

JEFFERSON PARISH SCHOOLS

INTERIM VIRTUAL DISCIPLINE POLICY

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jefferson Parish School System has given families the opportunity to choose from three different instructional models. Families may elect to have their children attend all classes in-person on the school campus (Grades K-8). Students enrolled in the hybrid model attend classes both in-person and virtually (Grades 9-12). Families may also choose to have their children attend all classes virtually (all grades). Students may be required to attend school virtually when schools are closed due to inclement weather or other unanticipated emergencies. The Jefferson Parish School Board adopts this Interim Virtual Discipline Policy in order to clarify expectations for student conduct in the virtual classroom and to provide notice of the possible consequences of inappropriate conduct in the virtual classroom.

Student conduct is governed, at all times, and regardless of the model of instruction, by La. R.S. 17:416 and the Student Code of Conduct, as set forth in the Procedures and Policies for Parents and Students. Conduct that is unacceptable in the physical classroom is, under most circumstances, equally unacceptable in the virtual classroom. While students and parents normally have an expectation of privacy in their home, conduct that occurs in front of a camera, and in view of peers and teachers in the virtual classroom, shall be governed by applicable law and District policy.

The context in which student behavior occurs is important, however, and will be taken into consideration by School and District administrators in determining whether there has been a violation of the Code of Conduct, the severity of the infraction and the appropriate penalty, if any, under the circumstances.

Privacy and The Virtual Classroom

Students and parents, typically, have a reasonable expectation of privacy with regard to what takes place in their home *outside of the view of teachers and peers in the virtual classroom*. In order to ensure that students and teachers are able to work and learn in a safe and orderly virtual environment, it is imperative that students have a quiet, well-lit “classroom” space -- free, to the extent possible, from toys, images, messages, personal property or other items that may distract from teaching and learning.

Students should be cautioned that the virtual classroom is for instruction and for engaging with peers and teachers for educational purposes. Students must not handle or display items, toys, messages, images, or personal property or engage in conduct unrelated to the lessons taking place. Students who engage in conduct in the virtual classroom that violates the Student Code of Conduct as set forth in the Policies and Procedures for Students and Parents and this Interim Virtual Discipline Policy may be subject to discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and this Policy.

School and/or district officials may be required, as mandatory reporters, to alert local law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services if they observe conduct, messages, images, or objects that raise legitimate concern for the safety and well-being of students in the virtual classroom. This may include students handling weapons in the virtual classroom, even if it is subsequently learned that the weapon is a toy or facsimile, as it is not always possible to determine remotely whether the weapon is real or not.

Conduct in the Virtual Classroom

Students are responsible for all content posted through their online account. Students are prohibited from sharing their online account username or password or using the username or password of another student. Students are required to have their computer camera turned on when virtual classes are in session.

Following is a *non-exclusive* list of behaviors that are prohibited in the virtual classroom and that may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct as set forth in the Policies and Procedures for Students and Parents and this Policy:

- Antagonistic, harassing or discriminatory language of any kind with regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender, intelligence, age, orientation, disability, socioeconomic status or any other legally protected characteristic or activity
- Bullying and/or cyberbullying
- Use of obscene, degrading or profane language (written, verbal, pictures, drawings, audio, video)
- Displaying pornography, nudity or images of nudity
- Committing lewd or sexual acts
- Handling or displaying weapons, including toy or facsimile weapons*
- Any criminal or other illegal activity encouraging the unlawful use, possession, manufacture or distribution of tobacco, drugs or alcohol*
- Illegal posting, distribution, upload or download of copyrighted work of any kind
- Sharing assignments, questions/answers or any other action that would violate any expectations or rules relative to academic honesty
- Posting personally identifiable information in any format other than via private message

Consequences of Inappropriate Online Conduct

Parents and students must be aware that conduct that is unacceptable and disruptive in the regular classroom environment is, typically, unacceptable in the virtual classroom. The School Board recognizes, however, that virtual learning is a new experience for students and families, and that the context in which student conduct occurs must be taken into account in determining the appropriate penalty, if any, imposed for violations of the Student Code of Conduct in the virtual classroom.

Student conduct that occurs in the virtual classroom may be subject to progressive discipline which, *depending on the seriousness of the conduct at issue*, will include an initial verbal warning and consultation with the student's parent or guardian, prior to any formal disciplinary action. The seriousness of the conduct at issue will dictate the actions of administrators and the nature of the penalty ultimately imposed. For example, a student may be subject to a severe penalty, even for a first offense, depending on the seriousness of the conduct at issue.

Some factors that administrators will take into account in determining the penalty imposed, if any, for conduct that occurs in the virtual classroom will include:

- Age of the student
- Whether the conduct disrupted learning in the virtual classroom
- Whether the conduct was violent or threatening, in any way
- Whether the conduct was illegal
- Whether the conduct interfered with the rights of teachers and/or students to work and learn in a safe and orderly environment free from inappropriate images, messages, language or behavior
- Whether the student committed prohibited conduct in the past
- Whether the student received prior warnings or discipline for similar conduct

*Conduct in the virtual classroom related to the display or handling of weapons or drugs, or other conduct that raises legitimate concerns about the safety and welfare of a student, must be reported immediately to the School Resource Officer, Director of Safety or Executive Director of Special Programs in order to assess

whether the matter must be reported to local law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

JEFFERSON PARISH SCHOOLS INTERIM VIRTUAL DISCIPLINE POLICY

We hereby acknowledge that we have read and understand the Student Code of Conduct as set forth in the Procedures and Policies for Students and Parents and that we have read and understand this Interim Virtual Discipline Policy.

We understand and agree that

_____ (name of student) will be held accountable for complying with these discipline rules and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the Interim Virtual Discipline Policy for violations thereof.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date