

School/Community Relations

Civility Policy

Preamble

The Weston Board of Education recognizes that education of children is a process that involves a partnership between a child's parents, teacher, school administrators, and other school and school board personnel. The Board recognizes that parental participation in their child's educational process through parent/teacher conferences, scheduled classroom visitation, serving as a school volunteer, serving as a field trip chaperone, PTO participation, and other such service is critical to a child's educational success. For that reason the Board welcomes and encourages parental participation in the life of their child's school.

However, from time to time parents and other visitors to schools and school district facilities sometimes act in a manner that is disruptive of a school or other school district facility and which is threatening and/or intimidating to school and district employees.

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules of conduct for parents, other visitors to schools, and school district employees which permit and encourage communication between parents, other persons, and school and district personnel concerning students or other matters and to encourage participation in school or district activities, while at the same time enabling the Board of Education to identify and deal with those behaviors which are inappropriate and disruptive to the operation of a school or other school district facility.

It is the intent of the Board to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among district employees, students, parents, and the public. It is not the intent of the Board to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. The intent of this policy is to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for teachers, students, administrators, other staff, and parents and other members of the community. In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, the Board encourages positive communication and discourages disruptive, volatile, hostile, or aggressive communications or actions.

POLICY:

1. Expected Level of Behavior:
 - a. School and school district personnel will treat colleagues, parents, students, and other members of the public with courtesy and respect.
 - b. Parents and other visitors to schools and school district facilities will treat teachers, students, school administrators, other school staff, and district employees with courtesy and respect.

2. **Unacceptable/Disruptive Behavior:**
 - a. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not necessarily limited to: behavior which interferes with or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office or office area, areas of a school or facility open to parents/guardians and the general public and areas of a school or facility which are not open to parents/guardians and the general public.
 - b. Using loud and/or offensive language, profane language, intimidating language, or display of temper.
 - c. Threatening to do bodily or physical harm to a teacher, school administrator, school employee, Board member, or student regardless of whether or not the behavior constitutes or may constitute a criminal violation.
 - d. Damaging or destroying school property.
 - e. Any other behavior that disrupts the orderly operation of a school, a school classroom, (unannounced visits), or any other Board of Education facility.
 - f. Abusive, threatening, or obscene email or voice mail message.
3. **Parent Recourse:**

Any parent who believes he/she was subject to unacceptable/disruptive behavior on the part of a staff member should bring such behavior to the attention of the staff member's immediate supervisor, appropriate school administrator, and/or the Superintendent of Schools.
4. **Student Recourse:**

Any student who believes he/she was subject to unacceptable/disruptive behavior on the part of a staff member, parent or visitor should bring such behavior to the attention of a teacher, guidance counselor or school administrator.
5. **Authority of School Personnel:**
 - a. **Authority to direct persons to leave school or Board of Education premises:**

Any individual who: (1) disrupts or threatens to disrupt school or school district operations; (2) threatens to or attempts to do or does physical harm to school board personnel, students, or others lawfully on a school or Board premises; (3) threatens the health or safety of students, Board personnel, or others lawfully on a school or Board premises; (4) intentionally causes damage to school Board property, or property of others lawfully on a school campus or Board premises; (5) uses loud or offensive language; or who without authorization comes on a school or other Board facility may be directed to leave the school or Board premises by a school's principal or assistant principal, or in their absence a person who is lawfully in charge of the school, any district level administrator including the superintendent of schools, or a facility security officer, or the district investigator. If the person refuses to leave the premises as directed, the administrator or other authorized personnel shall seek the assistance of law enforcement and request that law enforcement take such action as is deemed necessary. If the offender threatens personal harm, the employee may contact law enforcement.
 - b. **Authority to deal with persons who are verbally abusive:** If any member of the public uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting, and/or demeaning manner, the employee to whom the remarks are directed shall calmly and politely warn the speaker to communicate civilly. If the verbal abuse continues, the employee to whom the remarks are directed may, after giving appropriate notice to the speaker, terminate the meeting, conference, or telephone conversation. If the meeting or conference is on a school or

Board of Education premises, any employee may request that an administrator or other authorized personnel direct the speaker to promptly leave the premises. If the person refuses to leave the premises as directed, the administrator or other authorized personnel shall seek the assistance of law enforcement and request that law enforcement take such action as is deemed necessary. If the employee is threatened with personal harm, the employee may contact law enforcement.

- c. Abusive, threatening, or obscene email or voice mail messages: If any district employee receives an email or voice mail message which is abusive, threatening, or obscene, the employee is not obligated to respond to the email or return the telephone call. The employee may save the message and contact a school administrator or the Superintendent of Schools. If the message threatens personal harm, the employee may contact law enforcement.
6. It is the intent of the Weston Board of Education to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among district employees, parents, and the public. It is not the intent of the Board, however, to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. The intent of this policy is to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for teachers, students, administrators, other staff, and parents and other members of the community. In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, the Board encourages positive communication and discourages disruptive, volatile, hostile, or aggressive communications or actions.

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WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Weston, Connecticut