

## **Code of Conduct: Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School, Department of Deans**

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Deans of Students at Paulo Freire Charter School is to provide resources, supports, interventions and preventative strategies for our community to promote a safe and productive learning environment so that academic excellence will occur. We will provide methods and tools for our students, staff and families so that they may be able to exercise personal responsibility and practice ethical decision making. These systems will be indicative of restorative practice and will prompt integrity, awareness and personal development.

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### **Infractions and How They Are Addressed**

Responses to infractions are most effective when dealt with directly at the time and place the incident occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. We will always place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-awareness and self-discipline. In determining the appropriate responses to infractions, the Deans of Students will consider the following:

1. Student's age
2. Nature of the offense and the circumstances that led to the offense
3. Student's prior disciplinary record, if any
4. Effectiveness of other forms of intervention
5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate
6. Extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, consequences for inappropriate behaviors will be **progressive**. This means that a student's first violation may merit a lighter consequence and become more weighted when dealing with subsequent violations. PFSJCS recognizes the philosophy of **restorative justice**. Restorative justice principles involve:

- a) Those who have a stake in a specific offense in collectively identifying and addressing the harm done.
- b) The needs and obligations of all involved in order to heal and correct the situation as fully as possible.

Restorative justice strategies may be used at the discretion of the Deans of Students in lieu of, or in addition to, certain other interventions and responses. The following infractions that warrant direct involvement by the Deans of Students:

1. Assault or attempted assault of any person(s) on school property
2. Vandalism or abusing School property or equipment
3. Violent behavior
4. Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force that reasonably places someone in fear of imminent bodily injury
5. Engaging in conduct that endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety or welfare of others
6. Disorderly conduct
7. Refusal to abide by the cell phone policy
8. Using forged notes, excuses, passes, or any other forged document

9. Stealing or attempting to steal, or knowingly possessing stolen property
10. Extortion
11. Gambling
12. Excessively using obscene or abusive language or gestures towards others
13. Engaging in acts of verbal or physical sexual harassment
14. Pulling an emergency alarm or using non-designated entrances and or exits
15. Possessing, using, or distributing tobacco, alcohol, or any illegal substance
16. Refusal to abide by the uniform requirements
17. Committing egregious acts that staff reasonably conclude disrupts the learning environment of the School
18. Engaging in bullying or harassment
19. Bringing a weapon onto School property or to a School function
20. Repeatedly committing minor behavioral infractions

These above infractions may be handled with Restorative Justice Practices (following page) but are subject to the use of other methods and practices due to severity, including but not limited to:

1. Parent/Guardian notifications and conferencing
2. Public apologies
3. Presentations and research papers reflective of violations
4. Referrals to counseling and other student services
5. Searches
6. Probationary agreements
7. Suspension
8. Expulsion

### **Restorative Justice Strategies**

Following is a list of generally accepted balanced and restorative justice strategies. These may be used at the discretion of the Deans, Principal and/or Executive Director in lieu of, or in addition to, other interventions set forth in the Code, when all parties voluntarily agree to participate and the appropriate resources are available to support a meaningful effort:

### **Circles**

Circles use traditional circle ritual and structure to involve the victim, victim supporters, the offender, offender supporters, police, and all interested community members. Within the circle, people can speak from the heart in a shared search for understanding of the event, and together identify the steps necessary to assist in healing all affected parties and prevent future offenses.

#### **Circles typically involve a multi-step procedure that includes:**

1. Application by the offender to participate in the circle process
2. A healing circle for the victim
3. A healing circle for the offender
4. A circle to develop consensus on the elements of a healing plan
5. Follow-up circles to monitor the progress of the offender.

The healing plan may incorporate commitments by the School, community and family members, as well as by the offender.

### **The Goals of Circles Include:**

1. Promoting healing for all affected parties
2. Provide an opportunity for the offender to make amends
3. Empowering victims, community members, families, and offenders by giving them a voice and a shared responsibility in finding constructive resolutions
4. Addressing the underlying causes of offensive behavior
5. Building a sense of community and its capacity for resolving conflict
6. Promoting and sharing community values
7. Improving school culture

Circles are not appropriate for all offenses. The connection of the offender to the community, the sincerity and nature of the offender's efforts to be healed, the input of victims, and the dedication of the offender's support group are key factors in determining whether a case is appropriate for the circle process.

### **Restorative Group Conferencing**

Restorative group conferencing involves the community of people most affected by the offense: The Victim and the Offender, their Families, Friends and Key Supporters of both deciding together the resolution of an incident. These affected parties are brought together by a trained facilitator to discuss how they and others have been harmed by the offense and how that harm might be repaired. To participate, the offender must admit to the offense. Participation by all involved is voluntary. The facilitator contacts the victim and offender to explain the process and invites them to the conference; the facilitator also asks them to identify key members of their support systems, who will be invited to participate as well.

The conference typically begins with the offender describing the incident, followed by each participant describing the impact of the incident on his or her life. It is preferable to allow the victim to start the discussion, if the victim wishes. Through these narrations, the offender is faced with the human impact of the behavior on the victim, on those close to the victim, and on the offender's own family and friends. The victim has the opportunity to express feelings and ask questions about the incident. After a thorough discussion of the impact of the behavior on those present, the victim is asked to identify desired outcomes from the conference, and thus helps to shape obligations that will be placed on the offender. All participants may contribute to the problem-solving process of determining how the offender might best repair the harm he or she caused. The session ends with participants signing an agreement outlining their expectations and commitments.

### **The goals of restorative group conferencing provides opportunities for:**

1. The victim to be directly involved in the discussion of the offense and in decisions regarding appropriate sanctions to be placed on the offender.
2. Increasing the offender's awareness of the human impact of his or her behavior and providing the offender an opportunity to take full responsibility for it.
3. Engaging the collective responsibility of the offender's support system for making amends.
4. Shaping the offender's future behavior.
5. Allowing both offender and victim to reconnect to key community support systems.

In implementing any restorative conferencing program, the facilitators, who may be students or PFSJCS personnel, must be trained in conferencing preparation techniques. It is critically important that the facilitator do everything possible to ensure that neither the victims nor offenders are harmed in any way. Additionally, the victim's participation **must be completely voluntary**, as should the participation of the offender. Whenever possible, the victim should be given choices concerning decisions such as when and where the conferencing will take place, who will be present and who will speak first. The facilitator should conduct in-person, pre-conferencing sessions with both parties and make follow-up contacts, including the monitoring of any agreement reached.

## **Expectations of Teachers**

- Reflect a personal enthusiasm for teaching and learning and expressing a genuine concern for each individual student.
- Guide learning activities so students learn to think and reason. Assume responsibility for their own actions and that they respect the rights of others.
- Be fair, firm, and consistent in enforcing School Rules on school property and at all school functions both on the grounds and sanctioned field trips.
- Give positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior utilizing PFSJCS Purple Panther Point system.
- Inform the Deans of Students about any student whose behavior requires special attention.
- Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity to strengthen each student's self-confidence to learn.
- Communicate to students and parents information that is important to the student's emotional, social, behavioral, and academic progress including but not limited to:
  - Marking and grading procedures
  - Assignment deadlines
  - Expectations of students
  - The classroom discipline plan
  - The school-wide discipline plan
  - Student progress
- Be knowledgeable about effective classroom/building behavior management techniques and non-violent crisis intervention philosophy and techniques.
- Maintain confidentiality about all personal information and educational records concerning students and their families.
- Demonstrate dependability, integrity, self-discipline, and respect for law by word and personal example.
- Report any school-related safety concerns to the Deans of Students or other designated school administrators for resolution.

## **Expectations of Parents**

- Make certain your child's attendance at PFSJCS is regular, on time and that all absences are properly excused, as required by law.
- Ensure that your child is dressed in compliance with the PFSJCS dress code and school rules regarding sanitation, safety and in a fashion that will not disrupt classroom procedures or the educational environment.
- Be as certain as possible that your child is free of communicable diseases and is in good health, enabling him or her to participate in the learning environment.
- Teach your child, by word and example respect for the authority of PFSJCS, and the rights and property of others.
- Know and understand the rules your child is expected to observe at PFSJCS. Be aware of the consequences of violations of these rules and accept responsibility for your child's actions.
- Help your child understand that appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment and provide effective and appropriate strategies for dealing with peer pressure in accordance with the Code.
- Instill in your child a desire to learn. Encourage respect for hard work and an interest in exploring broader fields of knowledge.
- Become acquainted with the PFSJCS staff, administration, Board of Trustees, curriculum, and activities. Attend parent teacher conferences and PFSJCS functions.
- Convey to your child a supportive attitude toward education and PFSJCS.
- Recognize that the education of your child is a responsibility of you and PFSJCS.
- Send your child to PFSJCS ready to participate and learn.
- Promote positive behavior in your child by helping your child accept the consequences of his or her actions by becoming involved in the behavior management/disciplinary process.
- Guide your child to develop socially acceptable standards of behavior.
- Inform School officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
- Update on contact information as soon as it changes.
- Support your child educationally by providing a place for study and ensuring that homework assignments are completed
- Report any school-related safety concerns to an appropriate school administrator for resolution.

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Attend school and be granted the opportunity to receive a quality education.	Attend school regularly and on time, complete assignments, and strive to do the best work possible.
Be made aware of School rules and policies, and always be treated in a manner consistent with these policies.	Be familiar with the code and act in a manner consistent with the School's behavioral expectations.
Have the opportunity to present your version of the facts in all matters concerning discipline.	Be truthful and respectful when giving your account of situations.
Take part in all appropriate Be School activities on an equal basis regardless of disability, race, religion or sexual orientation.	Work to your best ability in all academic and extracurricular activities.
Be safe in the School environment.	Behave in a manner that will not jeopardize the safety of others.
Dress according to the School's dress code.	Dress in a manner not distracting to others and in accordance with the dress code policy.
Be allowed the opportunity for the free expression of ideas not including slanderous, vulgar or obscene words or images or speech that substantially disrupts the school.	Use language that is appropriate and respectful when expressing ideas and opinions.
Submit written grievances or complaints about School-related matters or School personnel.	Abide by school expectations and accept responsibility for your own actions in regards to complaints.



**161 Lower Westfield Road ♦ Holyoke, MA 01040 ♦ 413- 536-3201 (P) ♦ 413-536-3206 (F)**

I acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ that I have reviewed the CODE OF CONDUCT  
Print Your Name

with my advisor. I understand that I as an individual I am responsible for the content of this document  
and will be held accountable for my actions as a member of the Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter  
School Community.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by Dated



*To Be Completed By PFSJCS Personnel*

I acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ that I have reviewed the CODE OF CONDUCT  
Print Your Name

With the above student on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Review

\_\_\_\_\_  
PFSJCS Representative Dated

*Please complete this form and submit it to the DEANS OF STUDENTS.  
Thank you.*