

Merit Academy Discipline Policy & Code

Purpose

This document presents the procedures for addressing student behaviors at Merit Academy. We are committed to academic success for every student. At Merit Academy, we expect that each student will respect staff members, volunteers, and other students. Every student will conduct himself/herself in a manner compatible with the school's Code of Honor and function as an educational facility. Students that disrupt the operation of the school, interfere with the rights of others, or damage school or personal property will be held accountable for their behavior.

Discipline Systems

Any staff member who witnesses inappropriate behavior has the obligation and responsibility to implement this system. Any parent volunteer witnessing any inappropriate behavior will notify a staff member so disciplinary action, if warranted, can be taken. Students not adhering to school-wide expectations of Merit Academy's Code of Honor will be subject to the following process:

Classroom Intervention

Teachers will use a variety of verbal and non-verbal techniques as they work with students in order to refocus the student to prevent a discipline issue. Each grade level, including middle school, will have systems in place for classroom management. In middle school, teachers recognize minor infractions through a behavioral process outlined below. These systems may include a parental/family report at the teacher's or Dean/Behavioral Interventionist's discretion.

Dean/Behavior Interventionist Intervention

Academic success happens in an environment where students feel connected, cared about, and respected. While the Dean/Behavioral Interventionist implement consequences for students who exhibit serious or habitual violations of school-wide expectations or the Merit Academy Code of Honor, they also implement systems and interventions proactively to establish a school climate and social culture needed for all students to grow socially and emotionally.

Consequences

The Dean/Behavioral Interventionist and their designees will follow the procedures defined in the Merit Academy Code of Honor and the current Merit Academy Consequences Matrix, which may result in classroom removal, detention, suspension, or other appropriate consequences including expulsion if necessary. Parents will be informed if implementation of the [Merit Academy Consequences Matrix](#) is needed.

Detention

Detentions will be scheduled as needed and may include lunch detention, after school detention or community service.

In-School Suspension

In school-suspension is a consequence and is designed to be a deterrent. The students will spend the day in an alternate location within the building reflecting on their behavior. The Attendance Policy for In-School Suspension section applies for missed work.

Out-of-School Suspension

Students serving out-of-school suspension will not report to school on the designated day(s) of their suspension. The Attendance Policy for Out-of-School Suspension section applies for missed work.

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Severe Incidents

Any incident that is considered severe will be handled using the Merit Academy discipline matrix.

Discipline Matrix

Level I Violations [3 Violations = Class II]	Level II Violations [3 Violations = Class III]	Level III Violations [3+ Violations = Expulsion Hearing]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption • Uniform Violations • Electronic Devices Misuse • Inappropriate/Rude Language • Off Task • Property Misuse/Littering • PDA • Gossip • Chewing Gum/Eating Without Permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defiance/Non-compliance • Plagiarism • Lying/Cheating • Repeated Class I Violations • Minor Profanity/Disrespect /Excessive Rude Language • Acting with malice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abusive Language/Profanity/Threat • Harassment/(Cyber)Bullying/Hazing • Internet Misuse • Insubordination • Pornography/Inappropriate Sexual Behavior • Property Damage/Vandalism • Physical Aggression/Assault/Fighting/Retaliation/Retribution • Repeated Class I & II Violations • Sluffing/Truancy/Absconding • Theft • Forgery • Use/Possession of Weapons/ Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco/Arson/Bomb, or threat thereof.
Other Violations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tardies (5 tardies and/or uniform violations = Class III) • Uniform Violations (5 violations/tardies = Class III) • Disruptive students can be removed from class at any time at the teacher's or staff's discretion 		

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PREVENTION	<p><u>Use Love and Logic and/or other classroom management skills.</u></p> <p>If problem behavior occurs, inform student of the problem behavior and the consequence.</p> <p>Give age appropriate warnings/chances to improve.</p>
LEVEL I VIOLATION Handled in Class	<p>After 3 repeated offenses, inform the student that they will receive a Class I write-up. Give the student some reflection time if possible. If student is too disruptive of class, they can sit in a safe place in hallway or another class to do their work.</p> <p>The teacher/staff addresses the behavior using behavior management strategies such as: Redirect the behavior; Proximity control; Nonverbal cue; Private conference with the student; In-class modified seating, in-class recovery; Remind student of desired behavior; Reteach and practice desired behavior; Opportunity to apologize AND make it right.</p> <p>Fill out a Minor Incident Report.</p> <p>Contact parents.</p>
LEVEL II VIOLATION Handled in Class or by Behavior Interventionist/Dean	<p>Either Class II violations or repeated Class I's are also to be handled in-class or by the behavior interventionist or dean. If student is too disruptive of class, they may be sent to a safe place in hallway or another class to do their work.</p> <p>As needed, referred to the behavior interventionist and/or dean where they will address the behavior using consequences such as: Discipline (such as loss of privileges, detention, time in the office); Written reflection on behavior to be processed with an adult; Behavior contract/plan; Safety plan if necessary.</p> <p>Fill out a Minor Incident Report.</p> <p>The office will contact parents.</p>
LEVEL III VIOLATION Referred to Behavior Interventionist/Dean's Office	<p>Class III violations are to be sent straight to the office, where they wait in detention while the teacher fills out an Incident Report.</p> <p>The behavior interventionist and/or dean will address the behavior using consequences such as: Loss of privileges; Suspension (in-school or out); Behavior contract/plan; Safety plan; Possible expulsion.</p> <p>3+ Violations = Expulsion Hearing]</p> <p>Law enforcement will be called where appropriate.</p> <p>The office will contact parents.</p>

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Remember the Rule of 3's:

- Exceed Appr. Warnings = Class I (handled & reported by teacher)
- 3 Class I's = Class II (handled & reported by teacher, behavior interventionist, and/or dean)
- 3 Class II's = Class III (handled & reported by teacher, behavior interventionist, and/or dean)

Disciplinary Actions of Class III's:

- 1st Class III = Call home, 1 day appropriate consequence
- 2nd Class III = Call home, up to 3 days consequence (ISS/OSS)
- 3rd Class III = Call home, up to 5 days consequence (OSS), potential for expulsion hearing.

OSS/ISS/Detention/ (by Administrator Discretion)

- Abusive Language/Profanity/Threat
- Insubordination
- Harassment/(Cyber)Bullying/Hazing
- Property Damage/Vandalism
- Repeated Class I & II Violations
- Sluffing/Truancy
- Theft
- Accumulation of 5 Tardies and/or Uniform Violations

Out-of-School-Suspension and/or Expulsion Hearing (Mandatory)

Safe School Violations/Banned Items on Campus/Sexual or Violent Violations

- 3+ Violations Class III= Expulsion Hearing
- Pornography/Inappropriate Sexual Behavior
- Physical Aggression/Fighting/ Retaliation/Retribution
- Use/Possession of Weapons, Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco/Arson/Explosives

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Profanity Policy

Profane, Vulgar, and Hate Speech is considered a Class III Violation.

However, Merit Academy recognizes that the degree of offense can be diminished or elevated by the emotion and/or body language of perpetrators. We reserve the right to adapt the level of violation based on the circumstances. If desired, a list can be provided to serve as an example of profane, vulgar, and other unacceptable language.

Additional Guidance

Some situations (e.g. cell phones, drug & alcohol, weapons) require additional clarification. Merit Academy has developed these policies, and they are available on the school website. Merit Academy will develop additional policies and / or modify existing ones as required.

Discretion

No document can anticipate all contingencies that a school will face. Students, who have chosen to opt into this school, are expected to comply with the directions contained herein, in the school policy documents, and in the Merit Academy Student Handbook. However, they are also individuals who are learning discipline and behavior along with academics and virtues. Thus, in all cases, administrators, teachers, and staff are encouraged to use their discretion to balance this need for learning with the requirement to maintain an environment conducive to learning by all.

Adopted: November 2, 2021