

Student/Family Policies Submission: The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School

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The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School DISCIPLINE POLICY

Student Support Guide--Code of Conduct

Overview

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS' mission is to empower students to transform the world. The primary objectives of the disciplinary response system at Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS are to support a quality learning environment through self-discipline and self-direction and instill our core values of honoring self-development, designing for positive impact, challenging mind, body and spirit and pursuing justice everywhere. Truth PCS's Code of Conduct gives students guidelines and clear expectations that will reinforce critical-thinking skills, positive decision-making skills, and the use of sound judgment, basic reasoning, and analysis in their day to day activities. Students are expected to enter the school each day ready to learn, respect, and cooperate with other members of the Truth PCS community.

It is everyone's collective responsibility at Truth PCS to build and support a community where students serve as active agents in the construction of peace and model the Montessori philosophy of grace and courtesy. Truth PCS students will know who they are, what they want, and where they are going. They will be able to walk into any space, find their place, and make a powerful contribution.

Sojourner Truth PCS maintains high standards of conduct both in and outside of school. We recognize that the adolescent years are a time of transition when children learn the complicated connections between the choices they make and the resulting consequences.

The Code of Conduct guides students in making informed and responsible choices and provides a foundation on which students can build respect for themselves and others. It also helps us create a culture in which students have the opportunity to focus on achieving academic and social success and to understand the norms that will be expected of them as they mature and become responsible citizens.

All adult members of the Sojourner Truth PCS family are also expected to adhere to the components of the Code of Conduct and work together to support and enforce Sojourner Truth PCS's goals.

A full description of the Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS' Code of Conduct is provided in order to give students, families, staff and other Truth PCS stakeholders a clear understanding of the expectations of students and the responses for not meeting these expectations. Students are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct at all times while under the jurisdiction of Truth PCS, including all activities during the school day, all supplemental programs, all extracurricular activities, and all school functions both on- and off-campus.

At the end of the school day, students are expected to leave the building in a responsible and respectful fashion. Students should be aware that all Code of Conduct rules apply when they are leaving the building and on the school grounds, and they continue to apply until they have arrived at their home or other destination. Students who violate the Code of Conduct on their way home or outside of school may earn disciplinary consequences in accordance with school policies and relevant laws or regulations.

Jurisdiction:

While the provisions of this policy purport to control, regulate, or establish standards for the actions, behavior, or activities of students of Sojourner Truth PCS--those provisions shall be enforceable by school authorities, both during regularly scheduled school hours as well as at such other times and places including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- When the student is on school grounds;
- When the student is on or off school grounds participating in or attending any function or activity (including field trips, class trips, or athletic contests) that are sponsored by Sojourner Truth PCS;
- When the student is traveling on public transportation and the activity involves any conduct prohibited by DC Law, including from the time students leave home to come to school until the time they return home; and
- When the student commits a prohibited offense that occurs outside of school hours (with emphasis on infractions Tier 3 or greater, to include during the summer, whether or not a student is enrolled in Sojourner Truth PCS' Summer School Program).

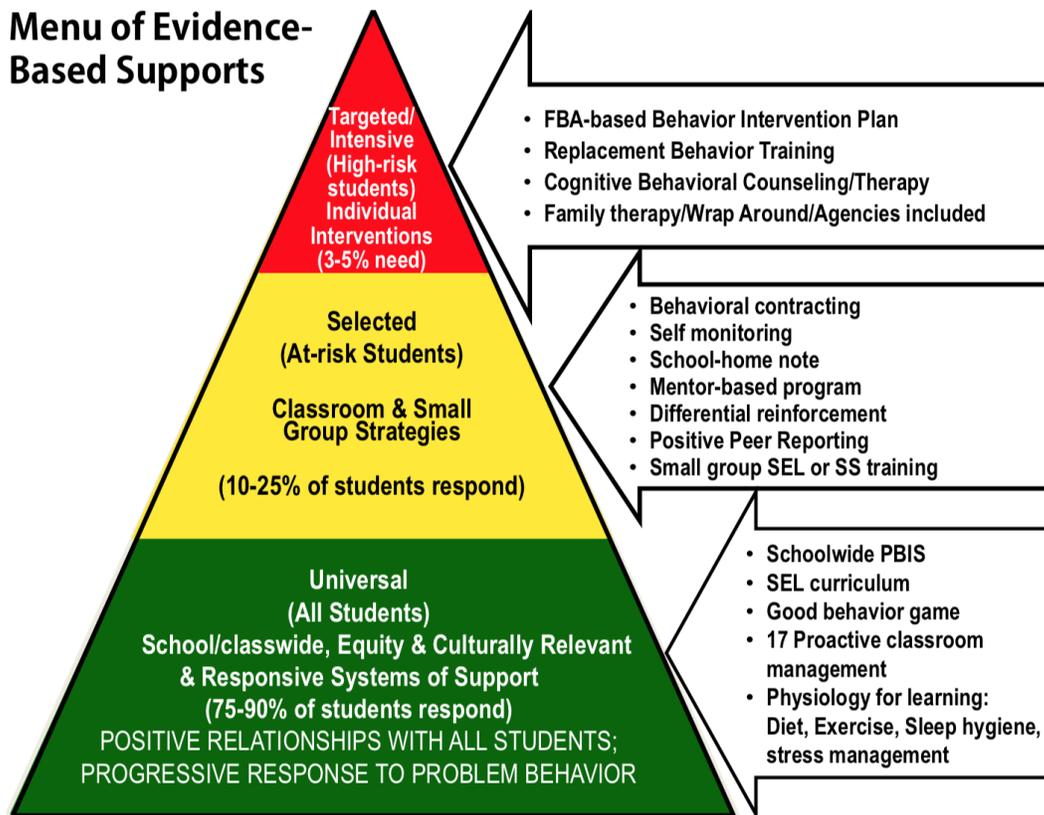
Restorative Practices

Truth PCS will include Restorative Practices as a method when assigning responses to students for behavior. A restorative pathway repairs the harm that has been done to the community through one's negative behavior or interactions. The responsible administrator/dean will determine if the restorative response will be in addition to an already assigned consequence or in lieu of a more severe consequence. Restorative Practices include, but are not limited to, Restorative Conferences, Restorative Circles, Peer Conferences, Affective Statements, Collaborative Class Agreements, Problem-Solving Anchor Charts, and other activities focused on mindfulness. These practices can provide opportunities to meet all of the goals of our Code of Conduct: for students to repair harm caused by their actions, learn new skills that will prepare them for success at Truth and beyond, and take ownership over their

behaviors. Thus, these practices provide Truth PCS with meaningful alternatives to suspension that align with our core values.

Restorative Practices in a Multi-Tiered System of Support. Restorative Practices fit into a Multi-Tiered System of Support, proactively supporting all students and providing targeted and intensive interventions for students with higher levels of need. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Menu of Evidence Based Supports.



Tier 1--RESTORATIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE. A Restorative School Climate focuses on building a strong sense of community and positive relationships among all stakeholders. In a restorative environment, all community members feel safe and welcome, and adults support students in developing social and emotional skills. Restorative Mindsets, Restorative Language, Talking Circles, and Restorative Conversations are universal methods that support at the Tier 1 level.

Tier 2-- RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE. After harm or conflict, restorative responses address the root cause of the problem, promote healing, and ensure that students are held accountable and take ownership over the process of

repairing harm. Restorative Conversations, Peer Conferences, Peer Mediation, Peace Circles, and other skill-building alternatives to suspension are practices that support at the Tier 2 level.

Tier 3--RE-ENTRY AND RESTORATIVE HEALING. In the most serious incidents of harm or conflict, restorative practices are designed to ensure that students who have been removed from the classroom or school are welcomed back to the community. These intensive one-on-one interventions can promote healing. Specialized Re-entry Plans and Restorative Conferencing both support at the Tier 3 level.

Restorative Practices and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional competencies are critical skills that students need to succeed in school, college, career, and life, and are thus critical components of Truth’s Core Value Competency Framework. Restorative Practices support the development of the five core social and emotional competencies displayed below. Each competency is valued and assessed in the Honoring Self-Development section of Truth’s Competency Framework.

Developing social and emotional skills also enhances the ability of students (and adults) to actively participate in Restorative Practices.



- Through Restorative Practices, students learn to take ownership over their own feelings and actions. Restorative responses, including the use of “I” statements, promote accountability, self-management and self-awareness.

- Restorative Practices teach students the impact and consequences of their decisions. For example, Restorative Conversations focused on reflection and “making things right” promote responsible decision-making.
- At the heart of Restorative Practices are strong relationships and communities. Relationships are built and restored through specific practices, such as Circles. The application of an overall restorative mindset involves the use of such social awareness and relationship skills as empathetic listening, as well as through developing an overall restorative mindset focused on social awareness and relationship skills through self-discipline and self-direction.

**The Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies and graphic come from CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)

At Truth PCS, we will teach students how to look within to be self-directed and to choose the appropriate behavior. This Montessori principle of self-discipline is very aligned with Restorative Practices of self-awareness and self-direction.

PUNITIVE VS RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE

	PUNITIVE	RESTORATIVE
MISBEHAVIOR IS DEFINED AS	Breaking school rules, disobeying authority	Harm done to one person/group by another
PROCESS RELIES ON	Authority figure establishing what rules are broken, and who's to blame	Everyone working to problem solve, build relationships and achieve a mutually-desired outcome
ACCOUNTABILITY DEFINED AS	Receiving punishment	Understanding the impact of actions, taking responsibility for choices, suggesting ways to repair harm and restore community
GOAL OF THE RESPONSE	Pain or unpleasantness to deter/prevent	Meaningful restitution to reconcile and acknowledge responsibility for choices
EFFECTS OF THE RESPONSE	Short term—behaviors often stop in the moment but return once the punishment is over	Long term—students learn critical social and emotional skills that serve them in college, career, and life

Bar Notices

A bar notice is a civil tool that is used to prevent individuals from entering private property. Sojourner Truth PCS reserves the right to issue a bar notice that may prohibit a student and/or members of his or her family from

entering Sojourner Truth PCS's property, if the administration concludes that such access creates an unacceptable safety risk for students and/or staff.

Policy Guidance:

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES. Students are expected to abide by all of the rules, regulations and standards of Sojourner Truth PCS at all times. Specifically, students **MUST**:

- Abide by the Code of Conduct Policy as provided to the student and their family.
- Refrain from inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior at all times.
- Accept responsibility for their behavior.
- Respect themselves and all other individuals in the School at all times.
- Meet academic expectations in the classroom.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES. Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Adhere to, support, and abide by the rules and regulations of the School, and to hold their children accountable to the same.
- Adhere to the School's attendance policy which requires all students to be present daily, unless absence is appropriately excused.
- Communicate with teachers to stay informed of their child's academic program and progress.
- Alert the School to any specific problems or concerns that develop.
- Notify the school of changes with contact information, which includes phone number and address.
- Participate in activities in the School.
- Take an active part in the parent component of the School.

TEACHER/STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES. Teachers and staff are expected to:

- Implement the mission and philosophy of Sojourner Truth PCS.
- Model the behaviors and performance standards expected of Sojourner Truth PCS students.
- Foster a learning environment and fulfill the professional obligations required by their positions.
- Keep open lines of communication with students and parents/guardians.
- Be friendly to students and their families and cooperative at all times.

STUDENT SAFETY AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Sojourner Truth PCS is not an organization that uses physical intervention as a regular way of ensuring student and staff safety. Appropriate personnel are trained, however, in physical intervention so that, on the rare occasion that physical intervention becomes for the safety and well-being of the child and/or of other students or adults in the school building, they are equipped to employ it. Sojourner Truth PCS is committed to using physical intervention only as a very last resort in an attempt to keep student(s) and staff safe.

SHORT-TERM (1-4 Days), MEDIUM-TERM (5-9 Days) OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS *Suspensions of 6 or more days only apply to students in grades 9-12***

School Administration may impose a short-term or intermediate term suspension on a student as a response to certain inappropriate behaviors when a student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause

significant bodily injury or emotional distress to another person. Before imposing a short-term or intermediate-term suspension, the Principal or his/her designee will meet with the student, notify the student of what he/she is accused of doing and the information that the school has to believe that the student engaged in such behavior, and give the student an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior. The Principal or his/her designee will conduct any investigation necessary to determine what occurred before suspending a student except in the case of an emergency where the safety of the student, other students, or staff is at risk. Short-term and Medium-term suspensions will be approved by the School Principal or his/her designee. Once the decision to suspend has been made and approved, the Principal or his/her designee will contact the student's parent or guardian by telephone as soon as possible. In addition, school Administration will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing that the student has been suspended from school. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident, or incidents, which resulted in the suspension and shall offer the opportunity for a conference with the school Administration.

Only the Principal or his/her designee may recommend and approve short-term suspension. Medium-term suspensions may be appealed within 24 hours of the suspension to the Principal by contacting him or her via calling the Office Manager at the school's main number. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the School from immediately removing a student from Sojourner Truth PCS property and activities when there is a reasonable belief that the student's continued presence may endanger either the health or safety of any individual or the effective operation of the School.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS (10 Days) *Only applies to students in grades 9-12***

A student who is determined by school administration to have committed a Level 4 or Level 5 infraction that willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause significant bodily injury or emotional distress to another person may be subject to a long-term suspension unless the school Administration determines that an exception should be made based on the circumstance of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. Such a student may also be subject to any of the disciplinary measures outlined elsewhere in this document; referral to law enforcement authorities; and/or expulsion.

Only the Principal may recommend a long-term suspension. Such a recommendation may be made final only after the determination by a preponderance of the evidence that the student violated the Code of Conduct Policy in a way that warrants long-term suspension. Long-term suspension hearings are presided over by the Executive Director.

Upon determining that the student's action warrants a possible long-term suspension, the Principal or his or her designee will meet with the student, notify the student of what he/she is accused of doing and the information that the school has to believe that the student engaged in such behavior, and give the student an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior. The Principal or his or her designee shall immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) by phone and in writing of any suspension or pending investigation. The school will endeavor to conduct and conclude its investigation within 2-3 business days after the occurrence of the alleged infraction. The School shall give the parent(s) and or guardian(s) of the student written notice by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 48 hours of the suspension at the parent(s) or guardian(s) last known address. Where possible,

notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident, or incidents which resulted in the proposal of a long-term suspension and shall propose two dates for a suspension hearing. The notification and hearing shall be conducted in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardians(s). All relevant information will be provided to the parent and student at least 48 hours before the suspension hearing. At the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, students who are recommended for long-term suspension and awaiting a hearing will not be permitted to return to school or participate in school activities. At the suspension hearing, the Principal or his or her designee will present the information relied on to support the recommendation for the long-term suspension; the student will be given an opportunity to fully respond to that information; the student may present any information that he/she wants the decision maker to consider. The Executive Director will serve as the impartial decision maker and issue a final decision regarding long-term suspension after considering all of the information presented at the hearing. The final decision will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian within 48 hours of the hearing.

In the event of an incident for which a student is assigned a long term suspension, before the student may resume attending classes, the Principal or her or his designee shall hold a re-entry conference with the student and his parent(s) or guardian(s) to discuss: 1) expectations regarding transitioning back to school; and 2) review of a mandatory Formal Behavior Contract. Attendance by the student is required and attendance by his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) is strongly recommended. If the student violates the provisions of the Formal Behavior Contract, the student will be recommended for expulsion and will not be allowed to re-enroll for the next school year. Sojourner Truth PCS will follow mandated due process procedures, in accordance with DC and other applicable law, to address any infractions.

For students with IEPs, 504 Plans and students who are in the process of being evaluated for special education who are suspended for more than 10 days in a school year, a multi-disciplinary team will review all relevant educational records contained in the student's file or in possession of the school to determine whether the student's violation of school rules was a manifestation of the student's disability.

If it is determined that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will be returned to his/her educational placement.

If it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his/her disability, the student's file will be reviewed to determine disciplinary action in accordance with the policies contained in this section.

EXPULSIONS

Students recommended by Sojourner Truth PCS staff for expulsion shall immediately be placed on out-of-school suspension. The Principal or his or her designee shall immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) by telephone and inform them of the reason(s) for the recommendation for expulsion. The School shall also send parent(s) or guardian(s) a copy of the written notice recommending expulsion.

Students who have willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily harm or emotional distress to another person, including behavior that happens off school grounds will be referred to the Principal may be subject to expulsion from Sojourner Truth PCS.

Due to the severity of these infractions, Sojourner Truth PCS staff may, in their sole discretion, contact local authorities to report these infractions. Additionally, the Principal may, in her or his sole discretion, recommend for expulsion a student who repeatedly engages in these offenses.

EXPULSION HEARINGS

Expulsion from Sojourner Truth PCS will be the last step in a process that aims to correct a student's poor behavioral habits. If a student commits frequent and/or serious infractions, that student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified of the behavioral problems and a conference with the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be requested for purposes of creating an intervention plan designed to correct the student's behavior.

If an intervention plan fails to improve the student's behavior, or if a student commits a Tier 5 infraction, the Principal may recommend such student for expulsion. Before issuing a recommendation for expulsion, however, the school shall take the following steps to ensure due process:

- The Principal or his or her designee shall meet with the student, notify the student that a recommendation for expulsion is being considered and why, and give the student an opportunity to present his or her side of the story or explanation for his or her behavior. The School Leader will conduct any investigation necessary to determine what occurred before making a recommendation for expulsion. At the Principal's or his or her designee's sole discretion, a student facing possible recommendation for expulsion may be suspended pending the investigation and recommendation. The school will endeavor to complete the investigation within 3 days after the notice of the recommendation is given to the student.
- The School shall provide written notice of the recommendation for expulsion and basis for that recommendation to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The Principal or his or her designee shall notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing of any suspension and/or pending investigation. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 48 hours of suspension at the last known address. Where possible, notification also shall be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a contact telephone number for the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such notice shall provide a description of the incident, or incidents, which resulted in the proposal of a long-term suspension and shall propose two dates for the expulsion hearing. The notification and formal conference shall be in the dominant language used by the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The School shall notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the scheduled expulsion recommendation hearing date and time. The expulsion recommendation hearing must be held within ten (10) school days of delivery of the notice of the recommended expulsion to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The School shall provide a copy of all relevant information to the parent(s) or guardian(s) and student at least 3 days before the expulsion hearing. Students who are recommended for expulsion and awaiting a hearing will not be permitted to return to school or participate in any school activities. At the expulsion hearing, the Principal or her or his designee will present the information relied on to support the recommendation for expulsion; the student will be given an opportunity to fully respond to that information; and the student may present any information that he or she wants the decision-maker to consider. The Executive Director shall serve as the impartial decision maker and issue a final decision

regarding the recommendation for expulsion after considering all of the information presented at the hearing. The final decision regarding the recommendation shall be provided in writing to the parent(s) and guardian(s) within 72 hours after the hearing concludes.

- Following the expulsion recommendation hearing, the Executive Director shall grant or deny the expulsion. The Executive Director will review all relevant documentation from the investigation and the hearing before making a final decision to approve the recommendation for expulsion. If the Executive Director approves the recommendation for expulsion, the School shall notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) verbally and in writing.
- If a parent or guardian and/or the student do not attend the expulsion recommendation hearing, the student shall be deemed to have automatically waived the right to a hearing and the expulsion recommendation will be final.
- A student who is expelled may not apply for readmission into Sojourner Truth PCS for 1 calendar year.
- When appropriate and feasible, the School will assist an expelled student with arrangements for an involuntary transfer to another school.

Students on suspension pending a hearing are not permitted on the Sojourner Truth PCS campus to attend schools activities or functions, and they will only be allowed to pick up missed homework and classwork assignments after-school hours by appointment made with the Principal.

In order to measure the effectiveness of its program, Sojourner Truth PCS will use previous years to make comparisons to the current school year on the frequency of different Tiers of Infractions and data on the effectiveness of the program and other intervention strategies will also be gathered and analyzed for the same purpose. Data will be disaggregated and analyzed to assess the effectiveness and fairness of its implementation.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION APPEALS

A student who has been suspended for fewer than eleven (11) days may appeal the Suspension as follows:

1. A Short-Term Suspension and a Medium-Term Suspension may be appealed to the principal.
2. All appeals must be made by the student's parent or guardian or the adult student, in writing to the principal or person designated by the principal as appropriate, no later than two (2) school days after receiving the notice of Suspension or Expulsion, and may be made prior to receiving formal written notice of the Suspension.
3. All appeals will be heard by the principal (for Short-Term Suspensions and Medium-Term Suspensions) or a person designated by the principal no later than one (1) school day after the appeal is requested. Upon request of the adult student or minor student's parent or guardian, the time for the appeal may be extended up to three (3) school days. The appeal may be held by telephone upon request of the parent or guardian if necessary due to health, work, or childcare.
4. The student and his or her parent or guardian may present evidence and ask witnesses to speak.
5. At the conclusion of the conference, the principal or a person designated by the principal, as appropriate, shall render a final decision.
6. No more than one (1) school day after the conference, the principal or a person designated by the principal, as appropriate, shall give the student and his or her parent or guardian a written summary of the conference proceedings, including the final decision.

7. Once a hearing is scheduled by the hearing office, the student shall be placed on Suspension, or in another appropriate placement until the conclusion of the hearing and appeals processes.

Except in cases of immediate emergency Suspensions pursuant to § B2504.4, students shall remain in their regular assigned classroom or education setting until the final determination of the Suspension has been made.

Bullying Policy

The mission of Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS is to empower students to transform the world. Acts of bullying are an attack on Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's core values of honoring self-development, designing for positive impact, challenging mind, body and spirit and to pursuing justice everywhere. Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS has established this comprehensive bullying prevention policy in an effort to support attainment of the mission and realization of its core values. This policy protects the dignity and safety of the Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS students, faculty, staff, and volunteers. Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will promptly report and investigate all incidents of bullying and provide appropriate remedies for victims of an incident.

Sojourner Truth PCS is committed to fostering an environment on Sojourner Truth PCS's campus and at School activities that is free of bullying (including cyberbullying), which is disruptive to learning and can adversely affect emotional well-being, school climate, and academic achievement. This policy serves as Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's bullying prevention plan.

Definitions

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS defines bullying as any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

- a. May be 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
- b. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 - Place the student in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
 - Cause a detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
 - Substantially interfere with the student's academic performance or attendance; or
 - Substantially interfere with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Prohibition Against Bullying

Acts of bullying, including cyberbullying, whether by students, volunteers or staff, are prohibited:

1. On Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS grounds and immediately adjacent property, at Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS-sponsored or related events on and off Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS grounds, on any vehicle used for Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS business, at any transit stop at which students wait to be transported to Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS or any school related event, or through the use of any electronic devices owned by Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS leased by Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS or used for Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS business; and
2. At a location or function unrelated to the Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS, through the use of any electronic devices, including those not owned or leased by Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS, if the acts of bullying or cyberbullying create a hostile environment at the school for the victim or witnesses, infringe on their rights at Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS, or materially and substantially disrupt the orderly operation of Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS.

Retaliation against a student, volunteer or staff member who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

Sexting

“Sexting” means sending a sexually explicit photograph over a cell phone or email.

- It is a crime to create, send or possess sexually explicit photos of a minor (even if the photo is of you, or if it is sent to your boyfriend or girlfriend).

When sending texts or emails, or surfing the Internet, remember ...

- Don't assume that what is being sent is private.
- There is no changing your mind. Once you send something, it is sent.
- Think of how the recipient will react to the message.
- Nothing is truly anonymous in the cyberspace world.
- Resist pressure to do anything that makes you uncomfortable.
- Never respond to a threatening or obscene message.
- Never meet with someone you know only online.

Publication and Contact Information

This policy will be made available on Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's website beginning in school year 2020-2021. The policy, and age appropriate versions thereof, will be distributed to students and parents of students in contact with Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS annually in the Student Handbook beginning in school year 2020-2021. Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will emphasize that the policy applies to participation in functions sponsored by Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS.

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's Principal is responsible for coordinating the school's bullying prevention efforts. All questions, comments and concerns about the bullying policy and Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's prevention efforts should be able to be directed to the Principal via email as designated by the school's staff list.

Principal Attn: Denise Brijbasi Edwards dedwards@thetruthschool.org

Prevention Leadership and Intervention

Responsibility for the implementation and execution of this policy is vested with the Principal who shall have responsibility for:

Sojourner Truth PCS works to prevent and manage bullying of and by our students using the following methods:

1. Conducting annual professional development to increase understanding and awareness of the prevalence, causes and consequences of bullying.
2. Educating staff on research-based strategies on how to prevent bullying in the classroom, as well as how to foster an environment that is inclusive to all people.
3. Communicating with families about the prevalence, causes and consequences for bullying.
4. Providing support and counseling for victims of bullying to address social-emotional welfare, as well as for those identified as individuals engaging in bullying behavior to educate the bully of the long-term effects this treatment can have on the victim.
5. Implementing curriculum designed to foster an accepting environment and a positive social climate.
6. Providing a systematic way for students to communicate anonymously with School Leaders when bullying is taking place in the building, at school activities, or electronically using school equipment.

Primary Prevention Strategies

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS expects students to behave in a way that supports the attainment of our mission and core values, and to provide a safe and welcoming environment for peers, faculty and staff, and community members. Students who are part of the Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS community are expected to follow the code of conduct in the Student Handbook. Further, students should:

1. Treat all members of the Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS community with respect;
2. Respect the property of Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS, its staff, and other students connected to Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS;
3. Respond appropriately to instructions from Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS faculty and staff.

Students who violate the school's bullying policy will be subject to disciplinary action, as per the Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS Code of Conduct.

Behavioral Expectations and Range of School Responses

Sojourner Truth PCS takes bullying seriously. Accordingly, we explicitly teach better and more supportive skills to those who engage in bullying or stand by, but also provide serious responses. The goals of our interventions are to

prevent future occurrence of bullying, bully-like behavior, or retaliation and to protect and support the target of the bullying.

Sojourner Truth PCS expects our students to behave in a way that supports Sojourner Truth PCS's intent to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment for all of our students, staff and community members. Students are expected to:

- Treat all members of the Sojourner Truth PCS community with respect;
- Respect the property of Sojourner Truth PCS, its staff, and other students connected to Sojourner Truth PCS;
- Respond appropriately to instructions from all Sojourner Truth PCS staff.
- Students who do not meet these expectations will be held accountable for their actions in accordance with our Code of Conduct Policy. The range in consequences and assigned infraction Tiers are diverse in order that we may consider all the details of a bullying incident to include: severity of incident, nature of the incident, developmental ages of the students involved (as targets, individuals engaged in bullying, bullies or bystanders), and any history of problem behavior from the person exhibiting bullying behavior.
- Additional or unique consequences to fit a particular situation may be assigned beyond those outlined here as deemed appropriate by school Administration.
- Students who are identified as engaging in bullying behavior may be required to make apologies or participate in mediations with the students that are identified as victims. Students who are identified as bystanders, those that are contributing to an unsafe environment (i.e. recording, sharing, commenting on, instigating, etc.), will also earn consequences.
- Decisions around these responses are made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the comfort-level and safety of the victim. Our priority is to create a safe and purposeful learning environment for all students—victims, bystanders and those engaged in bullying.

Reporting Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation (DC CODE § 2-1535.03(B)(6))

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS expects all faculty, staff members and volunteers to report incidents of bullying or retaliation they witness or are made aware of. Faculty and staff members should immediately report all such incidents to the Principal or designee who will create a written report of the bullying incident and include the incident in any requests for reports of bullying incidents to the citywide coordinator.

Students, parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged by Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS to report any incidents of bullying that they witness or become aware of. Reports of bullying may be made to the:

Principal Attn: Denise Brijbasi Edwards dedwards@thetruthschool.org

Reports of bullying by students, parents, guardians and community members may be made anonymously, but disciplinary action cannot be taken by Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS solely on the basis of an anonymous report, though such a report may trigger an investigation that will provide actionable information. All oral reports received as part of this process will be transcribed into writing and included in Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's bullying database.

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will ensure information about reporting is communicated to students connected to Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS in an age appropriate manner. Information on how to report incidents of bullying will also be included as appropriate in the Student Handbook. The Principal is available to assist in reporting incidents of bullying and can be reached at:

Principal Attn: Denise Brijbasi Edwards dedwards@thetruthschool.org

Reports of bullying not received by the Principal will be transmitted to her or him and within two business days of their receipt or creation by the staff member who reported the initial incident.

Investigating Incidents of Bullying (DC Code § 2-1535.03(B)(7))

Prior to the investigation of an incident, the Principal will take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim referenced in a reported bullying incident. These steps will be designed to restore a sense of safety to the victim and to protect them from further incidents if necessary. Examples of such steps taken include designating a staff member to serve as that alleged victim's "safe" person, altering the alleged bully/bullies' seating or schedule to reduce access to the alleged victim or creating a safety plan in consultation with the alleged victim. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the victim from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.

Once a report of bullying has been received, the following groups will be notified as needed by the Principal so long as, in the absence of legal imperative, the parent or guardian's written consent is obtained prior to notification. In all cases the Principal will determine what information will be shared.

Parents and guardians: Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will notify the parents or guardians of victims, individuals engaging in bullying, and if appropriate, witnesses to an incident of bullying behavior about the nature of the incident and the procedures and steps in place for responding to it. The Principal will determine if parents or guardians should be informed prior to or after the investigation of an incident.

Schools: Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will notify the schools of all victims and individuals engaged in bullying behavior bullies in an incident of bullying to ensure that students are not victimized across agencies and that comprehensive service and protection can be provided to the individuals engaging in bullying bullies and the victims.

Law enforcement agencies: If Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS determines that the reported incident may involve criminal activity or the basis for criminal charges, information about the incident must be conveyed to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. As part of making this determination the Principal may wish to consult with either a law enforcement officer or legal counsel.

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will notify these groups of incidents of bullying only to the extent allowed by law. Notification will be undertaken solely to ensure that services are provided to victims and individuals engaged in bullying bullies and to protect victims from further or sustained victimization. Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who report bullying incidents.

The Principal will provide confidentiality as far as possible to relevant parties as part of the investigation and inform all relevant parties that retaliation for reporting acts of bullying is prohibited. Written records of the investigation process should be maintained and may be included in the prevention database to generate a more accurate picture of bullying behaviors at the school. Where necessary, provisions will be made to include the advice of legal counsel.

In investigating an incident of bullying, the Principal will seek to ensure that the reported incident is one of victimization, a sign of bullying, rather than of general conflict. Thus, when investigating a reported incident, the Principal will attempt to determine, through interviewing the victim, what mechanisms the victim had and has access to for halting the incident that occurred and preventing future such instances. If the victim reports a few or no mechanisms for ending the incident or constructively dealing with future instances, that information will serve as compelling, though not conclusive evidence that the reported incident was an incident of bullying.

The Principal, or his/her designee, is charged with making determinations as to whether a reported incident constitutes a case of bullying. These determinations will be made in consideration of the totality of the facts and the circumstances surrounding the incident. If the Principal, or his/her designee, determines that an incident of bullying has occurred, they should take the response steps enumerated in Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS's prevention plan to prevent the recurrence of an incident and restore the safety of a victim.

If the Principal, or his/her designee determines that additional support is needed to conduct a thorough and equitable investigation they will contact the citywide prevention coordinator.

Responses and Consequences of Bullying

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. To this end, Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS shall ensure that faculty and staff follow these guidelines as closely as possible, while allowing for flexibility to adapt sanctions to individual contexts. Furthermore, to ensure equity in applying sanctions, measures will be applied on a graduated basis determined by the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the student involved, and the age and developmental status of the student involved.

Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but they are not limited to any student who is found in violation of the school's Code of Conduct regarding bullying will be subject to disciplinary action. All acts of bullying are considered Tier 3, as per the schools' Code of Conduct - violations and consequences may include:

- Ban on participation in specific school sanctioned activity
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion
- Sanctions will be applied within two business days of the determination that an incident of bullying has occurred, unless an appeal of the incident by the bully has been received in that time as described in the Appeals section of this policy. To ensure that single incidents of bullying do not become recurring problems, Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS will always refer victims and individuals engaged in bullying bullies involved in an incident to services in addition to imposing sanctions on those engaging in the bullying bullies

Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS shall communicate to students in contact with Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS, the responses that students can expect for participating in bullying behavior.

Appeals

Parties dissatisfied by the outcome of a bullying investigation may appeal the determination of the Principal to the Executive Director of Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS. This appeal should be submitted in writing no later than 5 days after the initial determination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Executive Director must conduct a secondary investigation within 10 business days of the receipt of an appeal. These 10 days may be extended by up to an additional 5 business days if the Executive director sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct an investigation. Additionally, upon the receipt of an appeal, the Executive Director must inform the party making the submission of their ability to seek additional redress under the DC Human Rights Act.

Tier 1

Tier 1 behaviors are those behaviors that are non-compliant or cause minor disruptions to the academic environment but do not involve damage to school property or harm to self or others. Tier 1 behaviors that occur in the community that can be managed by the teacher or staff member that is witness to the behavior. These result in classroom-level disciplinary responses that may be elevated to administrative response if they are not successfully abated by the teacher or the appropriate school-level committee.

Behavior	Response(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Off-task behaviors that demonstrate disengagement from classroom learning ● Attending class without required class materials or assigned work ● Refusal to comply with reasonable staff instructions, or classroom, or school expectations ● Behaviors that disrupt or interfere with classroom teaching and learning ● Unexcused lateness for school or class ● Inappropriate displays of affection ● Excessive noise in the classroom, hall, or building ● Running in the classroom, hall, or building ● Communication with staff and peers that is not polite, courteous, or respectful ● Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward peers ● Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that is insubordinate or causes minor disruption to the academic environment but does not involve damage to school property or harm to self or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restorative practices* ● Staff follows the hierarchy of responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-verbal redirection (proximity) ○ Verbal redirection/change seat/ appropriate response ○ Reflection ○ Family contact (in writing or phone) ○ Log in system ● Re-teach the behavioral expectations ● Teacher/Family conference (in-person) ● Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom* ● In-School Disciplinary Action* ● Behavior contract ● Other school-based responses as approved by the Principal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School/ Community service tasks ○ Restitution <p style="text-align: center;">*Refer to Definition of Terms on pg. 23</p>

Tier 2

Tier 2 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that cause disruption to the academic environment, involve damage to school property, or may cause minor harm to self or others. Tier 2 behaviors result in school-based and administrative disciplinary responses.

Behavior	Response(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using computer/office equipment without permission ● Intentional misuse of school equipment/supplies/facilities ● Unauthorized use of portable electronic devices during school hours (e.g. mp3 players, cell phones) ● Noncompliance with an approved dress code as outlined in Truth’s Handbook ● Leaving classroom without permission ● Unexcused absence from class ● Unauthorized presence in hallway during class time ● Unexcused absence from school² ● Disruptive physical contact between students (horse-playing, play-fighting) ● Directing profanity or obscene/offensive gestures toward staff and/ or student ● Throwing objects that may cause injury or damage property ● Academic dishonesty ● Forgery (passes or signatures on documents) ● Lying to or giving misleading information to school staff ● Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that causes disruption to the academic environment, involves damage to school property, or may cause minor harm to self or others ● Documented pattern of persistent Tier 1 behavior <p>² DCMR Chapter 21 (Attendance and Transfers) provides guidance about student attendance [*]Refer to Definition of Terms on pg. 23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restorative practices*, as deemed appropriate ● Staff follows the hierarchy of responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-verbal redirection (proximity) ○ Verbal redirection/change seat/ appropriate response ○ Reflection ○ Family contact (in writing or phone) ○ Log in system ○ Referral to Principal ● Teacher/Parent conference (in-person) ● Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom* ● In-School Disciplinary Action* ● Behavior contract ● Other school-based responses as approved by the Principal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School/ Community service tasks ○ Restitution

Tier 3

Tier 3 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that cause significant disruption to the academic environment or cause harm to self or others. In addition to lesser consequences, Tier 3 behaviors may result in either on-site or off- site Suspension.

Behavior	Response(s)
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acts of vandalism, destruction of property, or graffiti (including tagging) ● Inappropriate use of Truth’s computer or network (restricted websites, offensive emails) ● Sale or distribution of any item without authorization ● Possession or distribution of obscene or pornographic material on school premises ● Possession or use of tobacco ● Use of alcohol ● Use of marijuana, controlled dangerous substances, imitation controlled substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, or drug paraphernalia ● Unauthorized possession, use, or distribution of over-the-counter medication ● Verbal, written, or physical threat to person or property (including intimidating postures) ● Obscene, seriously offensive, or abusive language or gestures to students or staff ● Causing disruption/ displaying unsafe behavior during a school gathering (assemblies, Town Hall, Community Meeting) ● Causing disruption/ displaying unsafe behavior on school properties or at any Truth-sponsored or supervised activity ● Causing disruption/ displaying unsafe behavior during a school safety protocol (fire drill, lock-down, shelter in place, etc.) ● Gambling ● Communicating slurs based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, or place of residence or business, including derogatory sexual language ● Engaging in sexual acts on school premises or at school-related events ● Leaving school without permission ● Posting or distributing material or literature that is disrespectful, demeaning, humiliating, or damaging to students and/or staff. This includes posting material on the internet including any social media platform or sending material electronically (via email or cell phone). Engaging in behavior that demonstrates gang/neighborhood crew affiliation (displaying clothing or gestures associated with gangs, tagging) ● Hazing ● Bullying, or using humiliating, or intimidating language or behavior including Internet/cyber bullying ● Possession of tools or instruments which school administrators deem could be used as weapons ● Engaging in reckless behavior that may cause harm to self or others ● Extortion ● Fighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restorative practices* ● Verbal redirection/reprimand ● Other school-based responses as approved by the Principal. ○ School/ Community service tasks ● Restitution Teacher/Mentor/ student conference or Administrator/student conference ● Family contact (written or by phone) ● Family conference ● Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom* ● Behavior contract ● Other school-based responses as approved by the Principal. ○ School/ Community service tasks ○ Restitution ● In-School Disciplinary Action* ● Grade reduction for academic dishonesty ● On-site Short-Term Suspension* with provision of appropriate intervention services ● Off-site Short-Term Suspension*, except in response to unexcused tardiness or absence ● Off-site Medium-Term Suspension*, except in response to unexcused |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trespassing ● Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that causes significant disruption to the academic environment or causes harm to self or others ● Documented pattern of persistent Tier 2 behavior 	<p>tardiness or absence</p> <p>*Refer to Definition of Terms on pg. 23</p>
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Tier 4

Tier 4 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that cause disruption to the school operation, destroy school property, or cause significant harm to self or others. Tier 4 behaviors result in off-site Suspension.

Behavior	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acts of vandalism, destruction of property, or graffiti (tagging) ● Documented theft of school or personal property without force ● Interfering with school authorities or participating a major disruption of the school’s operation ● Tampering with, changing, or altering an official record or document of a school ● Persistent Harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, or place of residence or business ● Lewd or indecent public behavior or sexual misconduct ● Sexual harassment ● Retaliation for reporting harassment and sexual harassment ● Fighting which creates substantial risk of or results in minor injury ● Inciting others to violence or disruption ● Activating false alarm ● Contaminating food ● Possession of a weapon* or replica or imitation of a weapon (including water guns), other than weapons subject to the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act ● Using an article that is not normally considered a weapon to intimidate or threaten another individual ● Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this policy that causes disruption to the school operation, destroys school property, or causes significant harm to self or others (staff, students, community members) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restorative practices* ● Teacher/Mentor/ student conference or Administrator/student conference ● Family contact and conference ● Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom* ● Behavior contract ● In-School Disciplinary Action* ● Other school-based responses as approved by the Principal. ○ School/ Community service tasks ○ Restitution ● On-site Short-Term Suspension* with provision of appropriate intervention services ● Off-site Short-Term Suspension*, except in response to unexcused tardiness or absence ● Off-site Medium-Term Suspension*, except in response to unexcused tardiness or absence <p>*Refer to Definition of Terms on pg. 23</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented pattern of persistent Tier 3 behavior 	
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Tier 5

Tier 5 behaviors are those behaviors not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that are illegal, cause significant disruption to the school operation, or cause substantial harm to self or others. Tier V behaviors result in off-site Suspension or Expulsion.

Behavior	Response(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts of Exceptional Misconduct at other schools • Vandalism/destruction of property over \$500 • Selling or distribution of marijuana, prescription drugs, controlled dangerous substances, imitation controlled substances, inhalants, other intoxicants, controlled or drug paraphernalia • Possession or distribution of alcohol, drug paraphernalia or controlled substance, irrespective of the amount or type, pursuant to the criminal statutes of the District of Columbia, codified at D.C. Official Code§ 48-1101 et seq. (2001) • Causing serious disruption or damage to school’s computer systems, electronic files, or network • Possession of fireworks or explosives • Theft or attempted theft using force, coercion, intimidation or Threat of violence • Assault/physical attack on student or staff • Fighting which results in a serious physical injury • Participating in group fight which has been planned, causes major disruption to school day or results in substantial bodily injury • Using an article that is not normally considered a weapon to injure another individual • Use, threatened use, or transfer of any weapon* • Use, possession, or bringing to school a loaded or unloaded firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921 (2000), including but not limited to pistols, blank pistols, starter pistols, revolvers, rifles, and shotguns. • Any behavior that violates the Gun Free School Act • Deliberate acts that cause severe physical injury to another person (s) *staff, student or community member • Assault with a weapon • Commission or attempted commission of any act of sexual assault or sexual aggression • Arson • Biohazard • Bomb threat • Any other intentional use of violence, force, coercion, Threats, intimidation, or other comparable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices* • Off-site Long-Term Suspension*, except in response to unexcused tardiness or absence • Expulsion* • Other school-based responses as approved by the Principal. ○ School/ Community service tasks ○ Restitution <p style="text-align: right;">*Refer to Definition of Terms on pg. 23</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct which causes or attempts to cause ● severe physical injury, substantial disruption, or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function of the D.C. Public Schools ● Any behavior or other conduct not specifically enumerated in any other tier in this chapter that is illegal, causes significant disruption to the school operation, or causes substantial harm to self or others ● Documented pattern of persistent Tier 4 behavior 	
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***Definitions of Responses**

Restorative Practices – Restorative Practices are ways of pro-actively developing relationships and community, as well as repairing community when harm is done. After conflict or harm, Restorative Practices provide a way of thinking about, talking about, and responding to issues and problems by involving all participants to discuss their feelings and opinions, identify what happened, describe how it affected everyone, and find solutions to make things better. Restorative Practices include, but are not limited to, mindfulness, restorative conferences, restorative circles, restitution, peer conferences, affective statements and collaborative class agreements.

Temporary Removal of Student from Classroom – removal from the student’s classroom for less than half a school day, not to extend beyond the time of dismissal on the day of the disciplinary action. During any such removal, the student shall be supervised and provided with instructional materials.

In-School Disciplinary Action –disciplinary actions such as after-school detention, loss of privileges (including recess), exclusion from extracurricular activities, written reflection, conflict resolution, mediation, or similar actions of short duration that do not result in the student’s loss of academic instruction time.

Short-Term Suspension—on-site or off-site suspension for one (1) to four (4) school days for Secondary students

Medium-Term Suspension—suspension for five (5) to nine (9) school days.

Long-Term Suspension—suspension for ten (10) or more school days.

Expulsion—the denial of the right of a student to attend any Sojourner Truth school or program, including all classes and school activities, or one (1) calendar year.

Weapons— Include, but not limited to: weapons enumerated in DC Official Code 22-4514 (2001); firearms, knives, martial arts devices, air gun, bb gun, paintball gun, mace, pepper spray, tear gas, explosives, slingshot, bullets, chemical weapon, razorblade, razor, other weapons or instruments designed to be or commonly used as weapons (chains, clubs, knuckles, night sticks, pipes, studded bracelets) and others as listed in Chapter 25 (found on DCPS website).

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School ATTENDANCE POLICY

Student arrival Policy

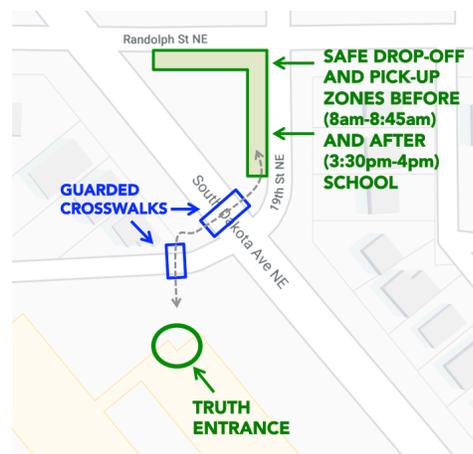
Class instruction begins promptly at 8:45am each morning for all students. Students not attending Before School Programming should arrive at school between 8:00am and 8:35am.

Students that are not at school and in their first class by 8:45am will be considered tardy.

Student Drop Off and Pick Up

Truth’s address is 1800 Perry St NE, but the entrance is along South Dakota Ave NE (as indicated in the map to the right. The drop-off plan has been designed in consultation with D.C.’s Department of Transportation, with student safety as a priority.

As indicated in the map to the right, students should be dropped off on Randolph St NE or 19th St NE, where they can be accompanied by an adult to safely cross South Dakota Ave and the alley north of the building.



Early Dismissal

Students are not permitted to leave the school during the school day unless picked up by a parent, guardian, or designated adult. Students leaving before the end of the school day must be signed at the front office. Please note that frequent early dismissals have a negative impact on student academic achievement, and thus unexcused early dismissals are counted in the same way as tardies and are reported as such.

If your student has two or more unexcused early dismissals, a parent conference will be held to discuss concerns and possible consequences. Students may only leave with an authorized person who is listed on the student’s pickup list or for which we have other specific authorization.

Dismissal

Students are dismissed at 3:30 pm daily (unless they are participating in After School Programming). Please ensure that you have a plan for how your student will leave the building each afternoon, and if you are picking them up by car please follow the plan detailed above.

Absences

Truth believes that regular school attendance is directly beneficial to both social-emotional and academic development. Regular attendance allows ongoing opportunities for social interaction, optimal communication between teachers and students, and the development of habits of dependability. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance.

This Policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent or guardian, teachers, and administrators.

Parent or Guardian's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to help ensure the student is attending school, to inform the school in the event of an expected student absence, and to work cooperatively with the school to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

Absences are recorded and reported to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the DC Public Charter School Board because attendance is considered a vital factor in a student's performance. *Vacations are not considered an excused absence.* Parents and guardians are responsible for sending their students to school and those that fail to do so may be subject to court action under the Compulsory Attendance Law of the District of Columbia 8-247.

What are Excused Absences?

- Illness or medical reason (A doctor's note is required for an absence greater than 5 days)
- Doctor's appointments or other medical reason
- Death in the student's immediate family
- Observance of a religious holiday

The school will excuse a temporary absence if proper documentation is provided. Proper documentation includes: a note from a health care provider and/or a signed letter from a parent/guardian for family emergencies and/or observance of religious holidays. If your student has two or more unexcused absences, a parent conference will be held to discuss concerns and possible consequences.

In-Seat Attendance

Truth is held accountable by the DC Public Charter School Board by, in part, our performance on a Performance Management Framework. Part of this is the rate at which students are present at school. This includes both excused and unexcused absences. In other words, *absences for sickness, vacations, and other reasons are still counted against us.*

Tardiness

Students are considered late if they are not in their first period class by 8:45am. Students that arrive late must get a tardy pass from the main office before heading to class.

Tardiness is recorded and reported to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board as it can adversely impact student performance.

In accordance with DC law, if a student accumulates ten (10) unexcused absences from school, they must be referred to Washington, D.C.'s student and Family Services Agency as a chronically absent student. At the same time, the school must report the student as truant to the Office of the State Superintendent for Education for follow up. The school will notify the family of these truancy reporting measures in collaboration with the Municipal Police Department.

After School

Students may continue to stay and work at Truth following dismissal if they are part of the After School Program or if they are working directly under the supervision of a teacher.

School Closures & Delays

Truth takes the safety of our students, staff, parents and community extremely seriously. Truth will make decisions in the best interest of the entire community.

In general, Truth will follow any school delay or closure decisions made by the District of Columbia Public Schools. Truth will also notify all major television news stations once a decision has been made. Information will be immediately posted on the Truth Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and main website pages.

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Parental Grievance Policy

Truth is committed to creating the strong family-school relationships essential to the success of each Truth student and to our school as a whole. On the occasion that parents wish to make a complaint, we have established the following grievance protocol to solve disputes or complaints in a fair and prompt manner. Notably, the formal procedures described below may be implemented only *after* the parties have engaged in an earnest attempt to resolve matter(s) informally.

Parent Complaints

Parent complaints are taken seriously by Truth and should proceed as follows:

1. Parents should first schedule a conference with the immediately-involved teacher or administrator to discuss the issue. The school reserves the right to redirect parent(s) to the appropriate personnel if this step has not been followed.
2. If parent(s) conclude that the initial response/course of action was insufficient, a meeting may then be scheduled with the Principal or Executive Director. Prior to the scheduling of any such meeting, the parent(s) should first provide the Principal or Executive Director with a message that identifies: (a) the issue/ concern/ complaint; (b) what steps have been taken to resolve the situation; and (c) proposed solutions. The Principal or Executive Director will make an effort to respond to all grievances within 2 business days.
3. If parent(s) conclude that the initial response/course of action was insufficient, an in-person meeting should then be scheduled with the Executive Director, following the same steps outlined in Step 3.
4. If a resolution cannot be reached through a discussion with the Head of School, parent(s) should submit a formal Parental Grievance Letter to the Truth Board of Trustees (boardchair@thetruthschool.org). This message must include the information and materials discussed below.

Information on the DC Public Charter School Board's procedures for receiving complaints and/or concerns can be found at <https://dcpcsb.org/community-complaints>.

Process of Board Review for Parental Grievances

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School's Board of Trustees shall annually appoint a Grievance Committee comprised of two (2) Trustees and the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall not participate in any grievance proceeding in which they are the subject of an original grievance. A Parental Grievance Message should be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees within 30 days of the conduct that triggered the grievance and must specify:

- The nature and date of the grievance and any related or supporting documents;
- The results of previous discussions to resolve the conflict, including any correspondence;
- The reason for the parent's dissatisfaction with the decisions previously rendered; and
- A description of the relief sought.

Within 30 days of the submission of a complete Parental Grievance Message, the Grievance Committee shall:

- Research the nature of the complaint;
- Interview the concerned parties; and
- Recommend a course of action to the full Truth Board of Trustees through communications by the Board Member serving as Parental Grievance Committee Chair to the Board Chair.

The Board shall render a final ruling on the grievance at its next regularly scheduled meeting following its receipt of the recommendation of the Grievance Committee.

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, District of Columbia Official Code Section 2-1401.01 et seq. (Act), Truth Public Charter School does not discriminate (including employment therein and admission thereto) on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an interfamily offense, or place of residence or business. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above-protected categories is prohibited. Discrimination in violation of the aforementioned laws will not be tolerated. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) NOTICE

Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School received a request for access. Parents of eligible students should submit to the School principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identified the record (s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent of eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent of eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 4000 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-5901

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School OPEN MEETINGS POLICY

All general meetings for The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School’s Board of Trustees are open to the public. There will be at least six meetings held per year, and all meetings are announced publicly at least one month in advance on the school website (on the “upcoming events” page). The Board Chair can be reached directly at boardchair@thetruthschool.org if there are any questions.

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School ADMISSION PREFERENCE POLICY

The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School participates in two preferences: Founders Preference and Sibling Preference (in that order). The school will reassess its preference policy prior to each school year.