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**ST. COLETTA DISCIPLINE POLICY**      **REV: October 2020** (reviewed 2022)

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St. Coletta School serves students with significant disabilities, which may include students that present with behavior challenges. All students are managed on an individual basis to determine the level of supports and/or consequences required to address severe behaviors that may disrupt the classroom environment or put themselves and/or others at risk of harm. While a majority of behaviors are able to be addressed through the use of positive behavior supports, there are instances when alternate consequences, such as suspension, are deemed necessary.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **Positive Behavior Supports**

It is the philosophy of St. Coletta School to foster productive student behavior. Toward this goal, staff are expected to provide: clear rules for student conduct; collegiality among staff members; a pervasive caring for students; effective instruction; and a focus on providing positive reinforcement and options for students.

Effective methods for responding to disruptive student behavior include:

- \*Using positive redirection and reinforcement whenever appropriate.
- \*Developing positive personal relationships with students that indicate high teacher expectations and respect for students.
- \*Closely monitoring performance and behavior.
- \*Using brief, non-disruptive interventions.
- \*Handling conflicts calmly and avoiding engaging in power struggles.
- \*Clarifying students' choices so that options are clear and students are responsible for the consequences of their choices.
- \*Using effective listening skills to help students identify problems and gain insight.

When students exhibit serious behavioral difficulties such as aggression, self-injury, significant property destruction and elopement (running away), a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) may need to be developed. The development process should include the multidisciplinary team involved with the student and the following six steps:

- \*Attempt to determine the function(s) of the behavior through an FBA;
- \*Focus on one or two specific student behaviors that need to change in order for the student to have a successful school experience;
- \*Determine specific interventions to bring about these changes;
- \*Assign responsibility to staff for implementing each intervention;
- \*Determine the data to be collected to test the effectiveness of the intervention; and,
- \*Review the program at a minimum annually, or as determined by the IEP team.

Copies of the FBA and BIP are discussed with and given to parents/guardians and affected staff. A copy is placed in the student's record.

St. Coletta staff members are trained in the Mandt System. All staff receive training in the Relational Section (Building Healthy Relationships, Communication, and Conflict Resolution). Depending on the specific needs of the school program, selected staff members receive training in the Conceptual and Technical Sections (Medical Risks of Restraint, Assisting and Supporting, Separating and Restraining.) Only staff members trained in the Conceptual and Technical level are allowed to intervene using this system. The Mandt System teaches a graded system of interventions, beginning with non-physical options and gradually moving towards physical options.. Physical intervention is used only as a matter of last resort when someone is a danger to themselves or others and the attempted non-physical interventions have not been successful. Parents must be notified if a restraint is utilized and a behavior plan must be developed.

There are Quiet Rooms at St. Coletta that are available for students to use if they need to calm themselves. These rooms are unlocked and students are never left alone. Use of the Quiet Room requires that an administrator be notified, an incident report be written and the parent notified and provided a copy of the incident report. St. Coletta policy prohibits the use of mechanical and chemical restraints.

The St. Coletta School Behavior Management Plan **strictly prohibits:**

- Deprivation of drinking water or food necessary to meet daily nutritional needs.
- Denial of the use of toilet facilities.
- Any action humiliating, degrading or abusive.
- Deprivation of health care including counseling.
- Intrusive aversive therapy.
- Use of mechanical restraints, chemical restraints, or seclusion.

Corporal punishment will never be administered by any staff person. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the school will contact Child Protective Services (CPS). Before CPS comes, a parent/guardian must be notified. If the parent/guardian objects, the child will not be interviewed. This does not apply if the parent/guardian is the suspect. In such a case, CPS may interview the child without consent from the parent or guardian.

### **Student Suspension/Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal**

While St. Coletta School is dedicated to serving students with challenging behaviors by providing intensive behavior supports, there may be incidents where suspension is deemed necessary. All cases are determined on a student by student basis and take into consideration their specific circumstances such as cognitive skill level and social awareness. In some situations suspension/disciplinary unenrollment is deemed necessary if the safety of others or the student involved is put at risk. Dependent on the seriousness of the offense and/or danger to others, outside authorities may also be contacted and the Public Charter School Board notified.

St. Coletta School employs the following levels of suspension:

#### **Level I:**

**In School Disciplinary Action:** disciplinary actions to include exclusion from school common areas and required participation in conflict resolution or peer mediation sessions, or similar actions of short duration that do not result in the student's loss of academic instruction time.

#### **OR**

**In-House suspension:** When a student continues to attend school with provisions made to their program that includes 1:1 supervision and suspension of all community outings. Instruction and related services will be conducted in a designated environment separate from the student's classroom.

#### **Level II:**

**Short Term Out of school suspension:** When a student is to remain home for the duration of the suspension to exceed no more than 5 school days. Students in KG through grade 5 cannot be suspended for a period greater than 5 days.

#### **Level III:**

**Long Term Suspension/ Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal:** When a student is suspended out of school for a period of 6 consecutive school days or more (for students in grades 6 through 12 only). Students cannot be suspended for more than 10 consecutive days.

This level of suspension is reported to appropriate school jurisdictions and, by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of suspension or if a disciplinary unenrollment has been recommended, a manifestation determination meeting must be held to determine the relationship of the behavior to the disability

of the student, update or create behavior plans/functional behavior assessments and possibly determine an alternate placement.

**Behaviors Resulting in Suspension include but are not limited to:**

**Level I:**

- \*Fighting
- \*Stealing
- \*Smoking
- \*Intentionally destroying school property
- \*Threatening others with bodily harm
- \*Running away from staff in the community

**Level II:**

- \*Drugs on premises
- \*Alcohol on premises
- \*Possession of a dangerous object
- \*Causing bodily harm to others

**Level III:**

- \*Possession of weapons
- \*Significant aggressive/destructive behavior posing an immediate threat of severe injury to others and/or self

In accordance with the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, no student in grades kindergarten through 5 shall be subject to an out-of school suspension or disciplinary unenrollment, unless a school administrator determines that the student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress, to another person.

**Process for Notification of Suspension:**

Once an infraction has been reported, the student(s) will meet with a school administrator to discuss their side of the incident. Incident reports will be written and submitted to the school administrator by witnesses of the incident.

In the event of a suspension/disciplinary unenrollment recommendation, parents/guardians will be informed immediately via telephone call (see also **Long Term Suspension Due Process Procedures** below). If parents/guardians are unable to be contacted, the student will be sent home with a letter of suspension/disciplinary unenrollment to be signed with a request that the letter be signed and returned. Parents/guardians and/or students, if they are 18 and their own guardian, will also be notified via certified mail and phone of this decision (preferably immediately as noted above), but no later than within 24 hours of the suspension/disciplinary unenrollment. In the case of a short term suspension, parents/guardians or students who are their own guardians will be extended the opportunity to meet with school administrators and can request to appeal the short-term suspension decision. The request for an appeal or a hearing can be made to the Principal or an Assistant Principal. This appeal will be reviewed by the school's discipline committee.

**Long Term Suspension Due Process Procedure**

If a suspension equaling more than six consecutive or cumulative days over the school year occurs, or an disciplinary unenrollment is recommended, then, according to the *Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA)*, a Manifest Determination and placement review IEP meeting must be held. In addition, all disciplinary unenrollment recommendations must be made by the Principal or in their absence, appropriate designee (Assistant Principal) and communicated as required to the St. Coletta Public Charter School Board. A Manifest Determination Meeting, per DCPS and other jurisdictional regulations, will be scheduled within ten days. Further steps taken will be determined by the IEP team at the Manifestation Determination meeting. Parents

and/or students also have the right to have an advocate or attorney present at any Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal hearing or meeting.

The St. Coletta Public Charter School Board reviews all suspensions at each board meeting and can make recommendations regarding policy. Suspensions extending beyond 5 school days and disciplinary unenrollments are also required to be reported to the DC Public Charter School Board. Parents and/or students have the right to appeal any decision to the school's discipline committee or the St. Coletta Public Charter School Board. Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal recommendations will be reported immediately to the St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School Board chairperson and the CEO of St. Coletta of Greater Washington.

**Policy**

St. Coletta must follow the attendance policies of the governing jurisdiction/school district in which a student resides. All students, however, are expected to attend school daily unless the parent/guardian provides a valid reason supporting the student's absence. The school records student attendance daily and historical records are maintained electronically on-site at the school. Homes of absent students are called by office personnel if a parent/guardian does not report their child's absence; however, it is the expectation that the parent inform the school of their child's absence. The reason for each absence or tardiness is documented. Excessive absence and tardiness are causes for concern. Lawful reasons for absences and tardiness include: illness of a student (a doctor's note may be required); death in the student's immediate family; medical appointments; required court appearances; observance of religious holy days; lawful exclusion or expulsion from school by school authorities; temporary closing of school; and other absences approved in advance by the principal upon the written request of a parent or guardian. Vacation time is considered an unexcused absence, and as required by the jurisdiction will be reported as such. If no information is received from the parent/guardian regarding the student's absence, it is marked as unexcused.

**District of Columbia Students**

DC's Compulsory Education and School Attendance law requires youth ages 5 to 17 to be in school. Tracking for in-person attendance will remain consistent with existing regulations. Per DC regulations, for a student to be marked present for the school day, he or she must be present for at least 80% of the day. Students who are tardy or leave early for more than 20% of the day will be counted as absent. The school will indicate whether the student was in school for 100% of the day (present-full), present between 80% and 100% of the school day (partial present), absent for the enter school day (absent- full), or in attendance less than 80% of the school day (absent- partial).

St. Coletta will collect daily attendance for students participating in remote learning as specified within OSSE's attendance collection guidance.

**Maryland Students**

The *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)* requires students ages 5 to 18 to attend school. If a student has 3 unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home alerting the parent of attendance concerns. If a student accrues 5 unexcused absences, an attendance conference will be scheduled with the parent and school social worker. Students who are habitually truant, or miss more than 20% of days within a school year, will be referred to the Department of Juvenile Services.

**Virginia Students**

The Commonwealth of Virginia's Compulsory Attendance Law, Code of Virginia, 22.1-254 requires students ages 5 to 18 to attend school. If a student has 3 unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home alerting the parent of attendance concerns. If a student accrues 5 unexcused absences, an attendance conference will be scheduled with the parent and school social worker. If attendance does not improve, the family will be referred to Juvenile Court.

**Procedures**

The following steps should be followed if a student is to be absent.

- Parents are responsible for communicating their child's absence to the school. Place a call to our student absence line at: (202)350-8680 ext. 1101 or select option #3 when prompted
- If the school does not receive a call from a parent/guardian, our attendance manager will call home to inquire as to the reason for the student's absence from school.
- A written note by the parent/guardian must be received by the school within 5 days upon the student's return to school, as per DC regulations.

- If a student is absent for 4 consecutive days or 10 cumulative days, further documentation, from a doctor or other staff from an agency or organization, may be requested in order to excuse the absence(s).

The following steps will be taken to address truancy as required per DC regulations:

- If a student reaches 3 unexcused absences, a letter is sent home alerting the parent of attendance concerns.
- If a student reaches 4 unexcused absences, the school social worker calls the home to discuss attendance regulations and inform the parent of accrued absences.
- If a student accrues 5 unexcused absences an attendance conference will be scheduled with the parent and school social worker. The purpose of the conference will be to review educational and attendance concerns, develop attendance intervention strategies to ensure the child is in school on a regular basis, and identify local community resources to improve school attendance.
- If a student (ages 5 – 17 years old) accrues 10 unexcused absences, a report of educational neglect will be made to CFSA.
- When a student ages 5-17 accrues 15 unexcused absences, a referral will be made to Court Services Division of the Family Court and to the Juvenile Student Division of OAG.

Valid Reasons for Excused Absences:

- Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for a student absent 3 or more consecutive days or 10 cumulative days in a school year)
- Illness of a child for parenting students (a doctor's note is required for a student absent 3 or more days or 10 cumulative absences in a school year);
- Medical or dental appointments for the student;
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Exclusion by direction of the authorities of the District of Columbia, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons;
- Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding, or court-ordered activity, as a party to the action or under subpoena;
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Absences to allow students to visit their parent who is in the military, immediately before, during, or after deployment;
- College visits or visits to DDA/RSA for students in 9th- 12th grades (up to three cumulative days);
- School visits for students in K through 8th grades (one day);
- Absences of expectant or parenting students for a time period specified by their doctor and any accommodations mandated by law;
- Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day;
- Religious event or celebration outside of a religious holiday (up to five cumulative days);and
- An emergency or other circumstance approved by DCPS or the Principal or St. Coletta School.

The following absences may be excused without written documentation from the parent, as verified by the school:

- Lawful out of school suspension or exclusion by school authorities;
- Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other condition(s) or emergency requiring a school closing or suspension of classes;
- Failure of the District of Columbia to provide transportation in cases where the District of Columbia has a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student; and
- An emergency or other circumstance approved by DCPS.

Any absence that does not meet the criteria of an excused absence or fails to satisfy the documentation

requirement of an excused absence within the allowable timeframe will be classified as an unexcused absence. If a student or parent anticipates an absence not covered by the excused absences listed above, they may submit a request for an excused absence due to a special circumstance to the school principal prior to anticipated date(s) of absence.

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## **Grievance and Complaint Procedures for Parents and Students**

**REV. 9/2020 (reviewed 7/2022)**

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St. Coletta School wants to ensure that there is open communication and a way for all parents and students to express their opinion, provide feedback, have input on the school program, and voice their concerns in a productive manner. We strive to collaboratively work together and resolve complaints so that it best meets the needs of our students and their families.

### **Procedure**

1. The first point of communication would be with the classroom teacher and/or therapist as it relates to daily school activities and programming. The parent/guardian should send in a note in the student's daily communication notebook or email the teacher to schedule a meeting to discuss their concern.
2. If the concern is not resolved at this level, the parent/guardian should contact the assistant principal for their child's age group to schedule a meeting to discuss their concerns. In addition, if the concern regards the immediate health and/or safety of a student, the assistant principal and/or principal may be contacted directly.
3. If the parent/guardian is still not satisfied with the response to their concern, they should call and schedule an appointment with the school principal. The school principal may also be contacted if an assistant principal is not able to be reached and the grievance is concerning a student's immediate health and/or safety.
4. If the concern is related to school policy and/or management, the school principal should be the first point of contact.
5. If all other methods of resolving a grievance have been unsuccessful, the parent/guardian should call to leave a message for the St. Coletta charter school board to schedule a meeting. A message for the charter school board can be left at (202)350-8680 ext. 1001.



**FERPA NOTIFICATION (rev. 6/2022)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is the federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. Schools are required to notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. Upon request, St. Coletta discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for the purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

FERPA grants five rights to parents with respect to their children's scholastic records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, upon reaching the age of 18. These rights are as follows:

- **The right to inspect and review the student's scholastic records** within a reasonable period but not to exceed 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal or assistant principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school principal or other appropriate school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where records may be inspected.
- **The right to request the amendment of a student's scholastic records** that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If St. Coletta 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.
- **The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in a student's scholastic records**, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. For example, FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent to school official whom St. Coletta has determined to have legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by St. Coletta as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; an official of another school system where a student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- **The right to withhold disclosure of directory information.** At its discretion, St. Coletta may disclose basic "directory information" that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy without the consent of parents or eligible students in accordance with the provisions of District law and FERPA. Directory information includes:
  - A. Student Name
  - B. Student Address
  - C. Student Telephone Listing
  - D. Name of Attending School
  - E. Participation in Officially Recognized Activities and Sports
  - F. Student's Date and Place of Birth
  - G. Names of Schools Previously Attended
  - H. Dates of Attendance

If you do not want St. Coletta School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the LEA within two months of your child's enrollment in the school.

- **The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school 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, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20202.



Eligible students and parents of minor students have the right to see their records. In general, parental consent is required for others to access information in a student's records. Below are some circumstances under which consent is not required (See 20 USC §1232g (b)-(j) and 34 C.F.R. §99.31):

- In an emergency " if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals (See 34 C.F.R. §99.36(a));
- Instances of abuse or neglect;
- Mandatory reporting of communicable diseases as required by local and federal requirements;
- Disclosure to "school officials, including teachers, within the agency or institution whom the agency or institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests (§ 99.31.(1)(i)(A));
- Certain legal situations including subpoenas or investigations of criminal offenses.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Catherine Decker  
Director of Admissions  
St. Coletta Special Education PCS



**Policy**

St. Coletta serves students three to twenty-two years of age who are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities, autism or multiple disabilities. They may also have the following secondary disabling conditions: speech/language disorders, vision, hearing, orthopedic, and/or other health impairments. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

**Procedure**

Admission for DC Residents: If a student lives in the District of Columbia, their parent/guardian can apply for admission by completing and submitting an application to the school during the Open Enrollment Period. The admissions office is located at:

St. Coletta School  
1901 Independence Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Once an application is received, the child's name will be added to the lottery pool/waitlist for their age group (with preferences applied, as appropriate). Should any spaces become available during the school year, St. Coletta will offer spaces to applicants as they appear on the lottery pool list. Only applications received prior to the close the Open Enrollment Period will be included in the lottery. Any applications received after the close of the Open Enrollment Period and before the start of the next Open Enrollment Period will be added to St. Coletta's waiting list.

All preference categories shall be identified prior to conducting the lottery. Upon application, families will indicate eligibility for a preference by selecting the appropriate box on the school's application. Families will provide a copy of the student's full-time IEP (with a disability classification of Intellectual Disability, Autism, or Multiple Disabilities) for review if they wish for the school to apply the special education preference for their child. Similarly, the parent will provide reasonable evidence (e.g. birth certificate, financial assistance statements/benefits, etc.) indicating that the child/student listed on the application shares at least one parent/guardian with and lives at the same residence as a currently enrolled student. A sibling preference will only be applied for cases in which a prospective student also qualifies for the special education preference. If a family does not provide documentation upon submission but indicates that they wish for a preference to be considered, the school will make reasonable attempts to obtain the documentation through communication with the family. The

preference will not be applied if the school does not receive evidence that the child/student meets the criteria specified above.

**St. Coletta Public Charter School Lottery Procedure:**

As per DC Public Charter School Law, if operating at full enrollment, selection for admission to the St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School for a new school year will be via a random public lottery system. The enrollment period will be announced in advance. For school year 2023-2024, the open enrollment period will run from November 1, 2022 through April 28, 2023. The lottery for the new school year will be conducted in a public forum at the school, on May 11, 2023. Should the number of available spaces in an age group exceed the number of students meeting the enrollment preference, St. Coletta will first offer any available spaces in each age group to the students that meet criteria for the sibling and special education enrollment preferences (in this order). Remaining spaces within that age group then will be offered to students who do not meet enrollment preference criteria via lottery. Students who do not receive a space through the lottery will remain on the school's wait list until the start of the next open enrollment period in the fall.

If the number of students eligible for an enrollment preference exceeds the number of spaces available in an age group, a lottery will be held to determine which students within the preference group are offered a space. Students meeting the preference criteria who do not receive a space via lottery will remain on the school's wait list until the start of the next open enrollment period. Students who do not meet criteria for sibling or special education preference would not be included in the lottery, however, they would continue to remain on the school's wait list should additional spaces become available.

If a child's name is selected, the family/guardian will be contacted regarding their intent to enroll their child within the school program. Any applicant offered a seat will be required to affirmatively respond to an offer for acceptance in writing within 48 hours. Those applicants not responding within this designated period of time will be removed from the waiting list and be required to reapply should they wish consideration for any future openings. No offer shall be made to any student not properly entitled to the available space.

## **Admissions for Virginia and Maryland Residents:**

If the child is a Virginia or Maryland resident, the IEP process will serve as the vehicle for admission through the local school jurisdiction via a referral process.

1. Referrals shall be considered for admission to St. Coletta from individuals and agencies that are legally responsible for the payment and assurance of services to the individual with a disability. These shall include but are not limited to:
  - local and state education agencies
  - public and private social service agencies
  - programs serving individuals with disabilities
  - advocacy agencies
2. The referring agent shall be responsible for obtaining release of records for forwarding copies of records to include the most recent:
  - Individual Education Plan
  - psychological evaluation
  - medical history and evaluation
  - other school histories and evaluations such as speech/language, occupational and physical therapy
3. After the information is received, the parent/guardian will be contacted for a tour and interview, if appropriate. The student must be present at the interview.
4. Accepted students will receive a school packet of forms to be completed. The assistant principal in conjunction with the Assistant Principal of Admissions and Local Education Agency will set an admissions date.
5. If a student is not appropriate for admissions, the parent/guardian or referring agency will be notified either in writing or via phone communication. Record of non-acceptance will be kept within the school, noting person contacted, date of contact, LEA jurisdiction, and reason for non-acceptance.
6. See attached admissions check-list.

**Policy**

St. Coletta of Greater Washington prohibits discrimination on the basis of a student's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs. All employees applicants, vendors, and SCGW visitors will be treated without regard to race, religion, color, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), material status, parental status, national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political affiliation, military service, or any other factor protected by local, state, or federal law.