or engaged in a school function specific and clear. The rules of conduct listed below are intended to do that and focus on safety and respect for the rights and property of others. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they:

- A. Engage in conduct that is disorderly. Examples of disorderly conduct include, but are not limited to:
1. Running in hallways.
  2. Making unreasonable noise.
  3. Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive.
  4. Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
  5. Engaging in any willful act which disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
  6. Trespassing. Students are not permitted in any school building, other than the one they regularly attend, without permission from the administrator in charge of the building.
  7. Computer/electronic communications misuse, including any unauthorized use of computers, software, or Internet/intranet account; accessing inappropriate websites; or any other violation of the district's acceptable use policy.
- B. Engage in conduct that is insubordinate. Examples of insubordinate con-





**X. (cont'd)**

lockers, desks, computer files and e-mail, and other school storage places may be subject to search at any time by school officials, without prior notice to students and without their consent.

### **SAVE PROVISIONS AND DUE PROCESS**

1. Under Education Law SAVE, teachers may remove “substantially disruptive” students by filling out a discipline referral form. Staff (LTA) may refer under SAVE through their teacher; for direct referral, they and others must refer to the administration again by filling out a discipline referral form. In all instances, common sense and good judgment should be the rule. In many circumstances, teachers and staff can diffuse the situation. In general, teachers are expected to maintain home contacts with potentially problematic students to promote good communication. If a teacher puts a student out of class under the SAVE provisions the teacher is expected to make an attempt to call home and follow up with a letter.
2. Under SAVE, the principal conducts a review of the incident within 24 hours and must find substantial evidence to overturn the action.
3. Four referrals to the office under SAVE must result in removal from program.
4. Refer to Education Law §2801.

### **STAMFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES & ESTABLISHED PRACTICES STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

#### **PROCLAMATION**

In compliance with the standards set for the governing of civil rights, all students are protected under the following grievance procedures.

NOTE: Certain areas, which are within the scope of a professional teacher’s responsibilities, are not subject to grievance (example: interpretation of a subject and/or work experience in the area of the teacher’s expertise).

#### **DEFINITION OF A GRIEVANCE**

A grievance is a complaint regarding an alleged violation of a student’s rights regarding grading, academic and laboratory work, dismissal, suspension, or student conduct.

#### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- 1.1 A student or a group of students have the right to submit a complaint informally to the staff member involved. If no satisfactory resolution occurs, a formal written complaint may be filed with the building principal within five (5) school days of the complaint.
- 1.2 The building principal will conduct a hearing within five (5) school days of receiving the complaint and will respond in writing within five (5) school days of the hearing.
- 1.3 If the student and/or students are not satisfied with the settlement offered at the first level, an appeal may be made to the superintendent within 30 days after the event given rise to the grievance.
- 1.4 A hearing by the superintendent, with the student and faculty, will be held within five (5) school days of receipt of the appeal.
- 1.5 A decision will be made in writing by the superintendent within fifteen (15) school days.
- 1.6 If the student and/or group of students are not satisfied at the superintendent level, they may appeal to the final level, which is the Board of Education within 15 days of receipt of the superintendent’s decision.
- 1.7 A hearing by the Board of Education will be held within 30 days of receipt of the written appeal and a decision in writing submitted within five (5) school days after the hearing.
- 1.8 Forms for appeals are available at the main office.

