

## HARMONY HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PLAN

### I. PHILOSOPHY

The members of the Harmony Hills School Community – students, parents, and staff – believe that learning is a continuous process and that while learning is not confined to a school building, it is nevertheless the primary function of the school.

The school must evolve a certain set of rules and regulations to guide its participants and to facilitate the performance of its primary function. These rules should reflect a balance between the responsibilities and rights of the individual and promote an environment conducive to effective and efficient learning and mutual respect and cooperation between and among all segments of the school community.

The Harmony Hills local school discipline policy will focus on the development of self-discipline which will express itself in responsible and appropriate behavior. The implementation of the policy will be fair, firm and consistent, and students will be made aware of the consequences of irresponsible and inappropriate behavior. Careful evaluation of each individual situation will be made so that the school staff's response to the student is appropriate. In all cases the goals of disciplinary intervention is to help the child deal with situations more responsibly and appropriately in the future.

The Harmony Hills school community members believe that self-discipline is learned, and, therefore, can and should be taught in the home, school and community. The child also learns through experience and imitation of those in his/her environment. Discipline is a developmental process. As the child matures, he/she should be given increased responsibility in keeping with his/her developmental level and social maturity. The ultimate goal is the internalization of discipline so that little external enforcement is required.

The cooperation of many people is necessary to establish and maintain a positive learning environment in each school throughout Montgomery County Public School system. Each member of the school community must assume certain responsibilities in order to assure that the rights of all are protected. The following rights are not all inclusive, but rather relat specifically to school discipline:

- A. Students have the right to a public school education in an environment conducive to learning. They are expected to do the following:
  - 1. Attend school and classes regularly, to arrive on time, and fulfill to the best of their ability the objectives of each subject.

2. Understand and observe the rules and procedures of the school.
  3. Recognize that there are channels through rules and procedures that can be studied or questioned, and realize that they must use those channels.
  4. Participate in the development of school rules and procedures in keeping with their maturity.
- B. Parents have the right to expect that the school will address the learning needs of their children in an equitable way, respecting the individual differences and needs of children. Parents have the right to be informed of their children's progress and of areas where closer home-school communication and cooperation is needed. The parent is expected to do the following:
1. Send children to school regularly, on time, and prepared to work.
  2. Respond to communications from the school.
  3. Cooperate with the school staff in solving behavioral problems.
  4. Help children to develop respect for the rights and property of others.
  5. Understand and support the fair, consistent administration of school rules and procedures.
- C. Teachers have the right to work in an atmosphere which fosters satisfaction in their work with the support and guidance of the administration in maintaining high professional standards. Teachers are expected to do the following:
1. Work with students to help them understand the objectives as established in the Program of Studies.
  2. Help students realize that they are important, and that as group members, they should behave responsibly and appropriately.
  3. Encourage and help students understand and support the rules of the school and to participate in formulating rules relating to them and their roles in the school.
  4. Know and enforce consistently and fairly the rules and procedures of the school.
  5. Use procedures and strategies appropriate for age, background, and level of maturity in fostering appropriate behavior and dealing with inappropriate behavior from students.
  6. Seek conferences with parents and other school personnel in an effort to help students who present behavioral problems.
- D. The principal has the right to expect the cooperation of staff, students, and parents as she seeks to facilitate the fulfillment of the school's function as an educational institution. The principal is expected to do the following:

1. Make known and interpret to students, parents, and staff the MCPS discipline policies and the local school discipline plan.
2. Implement specific plans for effective student, parent and staff participation in the formulation and review of the local school discipline plan.
3. Provide support for all building personnel in maintaining appropriate and effective discipline.
4. Be available for conferences with staff, students, parents, and others on discipline matters.
5. Provide support for teachers in dealing with serious problem situations.
6. Inform teachers of administrative disciplinary action.
7. Identify the line of authority in the building in the principal's absence so that disciplinary matters may be handled as expeditiously as possible.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF HARMONY HILLS DISCIPLINE PLAN

In March 1977 the Board of Education adopted a county-wide policy on discipline. Local schools were directed to develop their discipline plan so that certain procedures would be consistent in every school. In the fall of 1987, the current Harmony Hills discipline plan was developed, reviewed and revised by the staff with input from students and parents. The plan is reviewed and discussed annually.

County policies and regulations related to discipline are contained in the MCPS Policies and Procedures Handbook and the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook located in the school office, and are available to school staff, students, and parents.

Infractions defined by County Policies:

### A. Physical Attack on Staff and Students

An act of physically assaulting a staff member or student on school ground or in conjunction with school activities would require a minimum action of three days of suspension with police referral. Maximum action: expulsion (This should be distinguished from a minor fight or scuffle between students which will be addressed in the local school plan.).

### B. Verbal Abuse

Willfully intimidating, insulting, or in other manner abusing verbally a member of the school staff would require a minimum action of one day of suspension with a parent conference. Maximum action: five-day suspension. Use of improper language in itself is not here considered as verbal abuse, but such behavior is not condoned and should be dealt with at the school level.

C. Extortion

An act of attempting to secure money or property through threat of physical harm would require minimum action of one day suspension with a parent conference. Maximum action: five-day suspension or possible expulsion.

D. Storing, Possessing, or Carrying Dangerous Weapons (MCPS Regulation COE-RA)

Students found in possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons on MCPS property will be recommended for expulsion by principals without exception.

E. Destruction of Public Property (Vandalism ) (MCPS Regulation 230-3)

In addition to the policy statement on contacting police and full payment, the minimum action for destroying public property would require holding a parent conference and one day of suspension; or the principal may develop a work plan for students on their own time relating to the action in lieu of suspension. Maximum action: five-day suspension.

F. Smoking (MCPS Regulation 540-1)

In addition to the policy statement, minimum action for violation of the policy would be notification to parents and a student conference. Maximum action: three-day suspension.

G. Intoxicants (MCPS Regulation 230-6)

Minimum action for violation would be a parent conference, police notification, and one day of suspension. Maximum action: expulsion.

H. Drug Abuse

The minimum penalty for the possession of drugs or other illegal substances would be a parent conference and one-day suspension. Students determined to be engaged in the sale or distribution of drugs or other illegal substances will be recommended for expulsion by the principal without exception.

I. Plagiarism

Students are not to plagiarize. Plagiarism shall be defined as the taking of another's findings, interpretations, or tests, and intentionally presenting them as one's own without proper attribution. Minimum action for violation would be a conference with the student. Maximum action for a violation would be a three-day suspension.

### III. APPROPRIATE/INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

The ultimate goal is for the student to gain inner control and inner satisfaction. In dealing with appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, staff members will keep in mind the ultimate goal. The purpose of disciplinary action is to strengthen behavior that will enable the child to grow, develop, and appropriately cope with similar experiences in the future.

The Harmony Hills Discipline Plan describes behaviors as:

#### A. Responsible and Appropriate Behaviors

Responsible and appropriate behaviors at Harmony Hills include the following our Ground Rules.

Students will:

- Be respectful
- Be responsible
- Follow routines
- Be helpful and
- Make good choices

Responsible and appropriate behaviors may be rewarded by immediate praise, peer recognition, classroom awards, and school-wide recognition.

#### B. Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behaviors at Harmony Hills will not be accepted. Each infraction will be handled individually, fairly and consistently with philosophy of this discipline plan.

#### C. Implementation Guidelines

Order of staff procedures in dealing with infractions:

1. Teacher counseling with child
2. Teacher-parent conference (phone or in person)
3. Principal-child conference (parents notified)

#### D. Infractions and Consequences

<b><u>Type of Behavior</u></b>	<b><u>Consequences</u></b>	
	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Firearms, dangerous weapons	Expulsion	Expulsion
Illegal Substances: Possession Sale/Distribution Beepers	Expulsion	Expulsion
Theft	Parent notified Teacher counseling	Suspension
Off school grounds without permission	Parent notified Teacher counseling	Detention
Truancy, skipping class	Parent notified Teacher counseling	Parent conference
Extortion (requiring that a child give something to avoid being hurt)	Parent notified	Suspension
Destroying property	Teacher counseling	Suspension
Purposely striking, biting, or kicking another student	Parent notified Teacher counseling	Suspension
Purposely striking, biting, or kicking a staff member	Suspension	Detention
Name calling, teasing, swearing, threatening	Teacher counseling	Suspension
Disruptive classroom behavior (shouting, throwing objects, excess noise, being defiant)	Teacher counseling	Suspension
Instigating conflict	Teacher counseling	Detention
Tardiness	Teacher counseling	Parent conference
Inappropriate bus behavior	Parent conference	Suspension from bus

Continued infractions of negative behavior will result in further disciplinary action. After a student suspension, a principal/parent/student conference will be required in order for the student to return to school.

## IV. STUDENT APPEAL PROCEDURES

### A. Step 1

An informal attempt to solve problems or complaints should be made through a discussion between the student and the staff member who made the disciplinary decision. Disciplinary decisions are made when a staff member believes that a student had broken one of the five basic rules outlined in the local school discipline plan. When necessary the student may choose any person to be present during the discussion to help (such as a counselor or parent). The staff member then has two days to make a final decision based on the discussion. The student is reminded of the next step in the appeal process. If the student's advocate is not his/her parent/guardian, then the parent/guardian will be informed of the problem or complaint.

### B. Step 2

The decision made in Step 1 may be appealed by the student. An appeal will be submitted by the student in writing to the staff member whose decision the student is appealing. Anyone of the student's choice may help in writing this appeal. The staff member receiving the written student appeal has three days to prepare for Step 3 or to modify the decision made in Step 1.

### C. Step 3

A hearing will be held involving the student, his/her intermediary, the staff member whose decision is being appealed and the principal. The student shall present his/her appeal and any witness or other evidence he/she wishes to present to the principal. The staff member whose decision is being appealed may explain his/her decision on the appeal. At this time the student is informed of his/her right to further appeal.

### D. Step 4

If the student is not satisfied with the principal's decision, he/she may appeal to the appropriate area associate superintendent. The steps for appealing procedures beyond the local school are explained in detail in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook available for sign-out from the local school library.

No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by anyone against a student as a result of a complaint or appeal at any level.