

HOPE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Elementary School (Grades PreK-5) Parent/Student Handbook and Code of Student Conduct
2019-2020

BOARD OF EDUCATION PK-8 POLICIES

Detailed information regarding the following Board policies is available in the main office of the school and at the Board of Education Office. You can also access all BOE policies on-line at (<http://www.hope-elem.org>). What follows is a synopsis.

ATTENDANCE

Punctuality and attendance are important habits for students to develop and maintain. In accordance with the laws of the *State*, the Hope Township School District requires students to attend school regularly to ensure continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

NJ State Law requires that we document all days when a student is absent from school. As such, the school will monitor your child's attendance and timely arrival throughout the year. Parents are also encouraged to monitor their child's attendance through the OnCourse Parent Portal. **NOTE: Students who have missed 18 or more days of school, excused or unexcused, will be labeled as "chronically absent" by the State of New Jersey.**

Excused Absence: In keeping with the *NJ State Education Code*, we expect that, except in the case of illness (particularly contagious illness, vomiting, or fever), State-recognized religious observances, emergencies such as family illness or death, special educational opportunities or as per an individualized education, health or accommodation plan, your child should be in school and arrive on time. To be considered "excused" for these reasons, there **must** be parental/guardian notice to the school **in writing** with the reason for absence/lateness no more than **10 days** from the absence. **If written notification is not received within 10 days of the absence, it will be marked as an unexcused absence. There will be no exceptions.**

Note: *Even if absences have been excused, letters will be sent home regarding any areas of concern, if there are instances where parents/guardians are permitting excessive absenteeism or late arrivals, or when the number of cumulative absences is high. A total of 18 absences per year are considered to be excessive whether excused or unexcused and a referral may be made to the Municipal Court in accordance with 18A:38-25.*

Unexcused Absence: On a day when an absence/lateness is for reasons other than those noted above as "excused," the day of absence/lateness is recorded as "unexcused" and will go into your child's permanent record marked as such. Please note that family vacations and other non-educational activities are not included in the list of "excused" absences above. They are considered "unexcused" absences, and should be planned so they do not interfere with school attendance. Parents/guardians must assume full responsibility for all missed academic assignments. Teachers will not provide work in advance of such absences but may provide work upon a student's return.

In addition, in accordance with *NJ Statutes Annotated (NJS) 18:A* and *NJ Administrative Code (NJAC) 6A*, the following guidelines will be followed when absences are "unexcused."

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- For up to 4 cumulative unexcused absences, the school will conduct an investigation including contact with the student's parents to determine cause of absences, will develop an action plan as necessary, and will contact law enforcement and other authorities or agencies as appropriate;
- For between 5 and 9 cumulative unexcused absences, the school will conduct a follow-up investigation including contact with the parents, will evaluate and revise the action plan above to include referrals, consultations or assessments, and will cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies.
- For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, the student is considered truant. For students between the compulsory school ages, the school district will make mandatory referral to the court program as required by the *NJ Administrative Office of the Courts*. The school will consult with the parents, cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, and will proceed in accordance with *NJSA 18:A, Compelling Attendance at School*, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.

A reasonable attempt to notify the parent of an "unexcused" absence will be made. The school will proceed in accordance with the law's provision if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected.

Unexplained Absence: Parents/guardians must provide the school with a reason for a child's absence. If the child is not in school and the school office has not received parental/guardian notification as to reason, this absence will be considered "unexplained" and will be marked as "unexcused" in the child's permanent record and the guidelines above will be applied. In the event of "un-notified" absence, the school will make a reasonable attempt to contact the child's parents to determine the reason for the absence prior to the start of the following day.

Absences during Testing and Instructional Periods: If a student has an absence during the District or State standardized testing periods, he/she will only be able to make-up the test during the scheduled retake period that follows the testing period. This includes MAP testing that occurs in the fall, winter and spring.

Excessive absences may result in an incomplete or not applicable grade on a student's report card. Missing instructional time may limit the teacher's ability to issue a complete grade. *Children learn most effectively when they are regularly in school. Make-up work is not a replacement for missing day-to-day instruction and cannot replace lost student/teacher time.*

Absence and After School/Evening Events: Please note that except under previously-approved and special circumstances, a student who is absent from school during the day may NOT participate in any after school or evening events. (Note: A student who is absent due to illness may NOT participate.)

Reporting Absence: It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to call the school when a child is going to be absent. The District's voicemail system is operative 24 hours a day and parents are requested to call the school by 8:30 AM (or by 10:30 AM if it is an afternoon absence only).

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When calling the school to report an absence, please leave a voice message with the main office or school nurse and give the child's full name, reason for absence and the date(s) of absence. It is District policy that any "un-notified absence" will result in a call from the school. If left "unexplained," the absence will be classified as "unexcused."

Reporting Lateness: If a student must report to school late, the parent must escort the student to the main office and provide the office staff with the reason for the tardiness. The parent must sign the student in at the main office.

Reporting an Early Sign-out: Early sign-out from school is discouraged; however, we realize there are times when this will occur. Please send a note in advance to alert us of the need to sign your child out early from school. The parent must come into the main office to sign the student out.

Readmission after Absence: A physician's statement explaining a non-communicable absence of *more than five days* is required. The school nurse must receive a written physician explanation if the student has been absent with a communicable disease for *any length* of time. This will serve as evidence of the student being free of the communicable disease.

Retention or Credit Loss: Prolonged or repeated absences or lateness, excused or unexcused, from school or class may result in retention or the loss of credit toward promotion as per district policy. *As per school policy, a student who is not present in school for at least 160 of the 180 school days will be a candidate for retention.*

Religious Holidays: A list of the State of New Jersey Approved Religious Holidays can be found at the NJ Department of Education website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/>.

Student Tardiness (A.M. and P.M.)

Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Developing habits of punctuality and regular attendance help to foster success through school and into adult life. A student who is not in homeroom by 8:40 AM, or is dismissed prior to 3:13 PM, is considered tardy and must be signed in at the main office by a parent or guardian. Students who come to school on a bus that is late are not considered tardy. After school detentions will be held on Thursday afternoons weekly.

IN A SCHOOL YEAR	Consequence
6 unexcused tardies	A letter will be mailed home to the family
7-8 unexcused tardies	Recess detention
9-10 unexcused tardies	After school detention (Thursday)
11-12 unexcused tardies	In-person parent conference with Superintendent
13-14 unexcused tardies	After school detention (Thursday)
15-16 unexcused tardies	After school detention (Thursday)

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17-19 unexcused tardies	1 morning and 1 afternoon detention (Thursday)
20-22 unexcused tardies	Letter sent notifying parents that cumulative tardies may result in truancy charges.
24-26+ unexcused tardies	Office of the Courts will be notified

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (A.U.P.)

The Hope Township School District believes that all students should have access to technology tools, resources, and services when they act in a responsible, efficient, courteous and legal manner. Internet access and other online services, available to students and teachers, offer a multitude of global resources. Our goal in providing these services is to enhance the educational development of our students.

We educate students about appropriate online behavior including awareness and response to cyber-bullying and interacting with others on social websites. In addition, we take steps to block access to inappropriate content, monitor safety and security when students use electronic communications, prevent unauthorized access including “hacking,” and prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of students’ personal information.

Acceptable uses of technology are devoted to activities that support and enhance teaching and learning. Use of “technology tools” refers to all digital tools and equipment that are used in Hope School classrooms and the school— whether district-owned or privately-owned. Therefore, the A.U.P. also covers students in upper grades who participate in Bring Your Own Device (B.Y.O.D.) ***at the invitation of their teachers and under the conditions outlined in the B.Y.O.D. Guidelines.***

To use any technology in our instructional environment and while on school grounds, students must have an “Acceptable Use Policy: Technology Agreement” on file. All students and their parents/guardians must sign and/or electronically acknowledge this document. The Agreement, which is written in age-appropriate language, must be signed and on file.

BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (B.Y.O.D.)

The B.Y.O.D. Policy applies to students in grades 6-8 only. On occasion, an elementary teacher in 4th or 5th grade may choose to invite students to bring their own privately owned devices to school for use with a particular project during a specified time period. A communication will be sent home with the specifics should this occur. A student who does B.Y.O.D. must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, the Acceptable Use Policy, and all applicable Board policies and the guidelines for B.Y.O.D. The use of personal devices by students is optional; students who do not participate in B.Y.O.D. will not be penalized, and alternative modes of participation will be available. Devices must be put into silent mode, while on school grounds. Responsibility for the safety, security, loss, damage, operation, and charging of personal devices rests with the student. The school administration has the authorization to collect and examine any device if the device is suspected of a violation of the Student Code of

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Conduct. If the device is locked or password protected, the student will be required to unlock the device at the request of the CSA.

BUS CONDUCT

NJ Statute provides that the bus driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times. Infractions deeming the student to be unmanageable can be reported to the CSA by the driver and disciplinary action taken as necessary. **Students are only permitted to ride on their assigned bus.** In addition, the Code of Student Conduct also applies to bus behavior, as well as behavior at the bus stop. It also applies to the behavior of walkers to and from school.

DRESS CODE

The wearing of clothing bearing obscene writing, messaging or promoting indecent or unacceptable behavior, whether stated or implied, will not be permitted. In all such cases, students wearing inappropriate items as deemed as such by the CSA or any other school staff member, will be sent to the school nurse and asked to remove or replace them. When it is determined that students are in violation of these guidelines, they will either be provided with temporary clothing, asked to turn their shirt inside out for the remainder of the school day or a parent will be called to provide their child with appropriate clothing so that they may return to class.

Examples of inappropriate attire would include, but are not limited to:

- Garments which reveal underwear or expose midriffs, chests/torso, or buttocks
- All shorts and skirts must be mid-thigh in length.
- Pants must be able to stay up without being hand-held
- Shirts with spaghetti straps, halters, tank tops, tube tops, any shirts that expose the torso area are prohibited.
- See-through clothing of any kind is not permitted unless a proper lining or garment underneath is worn. This includes sheer, mesh, or lace fabric.
- Students may not wear clothing and/or accessories that are related to any alcohol/drugs/tobacco, violence, or offensive to any national, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation or gender group.
- Students are prohibited from wearing clothing with chains or any studded necklaces and bracelets.
- No student is permitted to wear a hat or any other head covering in school, unless required to do so by religious custom or medical condition.

Since students have structured recess every day, it is recommended that the students wear sneakers or other safe footwear (no flip-flops) to school daily. In addition, students should dress for the weather, since recess occurs throughout all seasons of the school year. Hats may be worn when outside of the school building

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

"Electronic Communications Between Teachers / Support Staff Members and Parents/Guardians"

Parents must communicate to their child's teacher via the district email system, district telephones, and district-sponsored or district-approved social media sites and web

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pages. Teachers **are not** permitted to communicate to Parents/Guardians via personal cell phones, which includes phone calls and text messages. Please be respectful of the 24 hour rule meaning that you should anticipate a response within 24hrs. of sending your inquiry. If an inquiry is sent on a Friday or before extended weekends for extended school recesses, a response can be expected on the following day that school is back in session as teachers are not required to check the district email system, district telephones, and district-sponsored or district-approved social media sites and web pages over the weekends/extended weekends.

"Electronic Communications Between Teachers / Support Staff Members and Students"

These two policies (teacher and support staff) protect students from receiving or exchanging any improper or inappropriate electronic communications with any members of the staff. Students may not communicate with a staff member through anything other than the district email system, district telephones, and district-sponsored or district-approved social media sites and web pages. Likewise, a staff member may not use or provide a personal email address to communicate with students, may not use a personal phone to communicate with students, is prohibited from text messaging communications with students, and prohibited from communicating with any student through a personal social networking website or other personal Internet-based website. A staff member may not offer or accept "friend" requests. Note: Under special circumstances (e.g. field trips, club activities), a staff member may receive permission from the principal to use a personal device or personal media site for the purpose of communicating emergency/information notification in a timely manner.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING (H.I.B.) POLICY

It is the intent of the NJ Legislature in its January 2011 enactment of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) Law to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidence of HIB of students that occur in school and off school premises.

The District prohibits all acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. HIB is defined as any gesture, written, verbal or physical act or any electronic communication (that is, transmitted by an electronic device) whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

- Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that **substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students**; and that
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to person or damage to property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students, or

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- Creates a **hostile educational environment** for the student by interfering with a student's education or by **severely or pervasively** causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

A HIB complaint will be investigated promptly within the defined timeline and in adherence with the procedures set forth in the District HIB Policy. This policy can be accessed along with contact information for the District's Anti Bullying Coordinator and Anti Bullying Specialist by contacting the main office.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

Policy provides a forum for members of the community to resolve any misunderstandings between the public and the school district regarding school personnel, district operations or instructional materials. Resolution is initially attempted through discussion between the involved parties and generally takes place at the classroom or administrative level.

RECORDING POLICY

The taking or sharing of pictures and/or video during school hours is prohibited unless required for an academic task and under the direction of a staff member. Students may not use devices to record, transmit, or post photographic images or video of a person or persons on campus during school activities or school hours.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The district and the school will maintain a school Web page and Facebook page. Expanding Internet presence and utilizing social media sites will allow the building administration to share information at any moment, thereby allowing the community to access this information via commonly used platforms.

WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS

Board of Education Policy regarding Weapons and Dangerous Instruments and State Law states that "any item known to be a weapon or any item used in such a way as to intimidate or physically hurt another person is prohibited from being on school property.." In addition, the Board Policy prohibits all imitation weapons and "the Board reserves the right to initiate and impose disciplinary action for conduct involving weapons." Given the changing political climate in schools across our country, it is essential that our students learn early that threatening language is not acceptable. Expressions like the following will not be tolerated: "I'm going to shoot you. I'm going to bring a gun to school and shoot you. I'd like to kill you." Verbal comments, written notes, and gestures along these lines will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. The school may have to consider police involvement in such instances.

PARENT NOTIFICATION

Hope Township School District offers a notification service to parents to keep them informed of information pertaining to their child's particular grade and educational programs. The "Blackboard Connect" notification system keeps subscribers informed of emergency closings, delayed openings or other instances where parents may be required to take action (school

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evacuation due to power outage, etc.). Please make sure that the information that we have on file (phone numbers and email address') are current and the ways that you prefer to be notified are indicated (phone, text message, email).

MEDIA AND WEB NON-CONSENT FORMS

Annually, Hope Township School District sends parent/guardians information about federal and state laws as it pertains to the "personally identifiable information" of students and their rights when it comes to the school district using a child's name/likeness in the media, district sponsored publications or on its website. If a parent/guardian does not want his/her child's name and/or photograph to appear in the local newspapers, district's sponsored publications or on the district's website, they must sign and return the related form to the school's main office. Permission may be rescinded at any point during the school year by sending a note to the CSA. This will take effect upon receipt of the school. For further details, contact the main office.

NUTRITION

Hope Township School District contracts its school dining services through Maschio's Food Service which provides school lunch options in compliance with the state-mandated nutrition policy. We ask that you be mindful of the existence of food allergies among children and discourage sharing of snacks.

SCHOOL SAFETY PROCEDURES

School Safety: Hope School conducts drills and have plans in place to keep students, staff and community members visiting the school safe and secure. Among such safeguards are the following: Bus evacuation drills (twice a year); fire drills (once a month); lockdown and other state mandated drills (once a month).

School Security: Hope Township School has a camera and buzzer entry system which restricts visitor access to the building. To ensure the safety of our students, staff and community, the district also has a protocol that it follows before allowing anyone access to the school, specifically the main office upon arrival. Please contact the main office and make an appointment if you wish to enter the school for any reason prior to your arrival. Once a visitor is cleared and granted access to the main office, the visitor will be issued a visitor badge upon signing in at the main office that must be worn. **You will be required to turn over your car key or driver's license as collateral.** You must return your visitor badge to the main office and sign out prior to leaving the school building. At this time your car key or driver's license will be returned to you. Requiring visitors to present identification and to be identified as a visitor while in the building will help us to distinguish persons in our school and enhance safety.

Visiting Friends After School

Students wishing to visit friends after school must have a signed note indicating parental permission. Due to the capacity and routing of buses, a student **cannot** go on a bus different than their own. The district cannot issue bus passes for students to visit friends if the friend normally rides a different bus.

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Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Parking/Drop Off and Pick-up: School buses will drop off and pick up students in the circular driveway in front of the All Purpose Room. ***No other vehicles are permitted in this driveway at any time.*** Parents of students in Grades K-8, who are picking up or dropping off students, must enter the parking lot adjacent to the All Purpose Room. This route is one way and all drivers are urged to use the utmost caution in order to ensure the safety of everyone. If you are not dropping off immediately, please park in an unmarked parking spot and escort your student(s) safely to the pick-up/drop off entrance. When being picked up please escort your students safely to your vehicle. A student who normally rides the bus must have a written note or be “signed out” in the main office by a parent or guardian.

Students are not to be dropped off at school prior to 8:30 a.m. For the safety of your child, please be advised that there is **no supervision before 8:30 a.m.** Please use the lower lot when dropping off students before 8:40 a.m. Only those students who are later than 8:40 a.m. may use the upper parking lot, and **must be signed in by a parent.**

All bus and car-line students will be dismissed from the gymnasium at the end of the school day. A student who normally rides the bus, must have a written note (preferred) or be “signed out” by a parent or guardian for car-line dismissal. If an emergency arises, parents may call prior to 3:00 pm on the same day if a child is to be picked up. Students are not allowed to ride a bus different from the one they are assigned to. Students will only be put on their assigned bus at the end of the day. Students younger than 3rd grade will not be released from the bus without an adult present. Students must be in 6th grade or older in order to supervise a child younger than 1st grade when exiting the bus without an adult present. If conflicting information about dismissal is reported to the office, every attempt will be made to reach the parent and clarify dismissal procedures. However, if no one is able to be reached the student will go home in the manner we have on record from their daily dismissal procedures.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT (CSC)

Hope Township School believes in fostering positive school citizenship. To that end, we embrace the following core values or CARES:

- C Cooperation*
- A Assertion*
- R Responsibility and Respect*
- E Empathy*
- S Self-control*

As students progress through the school system and into middle school, they continue to build upon these basic core values while also emphasizing the values of Honesty, Respect, Kindness, Service, and Responsibility.

The ultimate purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is the development of self-discipline and self-regulation. At Hope Township School, we strive to be consistent, firm but fair, and aware of

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the pride and dignity of every student. We expect students to behave responsibly, to respect the rights and properties of others, and to work cooperatively with all members of the school community. We expect students to follow the code of student conduct and the specific behavioral guidelines established in each class. Students are accountable to all school personnel for their behavior while on school property, at any school-sponsored function, at the bus stop, on a school bus, walking to and from school, in the before or after school programs, or off school grounds including field trips, when substantial disruption occurs to the orderly operation of the school. This includes but is not limited to behavior when using an electronic device for such things as shared documents, text messaging, video taping, social media posting, email, blogging, website posting and apps.

When a student commits an offense, the school staff helps the student to see the relationship between the offense and the related core value. When disruptive behavior occurs, developmental and/or age appropriate logical consequences are applied. The student's developmental needs and history of unacceptable behavior, as well as the circumstances of the offense are taken into consideration.

ELEMENTARY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Cooperation

I have the right to be an active participant in the school community, and the responsibility to do my best work with others.

- *I follow the rules at work and play.*
- *I take turns and share.*
- *I strive to be inclusive of others and their ideas when at work or play.*

Assertion

I have the right to have my ideas heard and appreciated by others, and the responsibility to listen to others and deal peacefully in the event of a conflict.

- *I listen to others.*
- *I speak up respectfully for what I believe.*
- *I tell the truth.*
- *I am an up-stander, not a bystander.*

Responsibility/Respect

I have the right to learn and the responsibility to do my best.

- *I come to school prepared and ready to learn.*
- *I let other students learn.*
- *I am accountable for my choices.*
- *I take care of myself, others and the school environment.*
- *I use technology in agreement with the district's Acceptable Use Policy.*

Empathy

I have the right to be treated with respect, and the responsibility to respect others.

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- *I try to understand feelings, emotions, and actions of others.*
- *I respect that everyone is different.*
- *I act in a way that respects other people's feelings.*

Self-control

I have the right to be safe and the responsibility to treat others in a safe manner.

- *I solve problems using appropriate school words.*
- *I think before I act and consider the consequences of my actions.*

ELEMENTARY LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The assignment of logical consequences is a classroom and school-wide practice designed to assist children in developing self-discipline. When children break rules, logical consequences help students to fix their mistakes and to learn from them.

Logical consequences help teachers respond to misbehavior, in a developmentally appropriate way, that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity.

These are examples of different types of logical consequences:

- Restorative Practice - Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to make it right under administrative supervision and guidance.
- Time-out
- Loss of privilege
- Apology- oral and/or written
- Reparations (You break it; you fix it.)
- Administrative-Assigned detention

On occasion, when offenses are repeated or when a student is not learning from logical consequences, additional remediation is necessary. This may include a parent-teacher conference, referral to the counselor, participation in a social group, detention, removal from an area, meeting with a building administrator, or development of a behavior plan. It is up to the teacher/counselor/administrator's discretion to apply remediation based on the incident or pattern of incidents.

There are also several situations when the consequence of an in- or out-of-school suspension may be warranted. These include but are not limited to the following: unethical use of technology, trespassing, leaving school grounds without permission, unacceptable language or gestures, endangerment, threats, fighting, theft, vandalism, violation of the Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) policy, assault, insubordination (defiance), distribution of tobacco or tobacco products or drugs/alcohol, weapons, false alarms, or arson. Misbehavior of a chronic or a cumulative nature may also lead to suspension.

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MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

In New Jersey, there is a uniform Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between school districts and law enforcement officials. The MOA, which is approved by the NJ Department of Law and Public Safety and the NJ Department of Education, documents the commitment for schools and law enforcement agencies to work together as equal partners to enforce the law on school grounds. The MOA also details how schools are to report suspected incidents involving alcohol or drugs, weapons, child abuse, hazing, harassment, intimidation and bullying, or problems that compromise school security or safety. School administrators use the MOA to determine their course of action when faced with matters that rise to this level.

DUE PROCESS

Parents and students have procedural due process rights under the Fourteenth Amendment with respect to discipline that involves the possibility of serious sanction and consequences such as suspension or expulsion.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

A current list of community and school-based health and social service provider agencies and other resources are available to support a student and a student's family. In addition to outside providers (help lines, referral services, counseling services and crisis services), there is a host of District supports including Student Support Teams (multidisciplinary teams that provide a coordinated system for the identification, planning and delivery of interventions to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties), Child Study Teams, counselors, and school nurses.

Please refer to the District Web Site at www.hope-elem.org for this information or call the main office for assistance.

8.20.19