



WASHINGTON LATIN

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Student Discipline

Philosophy & Policies

STUDENT LIFE: CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE AT LATIN

Discipline Philosophy

Washington Latin's unofficial motto, "Words Matter," is a guiding principle in our approach to discipline. As a school, we believe in and rely heavily on the power of words to both encourage positive behavior and discourage negative or harmful actions. We award merits to students throughout the school year, generally at student assemblies, to honor and publicly acclaim those students who follow the rules steadfastly and those who are making an effort to improve their behavior. Teachers and administrators may also issue demerits, as described below, in order to ensure that missteps are addressed immediately, consistently and in a way that is fair and emphasizes the learning moment.

As with all things at Washington Latin, discipline is an individualized process. While there are certain infractions that, once properly investigated, result in immediate, consistent responses, we also take an individualized and situation-specific approach to all disciplinary actions. Our approach focuses on helping students develop a compassionate understanding of how their words and actions affect others, both immediately and directly and over the longer term, and through the extended community. To achieve this, our disciplinary actions are tailored to each student, taking into consideration his/her background, history, and current pertinent circumstances. We remain committed to reduce the minutes that students may be removed from class or school and to mitigate any loss by providing them with access to their teachers during all in-school suspensions. We also assign tutors to work with students during out-of-school suspensions beyond two school days.

Trauma-Informed Classroom

Consistent with our commitment to understanding the individual, Washington Latin trains all faculty in the tenets of the trauma-informed classroom. Our goal for 2019-20 is that all members of the faculty will be trained in this approach by the end of the school year and that it will be an essential component of our approach to discipline through which student behavior and needs are understood. While the school will continue to utilize conventional responses to disciplinary infractions, such as in- or out-of-school suspension or detention, we are committed to not making this our sole approach. In training faculty, both new and returning, we emphasize the need for consistency balanced with consideration, particularly for students who have experienced trauma. We will identify issues that affect students' misbehavior and craft a response where they can build positive relationships with peers and caring adults in order to support their emotional and academic growth while also taking into account our concomitant responsibility to our entire community.

Restorative Justice and Peer Mediation

Behavioral expectations and consequences also reflect our overarching objective of helping our students become thoughtful people who will contribute to the public good and continue a lifelong quest towards a fuller humanity. We strive to incorporate the restorative approach in every disciplinary action to address students' actions and also repair relationships. This includes a robust and growing peer mediation program. Peer Mediation now exists as a credited (elective) course in our Upper School and is an elective in the Middle School, giving our younger students the opportunity to join and grow in the program. Students are encouraged to use this program for conflicts with both students and teachers.

CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

Code of Conduct

The purpose of our Code of Conduct is to create and maintain an environment consistent with the above principles that is conducive to learning, personal growth and development, individual health and safety, and the preservation of good order, property and belongings. Students have the right and responsibility to help maintain this environment.

The Code of Conduct applies to all Washington Latin students whenever their conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities. This includes:

1. On school grounds before, during, and after school hours
2. At any other time when the school is being used by another school group
3. Off school grounds at a school activity, function or event
4. Traveling to or from the school, a school activity, or a school-related function
5. On a school-sponsored bus or public transportation traveling to and from school
6. When a Washington Latin student is in a capacity representing the school on or off campus
7. When using any electronic device on campus, whether school owned or not, through social media, chatting, texting or any other means of communication through these devices.

POLICIES AND CONSEQUENCES

Our discipline policy is guided by the belief that missteps and mistakes are frequently a part of personal growth, and the school implements a system of graduated incentives and responses in order to move students toward more acceptable behavior and increased accountability and maturity. The school understands that students come from myriad sets of circumstances and backgrounds, and we are eager and equipped to support students at every step of their academic career and experience at Washington Latin.

Usually, the school staff carries out such actions in an informal way using dialogue and mediation strategies. However, more serious and chronic behaviors may require corrective and disciplinary measures in the form of issuing demerits, conducting conferences, hosting detention, and occasionally, suspending or expelling students. In certain circumstances, the school may also require the student and family to enter into a specific behavior agreement that will determine the student's ability to remain enrolled in school. In situations where behavior is not improving, the school's foremost objective is to craft a solution that minimizes the loss of academic time and maximizes the opportunity to provide the student with the necessary support to manage challenges in their personal lives. To this end, the school is committed to making individualized disciplinary decisions that serve the best interests of the student and the community.

While it is expected that all Washington Latin students comply with school rules and regulations at all times, it is important to outline the consequences of violating those rules. The following section must not be considered an exhaustive list, but rather a guide to help families understand how seriously the school takes our Code of Conduct.

Behaviors Contrary to Washington Latin's Culture

The following behaviors are inconsistent with the values of our community and therefore not allowed:

- **Behavior that is physically hurtful:** e.g., fighting, pushing, shoving, running in the halls, throwing objects, carrying dangerous objects, using school materials inappropriately.
- **Behavior that hurts the feelings of others:** e.g., name calling, racial slurs, calling attention to one's personal characteristics in a derogatory manner, intimidation, group isolation or ostracism, sexual harassment, and other behaviors designed to devalue or hurt another person.
- **Behavior that damages, destroys, or causes the loss of personal or school property:** e.g., irresponsible use of materials, theft, malicious destruction or defacement, manipulating locks or lockers other than one's own.

- Behavior that interrupts the school program for self or the group: e.g., class cutting, profanity, obscenity, insubordination, flagrant tardiness, remaining in areas of the school where one does not belong.

Glossary of Unacceptable Behaviors

Alcohol & Drugs: Includes possession, use, sale, distribution, or being under any influence of illegal substances or misuse of legal substances, or items purported to be such, at school or school-related activities.

Bullying: Any intentional behavior by a student or group of students that cause the distress, hurt, humiliation, or anxiety of another student or group of students. Bullying includes all forms of abuse, harassment or intimidation. Please see below for our complete policy against bullying.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Giving or receiving information during tests and quizzes either verbally, visually or electronically
- Bringing prepared materials to the test, e.g., notes on cheat sheets, hands, arms
- Copying homework or having someone else complete the homework assignment for the student
- Allowing another student to copy all or part of homework assignment

Disruptive Behavior: This includes any behavior that disrupts the flow and routine of the class, including tardiness, talking out of turn, inappropriate comments or any behavior that absorbs the time of the teacher in ways that detract from the learning of others.

Fighting: Any attempt to injure any other person at the School represents an extremely serious violation of both the regulations and community norms of the Washington Latin PCS. As such, there is to be no fighting at any time. Fighting consists of excessive roughness, tripping, pushing, punching, and any other attempt to cause bodily harm to another student, even in jest.

Gambling: Gambling involves an exchange of items, including, but not limited to money, from prior arrangement based upon the outcome of an event.

Harassment: Any verbal or physical contact where the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, academic performance or educational experience, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive working, educational or living environment. All forms of harassment, including bullying and sexual harassment, fall under this definition.

Inappropriate Language: Swearing, cursing, name calling, or other inappropriate, derogatory or meanspirited language – in written or spoken form. Email correspondence is no exception to this rule. Students are expected to address all members of the community with kindness and respect at all times.

Illegal Substances: A drug whose production or use is prohibited or strictly controlled via prescription.

Insubordination: Any student who fails to obey direct instructions or requests from their teachers, the staff or a guest is considered insubordinate.

Plagiarism: Copying published material and submitting it without indicating the source of information so as to make it appear as if it were one's own work or words. Both images and text are considered plagiarized if not cited. In addition to the demerits issued, a student will have a conference with the teacher and a grade of zero will be given on the test, quiz or assignment.

Tobacco: Smoking or otherwise consuming substances that include any tobacco or tobacco-based products.

Theft: The taking of someone else's property without the owner's knowledge or prior approval.

Uniform Violations include improper shoes, wearing a coat or jacket in school, improper wearing of the uniform (e.g., inappropriate sizes), etc. as outlined in the uniform policy.

Vandalism: Any intentional misuse or damage to school supplies, equipment, furniture, classroom space, common space, or the property of others in the school.

Weapons: Guns, knives or any other dangerous or potentially harmful items are considered weapons and therefore banned. This ban also applies to replicas of dangerous or potentially harmful items.

Prohibition Against Bullying

Washington Latin defines bullying as behavior - whether physical, electronic, or verbal - which is designed to devalue or hurt another person. This generally includes name calling, racial slurs, calling attention to one's personal characteristics in a derogatory manner, intimidation, group isolation or ostracism, sexual harassment or any other such behavior that interferes with the person's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges of Washington Latin. Bullying is specifically defined meeting the following criteria:

1. Includes harassment based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a student's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 - a. Place the student in reasonable fear of physical harm to his or her person or property;
 - b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
 - c. Substantially interfere with the student's academic performance or attendance; or
 - d. Substantially interfere with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by an agency or educational institution.

Retaliation for reporting, providing information or witnessing bullying against any student, family or faculty/staff member, including the victim, is also prohibited.

Washington Latin recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be implemented consistently, fairly and equitably. To this end, Washington Latin ensures that staff members follow these guidelines as closely as possible while allowing for flexibility to adapt sanctions to individual contexts.

Furthermore, to ensure equitability in applying sanctions, measures will be employed on a graduated basis determined by the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the students involved and the age and developmental status of the students involved. Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Reprimand
- Suspension of Washington Latin privileges
- Suspension of participating in optional Washington Latin activities
- Suspension from Washington Latin facilities

Washington Latin does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with "zero-tolerance" policies when applying sanctions to an incident of bullying.

Levels of Infractions

Although it is not possible to list all of the ways in which students may violate the school's code of conduct, we list below several instances of very serious to less serious infractions. In all cases, a student's previous record and standing at the school will be considered before the administration will make a disciplinary decision.

Very Serious Infractions

While the school works with students so that they can learn from their mistakes, the following violations of the school's code of conduct are grounds for **immediate suspension out of school and possible expulsion**.

- Possession or use of illegal substances on school property or at school-sponsored events
- Use of a weapon in a threatening and dangerous manner
- Extreme sexual harassment

Serious Infractions

Listed below are examples of serious infractions, whether occurring at school or at school-related activities, which could result in **out-of-school suspension (OSS)**.

- Violence, force or threats of violence or force
- Coercion, intimidation, bullying, or any other similar behavior that may interfere with another's well-being, safety, rights, or daily activity
- Being under the influence of an illegal substance, i.e. drugs, alcohol or medicine not prescribed by a physician

Serious Violations

Listed below are examples of serious violations, whether occurring at school or at school-related activities, which **could result in an in-school suspension (ISS)**.

- Open defiance, disrespect or disruptive behavior
- Destruction or defacement of school property or others' personal property
- Trespassing or being in an unauthorized part of the school
- Leaving the school building or campus without permission
- Verbal or written profanity or obscenity or any inappropriate gestures or actions
- Failure to attend assigned detention
- Inappropriate bus behavior
- Behavior which disrupts the learning process for others, whether occurring in the classroom, hallways or other areas of the school grounds
- Consistent or repeated failure to meet the Code of Conduct or "Classroom Responsibilities and Expectations" described in the student planner (APPENDIX J).

Major and Minor Infractions

Generally speaking, all other disciplinary infractions fall into two major categories: minor and major.

- **Minor infractions** are those violations of classroom rules that are dealt with by an individual teacher. Classroom teachers have the right and responsibility to assign penalties for infractions of the rules that they set for their classrooms. Teachers may give demerits and assign detentions; they will report more serious infractions to the Assistant Principal of Student Life and the Deans of Students.
 - **Major infractions** are cases in which a more serious violation has taken place. The student will be summoned to a discussion with the Assistant Principal of Student Life. The Assistant Principal of Student Life will then
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Speak with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s), and will determine the appropriate course of action, including the assignment of penalties.

Disciplinary Consequences

The following are the types of disciplinary actions or consequences for violations of the Code of Conduct, listed in order of severity.

Demerit

The purpose of demerits is to inform parents/guardians about student infractions and provide a record of conduct.

- Demerits are recorded on a daily basis
- Excessive accumulation of demerits may result in detention and/or suspension.
- Demerits do not accumulate from one quarter to the next.
- The accumulation of 7 demerits in one marking period will result in detention.
- The accumulation of 14 demerits in one marking period may result in an in-school suspension. • Parents will be notified in advance of detention times and dates.

Removal from Class

Any student whose behavior disrupts the learning environment will be asked to leave class temporarily at the direction of the teacher. This can occur on two levels:

- The student is asked to take a brief break outside the classroom door with the purpose of redirecting behavior to allow the student to rejoin the class.
- The student must report directly to the Assistant Principal of Student Life or a Dean of Students, who will then decide upon a way forward.

Detention

Students may be required to serve detention as a consequence for the violation of a school rule. This is a designated amount of time, in addition to that in the classroom, under the supervision and direction of a teacher and/or administrator, which may occur during school hours and/or after school, or on a Saturday from 8 am to 11am. Please note that the administration reserves the right to change the time and days for detention based on scheduling needs to ensure adult supervision.

- Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of detention times and dates.
- In the Middle School, regular detentions will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3:45 to 4:45 pm and on Saturday from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.
- There will be no regular detention for the Upper School, but a school administrator reserves the right to assign a Saturday detention from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.
- Students must attend and be on time to the detention to which they are assigned. If students do not attend or arrive late, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action.
- An accumulation of detention may result in suspension.

Community Service as a Behavioral Consequence

Community service in the Upper School for behavior reasons will be in addition to the required 100 community service hours needed to graduate from Washington Latin. Please note that the administration reserves the right to change the time and days for community service based on scheduling needs to ensure adult supervision.

- Students must attend and be on time to the community service to which they are assigned. If students do not attend or arrive late, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action.

- An accumulation of community service assignments may result in suspension.

Suspension

- **In-school suspension (ISS):** A temporary removal from one or all classes and school activities. Students will be assigned to a room where their teachers, dean and counselor (if applicable) will work with them to reflect on their actions and assist them with their work. Students are expected to complete their class assignments during their suspension. Also, students serving suspension must complete a corrective action assignment associated with the infraction committed.
- **Out-of-school suspension (OSS):** If school administrators determine that a student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress to another person at Washington Latin, he or she will be suspended out of school. A student who is suspended is excluded from all classes, school activities and from WLPCS property for the duration of the suspension. The number of days a student is suspended will most often increase with each additional suspension for that student.
- In the case of either ISS or OSS, Latin will establish a plan for the student to continue his or her studies during the period of suspension. Students will be expected to complete assignments during the suspension. The OSS student will be responsible for submitting any work that could not be completed during the suspension immediately upon returning to school.
- Parents/Guardians are essential partners in addressing the behavior issues that have led to the suspension, and Latin will **strongly urge** their participation, particularly at key points during the process. This includes:
 - If the parent or guardian of a suspended student cannot be notified in person or by telephone, the student must remain at school until the end of the school day. A parent/guardian *or* responsible adult designee **MUST** pick up the suspended student from school.
 - The school will arrange a return-to-school conference for the student (attendance is required) and a parent/guardian (attendance is very strongly urged) with an administrator before the student's return to class.

When a **student with a disability** is suspended (in-school or out-of-school) for more than ten school days cumulative within the school year:

- The school will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review Meeting within 10 school days from the date that the decision to suspend the student is made. At the Manifestation Determination Review Meeting, relevant members of the IEP/Section 504 team will determine if the behaviors resulting in the suspension are a manifestation of the student's disability. Washington Latin will then take appropriate action based on the determinations made by the team and according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a suspension, change of placement or other disciplinary action is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates the school's Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary Probation

A student may be placed on disciplinary probation either because of a pattern of misbehavior or whenever the Assistant Principal determines that a student's behavior warrants special monitoring. Probation is a period during which the School observes whether a student is respectful of the guidelines for community behavior (when a student is on probation, he or she is expected to maintain an exemplary behavioral record). Violation of a major school rule while a student is on disciplinary probation may result in expulsion from the school.

Expulsion

A student may be expelled from the School either for a chronic pattern of substantial violations that have not been corrected through any of the above methods, or for an extremely serious violation, such as possession of weapons or drugs, or the intent to harm another individual. Parents' or guardians' falsification of records or non-compliance with school policies or support of the child's non-compliance with school policies may also result in expulsion.

Students who are expelled may not re-enter the School.

The School has School Resource Officers (SROs) from the Metropolitan Police Department who visit the school almost daily to offer their support as needed. If the school determines that a student's behavior in any way jeopardizes the safety of the community, the School sees fit to involve the police. If a student is found in possession of an illegal substance or a weapon, the School will notify the police.

Searches of Students, Personal Property in Students' Immediate Possession

School administrators are authorized to search students and/or personal property in students' immediate possession, when, in their judgment, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has violated or is violating Board policies, school rules, federal/state laws, or is interfering with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school.

All searches of students and/or their personal property will be authorized and conducted by a school administrator in the presence of a witness, except where the circumstances render the presence of a witness impractical. A reasonable effort will be made to conduct searches out of the sight and hearing of other students.

Procedure for Requesting an Independent Hearing

It is the sincere hope of the school that all disputes can be solved by mutual cooperation without recourse to a formal complaint, and to that end, every effort should be made to resolve any dispute informally first. In the case of suspensions or expulsions, families who choose to submit a formal complaint must do so in writing to the Head of School.

1. A written request for a due process hearing signed by a parent or guardian must be submitted to the Head of School within five business days of the incident.
2. The Head of School will contact the School's Hearing Officer within three school days of receiving the request.
3. The Hearing Officer will schedule a hearing at the earliest mutually convenient time.
4. After hearing the case and deliberating, the Hearing Officer will submit a written recommendation to the President of the Washington Latin Board of Governors.
5. The Board President will provide the parent or guardian with a written decision on the case within one week of receiving the recommendation of the Hearing Officer.