

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

Mission Statement and Expectations of Student Behavior

Students at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs are expected to be courteous and respectful to all members of the School community -- teachers, staff, other students, volunteers and guests. This includes showing respect for both the School's property and the property of others.

The School strives to create a safe, nourishing, and creative environment so that all students can succeed academically and thrive personally. Ensuring a safe and healthy School environment requires that students abide by all School rules and regulations. Students should arrive at School appropriately prepared to learn and participate in class, which includes bringing in all necessary materials and books. All students at the School are reminded to be honest, truthful, and diligent in their studies.

Sometimes students require more attention to excel academically or to adhere socially. The School has developed this Student Code of Conduct to assist the students to understand what is expected of them. This is a tool that will be used by the students, parents, and staff to navigate the process when a student experiences difficulties and obstacles in School.

It is the responsibility of each and every employee of the School to enforce the Student Code of Conduct. Serious or repeated infractions may necessitate the involvement of the appropriate Faculty Chair, the School Administrator, and/or may also include the student's parents or guardians.

Definition of Prohibited Behaviors

Harassment or Discrimination, including Sexual Harassment or Discrimination, is any behavior that is pervasive or severe and which has the purpose or effect of (1) creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, (2) interfering unreasonably with an individual's academic performance, and/or (3) creating a situation where academic decisions of a student depend on his or her submitting to and/or not objecting to the offensive behavior.

Discrimination and harassment can take many forms. Examples of harassment and discrimination include, but are not limited to:

- oral or written slurs, jokes, statements, remarks, questions, gestures, pictures, emails, texts, and/or cartoons that discriminate based upon a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex

- demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment, academic rewards, or continued participation in a program or project
- offensive and/or unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances, or touching
- obscene, demeaning, and/or abusive commentary about an individual's body or other personal characteristics

Sexual Assault is any unwanted, non-consensual sexual contact against any individual by force or without consent (against a person's will) or when a person cannot give consent (under the age of consent, intoxicated, developmentally disabled, mentally/physically unable to consent, etc.). Examples of sexual assault, include but are not limited to, unwanted or unwelcome touching, sexual violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and/or sexual coercion.

Bullying is any unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power between two or more individuals. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time and creates a hostile or intimidating environment for the targeted student. Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- **Verbal:** Name calling, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, and threatening to cause physical harm
- **Social:** Spreading rumors about someone, excluding others on purpose, telling other students not to be friends with someone, and embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical:** Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking and/or breaking someone's possession, or any other behavior that causes physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to the targeted student's property

Cyberbullying is any bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, fax machines, and the Internet. Cyberbullying can occur on or off School property. Examples of cyberbullying may include, but are not limited to:

- threatening or insulting others through aggressive emails, instant messages, or text messages
- taking a private email, instant message, or text message and forwarding it, or threatening to forward it, to others, or posting it where others can see it in order to embarrass or intimidate a person

- spreading hurtful rumors or lies about others by email or on social networks
- posting, or threatening to post, embarrassing pictures of someone online without his or her permission
- creating websites, videos or social media profiles that embarrass, humiliate, or make fun of others

Hostile environment is one in which discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying cause the School environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, and/or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who: (1) reports discrimination, harassment, hazing, or bullying, or provides information during an investigation of such behavior, and/or (2) witnesses or has reliable information about such behaviors. Retaliation against any individual reporting such incidents is not tolerated, and the individual engaging in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary measures.

Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. General Violations of School Rules

- Violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
- Failing to comply with instructions given by School personnel
- Behaving in any way that disrupts the School environment or educational process
- Disobeying rules for conduct on School buses
- Violating the School dress code guidelines
- Damaging, vandalizing or stealing School property or property owned by others
- Violating safety rules

2. Leaving School grounds or School-sponsored events or activities without permission

- Skipping or being tardy for class
- Leaving School property without permission

3. Inappropriate Physical or Verbal Conduct

- Physically aggressive, threatening, or abusive behavior (threatened or actual)

- Verbally abusive behavior and/or written threats, including those made on the internet. This includes the use of profanity, vulgar language, and/or obscene gestures
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment, assault, or contact. Engaging in inappropriate physical contact, whether consensual or not
- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Making false accusations
- Aggressive or disruptive action that disrupts or interferes with School activities

4. Prohibited Items

- Possessing and using electronic devices and/or cellular telephones other than in accordance with the policies outlined in the “Electronic Devices” section of the Student Handbook
- Possessing or using matches or a lighter
- Possessing, smoking, and/or using a tobacco product
- Possessing and/or distributing pornographic material
- Possessing drug paraphernalia
- Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using and/or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage
- Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using and/or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, and/or other illegal drug. (Any student taking a controlled substance prescribed by a doctor must have a written note from the provider. All such submissions must be reviewed by the School).
- Abusing the student’s own prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, and/or possessing or being under the influence of another person’s prescription drug
- Possessing or using any articles generally considered to be weapons and/or dangerous items which can be used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily harm to another, including, but not limited to, firearms, knives, and/or explosive devices

5. Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices and Technology

- Violating policies or rules regarding the use of the School’s technology resources as set forth in the Student Handbook and Parent Handbook found in the BigSis portal

- Attempting to access or circumvent passwords and/or other security-related information of School computers and related equipment
- Attempting to alter, destroy and/or disable School technology resources
- Using email or websites to engage in, or encourage, illegal behavior or to threaten School safety, which shall include conduct that occurs off of School property if such conduct causes a material disruption to the educational process
- Sending, posting, or possessing electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, , threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including cyberbullying and "sexting", whether such conduct occurs on School property, or off School property if such conduct causes a material disruption to the educational environment

Violations of the Student Code of Conduct are prohibited on School grounds and at School-sponsored events, activities, functions, and programs. Inappropriate behavior is also prohibited on School buses and other vehicles owned, leased or used by the School, and through the use of technology or any electronic device owned, leased, or used by the School. In addition, harassment or discrimination, including sexual harassment, assault, contact, or discrimination, bullying and/or cyberbullying are prohibited at any location, activity, function, or program that is not School-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School, if the prohibited behavior creates a hostile environment at School for a targeted student, infringes on the rights of a targeted student at the School, or materially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the School.

Students are encouraged to make complaints involving any type of harassment, assault, contact, and/or discrimination to Abigail Reid, the Administrator. If a student does not feel comfortable making a complaint to Abigail Reid, the Administrator, he or she is encouraged to make the complaint to his/her teacher or any member of the staff with whom the student feels comfortable. Students are strongly encouraged to make a written complaint on the Student Complaint Form available in the front offices of the Lower School and High School, and on the website: waldorfsaratoga.org. If the student prefers to make an oral complaint, any member of staff who receives the complaint should complete the Student Complaint form following receipt of the oral complaint. Parents and/or other witnesses to the aforementioned conduct are encouraged to report it immediately.

Reporting Incidents

Students who believe they have been harassed or discriminated against, including sexually assaulted, harassed, and/or discriminated against, and/or been bullied or cyberbullied, witnessed such an incident, and/or has relevant information about such an incident should report the matter as promptly as possible to any faculty or staff member of the School with whom they are comfortable speaking. Similarly, the parent or guardian of a student who is the target of such behavior is also encouraged to speak with a faculty or staff member. Students and parents are encouraged, but not required, to complete the Student Complaint form.

Parents and students should be aware that the School will endeavor to keep all matters confidential. The School, its staff, and administrators may have to share information in order to complete an investigation of the matter.

While the School cannot promise strict confidentiality (because information may have to be shared appropriately in order to conduct an effective investigation), the School releases information concerning these complaints only on a “need-to-know” basis, such as required to conduct a comprehensive and effective investigation or to ensure that the requirements of this policy and applicable law are met.

Investigating Incidents of Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Discrimination

The School’s Governance Council is responsible for investigating all reported instances of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and discrimination;. If the complaint is against the Administrator, the complaint should be directed to the Board Chair or Collegium Chair. This process will generally begin within twenty-four hours of receipt of the report, whether from a student, parent or guardian, faculty or staff member. Such an investigation may include, but is not limited to, interviewing those individuals directly involved in the incident and potential witnesses (including students, faculty, and staff members), as well as collecting documents and any other evidence bearing on the incident. Throughout this process, the Governance Council and the School Administrator will maintain confidentiality to the extent, in its judgment, the situation permits. In the case of serious offenses, the Governance Council or the School Administrator, as applicable, may refer the matter to, or seek guidance regarding the matter from outside counsel or experts who can assist with ensuring a thorough and impartial investigation.

All members of the School community are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation initiated by the Governance Council or the School Administrator under this policy. Upon completion of its investigation, the matter will be brought to the Collegium, including the School Administrator, to determine what, if any, restorative justice practices, remedial action, and/or disciplinary measure will be initiated. All investigations are expected to be completed within thirty (30) days, but in no more than sixty (60) days. Upon determination of the appropriate remediation measure, a representative of the Governance Council will inform the individuals directly involved – including students, parents and guardians, faculty and/or staff members -- regarding the outcome of the investigation and what action will be taken.

If the individual initiating the complaint or against whom the complaint was made does not agree with the outcome of the investigation and action proposed to be taken by the School, they may file an appeal with the School Administrator within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the proposed resolution. This appeal will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees within fifteen (15) days of receipt. The determination of the Executive Committee shall be final and binding on all parties. If the complaint is pedagogical in nature, the collegium will be involved with the final determination. Generally within a month of the resolution of the investigation, either the Collegium Chair or the appropriate Faculty Chair will follow up with the parties involved to determine whether the situation has been successfully resolved or whether additional measures should be considered.

Although it is the School's goal to support and educate members of the School community as the principal means of preventing harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment, assault, contact and discrimination, and/or bullying and cyberbullying, it is also the responsibility of the School to promote a learning environment free of such behavior. Individuals who have been found to have engaged in such behavior will, in accordance with the procedures outlined above, be subject to remedial or disciplinary action as considered appropriate, up to and including expulsion from the School.

Disciplinary Process

Overview

As described above, infrequent or minor infractions of the Student Code of Conduct are overseen and handled by the class teacher and/or advisor. However, serious or repeated infractions require completion of a Behavioral Report Form and may necessitate the involvement of the appropriate Faculty Chair, or School

Administrator, or Governance Council, and may also include contact with the student's parents or guardians.

The goals of a chosen course of disciplinary response include helping the students to:

- Understand why the behavior is unacceptable and the harm it causes and/or has caused
- Identify what they could have been done differently in the same situation
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Learn appropriate social strategies and skills to use in the future
- Understand that further, more stringent disciplinary consequences will likely be enforced if the behavior reoccurs

Responses to Student Behavior

Responses may include one or more of the following practices, based upon a review of the criteria outlined above:

- Restorative Justice circle to repair harm
 - Verbal correction
 - Cooling-off time or a "time out"
 - Seating changes in the classroom
 - Counseling by teachers and/or mental health professionals, and/or appropriate administrative personnel
 - Parent-teacher conferences
 - Confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
 - Behavioral contracts
 - Sending the student to the main office, or other designated area
 - School duties and/or community service activities in another class or designated area of the School
 - Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities or afterschool sports, as well as eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices
 - Required medical leave as outlined in our medical leave policy
 - Suspension
 - Probation
 - Expulsion
 - Other strategies and consequences as deemed appropriate to the circumstances by the Faculty Chair, and/or School Administrator.

For repeated or serious violations to the student code of conduct, the class teacher or advisor will contact the student's parents to discuss the behavior and the disciplinary action being taken. The teacher or advisor will also contact the parents of any other students who were impacted by the behavior, informing them of the situation and how their child may have been affected. It is the faculty member's responsibility to follow up with all parties, , to ensure that the matter has been brought to appropriate closure in an expedient and timely fashion.

Punishment

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances at The Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs. If a student presents an immediate danger to themselves or to others, they may be physically restrained only for the purpose of ensuring either their own safety or the safety of others.

In addition to the disciplinary consequences outlined above, behavior which may be either a misdemeanor and/or a felony offense, and which is committed on the School's property, will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Suspension

While student suspension is generally reserved for a serious infraction of the Code of Conduct, repeated smaller infractions may also result in suspension. In the case of in-School suspension, the student does not attend regular classes, but rather works in a supervised environment on either a specific assignment (such as a reflective essay) or performs supervised work on behalf of the School community (such as assisting with building projects or grounds work). The decision to suspend a student is made by the Administrator, the Faculty Chair, and other involved faculty members; and the student's parents or guardians will be notified by phone. A follow-up letter is sent to the parents or guardians specifying the terms of the suspension, along with consequences for repeated behavior. Parents who would like to request additional information may request a meeting with the student's teacher or advisor and/or the Administrator.

Probation

Serious or repeated violations of the Student Code of Conduct, may result in a student being placed on probation. Additionally, if the student is experiencing academic-related difficulties, probation may also be warranted to ensure the student is receiving specialized attention and monitoring.

During the probation period, the student's behavior or academic performance is closely monitored, with an expectation of improvement by a stated date in order for the student to continue attending the School. The decision to place a student on probation is made by a consultation with the Faculty Chair, Administrator, and/or any faculty or staff considered appropriate. There will be a meeting with the student's parents or guardians to discuss the concerns and expectations of improved student behavior or performance. A letter is sent to the parents or guardians outlining the terms of the student's probation.

Expulsion

A single serious violation or repeated lesser violations of the Student Code of Conduct, continued academic difficulties, or failure to improve behavior and/or academic performance during a probationary period, may result in student expulsion. The decision to expel a student is made by a consultation with the Faculty Chair, Administrator, and/or any faculty or staff considered appropriate. There will be a meeting with the student's parents or guardians to discuss the expulsion. A follow-up letter is sent to the parents or guardians outlining the reasons for expulsion.

False Complaints/Abuses of the Process

Allegations of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and cyberbullying are serious and can damage an individual's reputation, therefore any person who knowingly, maliciously or recklessly makes a false complaint will be subject to serious discipline, up to and including expulsion. In addition, because candor and honesty are essential to the investigation and remediation process, they are required of all participants, including third-party witnesses. The withholding of material information in an investigation by student complainants, witnesses, and/or the accused party is also a violation of the School's Student Code of Conduct.