

# Quick Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities

August 2020 - Middle and High School

Fairfax County Public Schools • Department of Special Services • Intervention & Prevention Services

Schools are communities of people working and learning together. Every student and family, and every adult who works in the school is a valued and important member of this community. Respect for each other, kindness, integrity, and personal responsibility for your behavior and your interactions with others are essential. As a central member of the school community, you have rights, privileges, and responsibilities. These are outlined in detail in Appendix D of the Family Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R), or at [www.fcps.edu/SRR](http://www.fcps.edu/SRR), and are highlighted in this guide for your quick reference. SR&R reference numbers included below refer to the pages in Appendix D.

## RIGHTS



You have a right to be treated respectfully. If you feel this is not happening, speak to a trusted adult immediately.



You have a right to learn and study in a safe, positive environment both in the school building and in a virtual environment.



You have a right to ask questions and to complain if you believe that a decision made by staff members is not in your best interest. You can make an appointment to talk to the teacher, a counselor, or a school administrator, and he or she will meet with you and listen to your concerns. (Appendix D, page 10-11)



You have a right to express opinions through speech, assembly, petition, and other lawful means. If you would like to distribute literature, you must go through your student government. (Appendix D, page 7-8)



If you are aged 18 or older, you are considered an adult, with some exceptions. If you want to exercise your right to act in place of your parent in certain situations, you must sign a declaration. (Appendix D, page 9)



If you are sent to the office for breaking a school rule, you have a right to explain what happened and what you were thinking or why you did something. You may be given an opportunity to write down what happened. This is voluntary and you have the right to refuse to make a written statement. (Appendix D, page 36)



You and your parents have a right to appeal certain discipline decisions such as an out-of-school suspension from school. (Appendix D, page 40)

## PRIVILEGES



Some things at school are privileges, come with certain limitations, and may be suspended or discontinued if you do not use them properly.



FCPS Network, computers, and personally owned devices. When using the FCPS Network, you should not do anything that would disrupt the use of the network by others, and should demonstrate respect and ethical conduct. You must also follow teacher directions about when and how to use devices. On buses, you may listen to music with headphones, play games, or text, but not talk on the phone.



Riding the school bus. Listen to the driver, stay in your seat, keep your hands to yourself and inside the bus, keep your voices low, and don't block the aisles.



Parking on school grounds. Parking rules must be followed. Understand that your car can be searched if there is reason to believe you might have something that violates school rules, or is illegal or dangerous. (Appendix D, page 8)



Participating in sports and activities. The Virginia High School League has rules about participation in sports, including the length of time you must be registered at a school, and the behavior expected. In addition, FCPS requires that students be in good standing to participate in extracurricular activities. You may not participate when you are suspended, and may lose the right to participate for a longer period if you violate rules about drugs or alcohol. (Appendix D, page 27)

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Come to school on time, and attend all of your classes both in person and in the virtual environment, unless excused due to illness or other emergency. (Appendix D, page 5)
- Resolve problems with other students in a calm and peaceful manner. (Appendix D, pages 23-26)
- Have parents bring all medications you need to take to the school health room. (Appendix D, page 28-29)
- Do not bring, use, share, or sell alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products, or imitations or synthetic versions of these substances at school or at a school bus stop, on a school bus, or at any school-sponsored trip or activity. (Appendix D, pages 26-31)
- Do not bring any type of gun or ammunition, any explosive device or firecrackers, or any type of weapon to school. (Appendix D, pages 32-34)
- Respect the rights and property of all students and staff members.
- If you see any behavior that may be dangerous to someone, tell a teacher or other staff member right away.
- Act with honesty and integrity. Take credit only for your own work.
- Follow class rules and school rules, and directions given by adults throughout the day.
- If an adult asks for your attention, stop, address/respond to the person, and listen.
- When you make a mistake, work to make it right. Pay for or replace the property of others if you break it. Ask a person you may have hurt how you could repair the harm.

## Bullying, Harassment, Hazing, and Mistreating Others

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity. Intentional demeaning and intimidating treatment-whether verbal, physical, written, or electronic-can harm an individual and the community. If you are the target of these behaviors, report them. If you witness these behaviors, offer support to the target and reach out for help from a trusted adult. This behavior is unacceptable, whether based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, personal or physical attributes, sexual orientation, or gender identification or expression. Hazing, or inflicting injury on someone, or recklessly endangering them as part of an initiation or condition of joining a club or other organization can result in criminal charges. (Appendix D, pages 24-25)

## Dress Code

Wear clothes that are appropriate for a K-12 learning environment.

Wear clothes that do not:

- Include images or words that are vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene.
- Include images or words that promote illegal or violent activity such as gang symbols, the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia or clothing that contains threats.
- Expose private areas or an excessive amount of bare skin.

Your school may have additional rules regarding dress code. (Appendix D, page 6)

## **Safe and Drug Free Schools**

A healthy learning environment is free of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, inhalants, and look-alike or synthetic drugs. Possession, use, or distribution, of these substances is not permitted in school, on school buses, or at any school-sponsored activities. (Appendix D, pages 26-31)

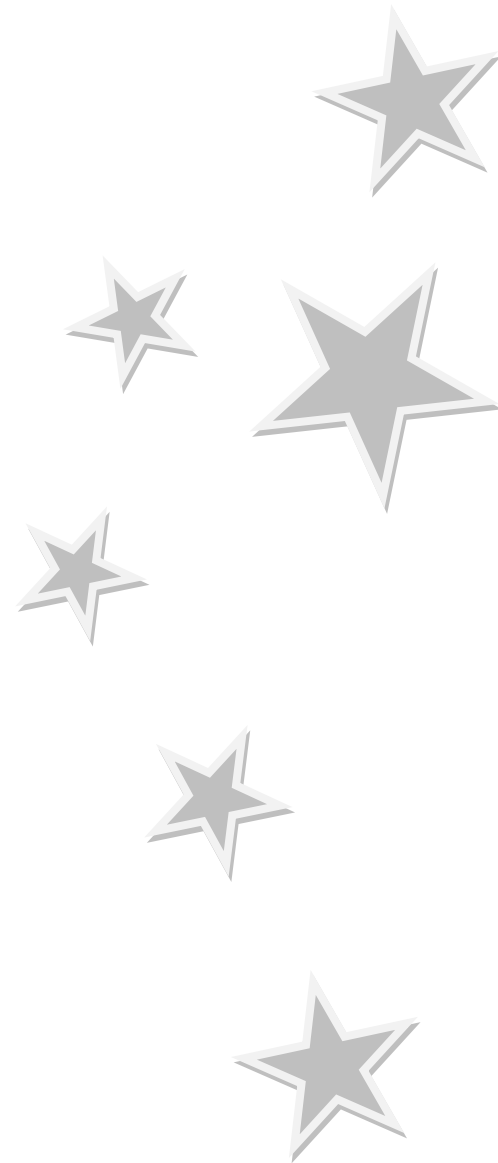
Students who become angry or frustrated are encouraged to resolve conflicts peacefully. Teachers, counselors, and other school personnel can help you find civil, non-violent ways to handle disputes. Schools can also utilize restorative justice to resolve disciplinary incidents when harm has been caused. (Appendix D, page 55)

Weapons and items that could be used as weapons, including razor blades, knives, switchblades, machetes, guns, any form of explosives, nunchacka, etc., are never permitted in the school environment. Possession of these items on school grounds will result in significant consequences. If you find you have inadvertently brought one of these items to school, immediately bring it to the office. (Appendix D, pages 32-34)

## **Search and Seizure**

Desks, lockers, and storage spaces can be searched and contents, including student belongings, can be examined as part of a general inspection on a periodic or random basis. Student backpacks, coats, electronics, and cars parked on school grounds may also be searched if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the item contains contraband such as drugs, weapons, stolen property, or evidence of a violation of rules or unlawful activity. (Appendix D, pages 8-9)

This *Quick Guide* is intended as a general overview. In this context, all student behavior is governed exclusively by the SR&R and can be reviewed at [www.fcps.edu/srj](http://www.fcps.edu/srj). In the event of any conflict between the Quick Guide and the SR&R, the SR&R shall control.



## DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Keep in mind that a school principal may impose a short-term suspension, recommend a long-term suspension and/or make a referral to the Division Superintendent for situations involving prohibited conduct as outlined in R2601.

### School-Based Consequences<sup>1</sup>

- Disruption, disobedience, insubordination, defiance of school officials
- Cursing including gestures
- Fireworks: use or possession
- Forgery, cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty
- Gambling
- Laser devices
- Misuse of portable communication device
- Attendance violation
- Use or possession of nonprescription drugs
- Unauthorized presence on school property
- Tobacco violations
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, inhalants, or nonalcoholic beer
- Being under the influence of marijuana or other controlled substance
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Distribution or manufacture of alcohol or inhalants
- Distribution of drug paraphernalia

### May Result in Referral to Division Superintendent

- Harassment based on race, disability, etc. (See Appendix D, page 11 for complete list.)
- Vandalism of school property; bomb threats
- Hazing
- Distribution of nonprescription drugs for the purpose of abuse
- Possession or use of marijuana, imitation marijuana, synthetic marijuana, or a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance
- Endangering well-being of others, bullying
- Threat or assault of another student
- Possession or display of obscene material; indecent exposure
- Mob assault
- Threatening a staff member or assaulting a staff member without causing injury
- Gang-related activities
- Improper touching
- Unauthorized or illegal use or disruption of information technology

### Required Referral to the Division Superintendent

- Physical assault on staff member or members causing injury
- Distribution of marijuana, imitation marijuana, synthetic marijuana, or a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance
- Possession of a statutory weapon, knife with a blade three inches or longer, switchblade, or machete, or using any object as a weapon

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<sup>1</sup> While a school-based consequence would be typical for these violations, the principal may make a referral to the Division Superintendent if the violation substantially disrupted instruction, endangered others, or followed prior violations.



# **IMPORTANT**

## **PARENT AND/OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE SHEET**

Please review the Student Right and Responsibilities at [www.fcps.edu/srr](http://www.fcps.edu/srr), and sign and return this form to your child's school by **October 30, 2020**. You may request a printed copy of the SR&R from the front office of your child's school at any time.

By signing and returning this page, you acknowledge that you have been provided online access to, as well as the opportunity to receive a printed copy of, the *Student Rights & Responsibilities: A Guide for Families* for 2020-21. The document is required by law and contains the following:

- Acceptable Use Policy for Student Network Access (Appendix A)
- Standards of Conduct for Students Riding School Buses (Appendix B)
- Parental Responsibility and Involvement Requirements (Appendix C)
- Compulsory School Attendance (Appendix C)
- Law Regarding Prosecution of Juveniles as Adults (Appendix C)
- Standards of Student Conduct, Interventions, and Consequences in Regulation 2601.34P (Appendix D)

This form will be kept at your child's school.

The undersigned parent or guardian acknowledges that online access to, as well as the opportunity to receive a printed copy of, all items listed above has been provided.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*To enable us to properly record that you have returned this sheet, please carefully print the information below:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Teacher or Counselor

By signing the above statement, parents or guardians shall not be deemed to waive, but to expressly reserve, their rights protected by the constitutions or laws of the United States or the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the parent or guardian shall have the right to express disagreement with a school's or school division's policies or decisions.