

**Westover Elementary School**  
**Discipline Policy**  
**2021-2022**

One of the most important goals of the Westover Elementary School community is to establish a positive and supportive learning environment in which our students feel safe, secure, and have maximum opportunities to learn. Our focus is on teaching students what they are expected to do and on helping them to understand how appropriate behavior from every student is necessary for a positive learning environment. In order to promote and maintain this environment, we hold high expectations for student behavior through adherence to the Westover Way:

- All students will come to school prepared to learn.
- All students will respect the rights and learning of others.
- All students will practice safety in and out of the classroom.

Throughout the year, we expect students to demonstrate the virtues of good character. Our peace day program focuses on three key expectations: students will be respectful, safe and prepared. These virtues are taught and supported during guidance instruction, as well as through classroom reinforcement and school-wide incentives. In addition, quarterly town hall meetings will be facilitated by administrators and the school counselor to monitor relative topics such as character, responsibility and friendship. Additional reward systems will also be used to monitor classroom, playground and cafeteria behavior, such as Orange Wallaby Tickets and Wallaby squares in the cafeteria.

Classroom meetings and restorative practices will be used to assist students to solve problems created in everyday living. By using relevant topics such as character, responsibility and friendship, students can make individual connections in a collaborative and cooperative structure. Class meetings are especially helpful in improving students' social behavior in and out of school.

**Statement of Disciplinary Philosophy, Action, and Process**

The administration and staff of Westover Elementary School will administer the discipline policy consistently and appropriately. We recognize that two situations are rarely the same in every respect, and that it is important to maintain flexibility and to take into account individual circumstances. Factors to be considered include: seriousness of the offense, the student's age, the frequency of misconduct, the effect or potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and the requirements of a student's Individual Education Plan. We believe that making the rules clear and explaining the consequences for not following the rules are important steps in ensuring that the process will be as fair as possible to all students.

- All disciplinary actions begin with a timely staff-student conference and a full investigation. The next step might include a conference with administrator-student, administrator-parent, or any necessary and appropriate combination.
- The intermediate steps might include work details relating to infractions, temporary exclusion, or reduction or elimination of student privileges (i.e. loss

- of recess). For serious infractions, initial steps may be bypassed. The most severe infraction of the discipline policy could lead to suspension (determined by the principal or appointee) or recommendation for expulsion (determined by the principal). *If a student is suspended, an intake conference, with the parent/guardian, will occur prior to the student returning to school.*
- We believe that communication with parents is an important intervention strategy. While parents may not be notified every time a child commits a minor infraction of the discipline policy, a staff member will promptly notify the parent when a serious infraction or disruption to the classroom environment occurs.

### **Bullying**

The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 mandates that the Maryland State Department of Education report to the legislature information about incidents of harassment and intimidation, bullying, that were brought to the attention of school staff by students, parents, or close adult relatives of a student. Should you believe that your child is the victim of bullying, please contact the office. MSDE has developed a standard victim reporting form that will be used by students, parents, or close adult relatives of students to report an incident. Once the incident has been reported, school staff will conduct a thorough investigation. The form can be found here: <https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/pdf/230-35.pdf>

### **Steps to Appeal a Disciplinary Action**

1. All appeals of a disciplinary action should begin with the staff member who made the decision.
2. Students may appeal a decision to the principal.
3. The principal hears the appeal within three school days and notifies the student/parent of his/her decision within a week.
4. The decision of the principal may be appealed to the Director, School Support and Improvement. See *Guide to Students Rights and Responsibilities in Montgomery County Public Schools*, which is available in the school office or on the MCPS web site, for the procedure.

Westover Elementary School has a long history of students who are motivated and self-disciplined and who enjoy supportive families. We are all fortunate to be a part of the Westover Elementary school community. Thank you for helping us to continue this tradition.