

# **Pontiac Academy for Excellence**

## **School Handbook**

**&**

## **Student Code of Conduct**

**2024-2025**

***“Safety, Respect, Learning and Community”***

**196 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue**

**Pontiac, MI 48342**

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**[www.pontiacacademy.org](http://www.pontiacacademy.org)**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

# **Pontiac Academy for Excellence**

## **Student Handbook**

### **Welcome Letter**

Welcome to Pontiac Academy for Excellence! Thank you for becoming a part of our family! Pontiac Academy for Excellence is working hard to become the highest performing school in the City of Pontiac and soon to be in the State of Michigan. It is for this reason that all families with children in attendance be well informed that we have extremely high expectations for all students.

It is equally important to state that in order for your child to be successful at Pontiac Academic for Excellence, we are going to need your assistance. Below is a list of things that you need to be prepared for:

1. Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences (view school calendar).
2. Assist your child with reading each week day.
3. Establish a set of rules and routines for everyone in the family. Be consistent!
4. Encourage your child to be successful and assist them as needed to reach all goals outlined within our program.
5. Encourage your child to read something each day and, as the parent, read something to them each day.
7. Recognize your child for the goals he/she has accomplished.
8. Be available or arrange for someone to help your child when needed.
9. Communicate with the school and your child's teachers on an ongoing basis. This includes updating the school office(s) with current phone numbers and email addresses.
10. As the parent, you are responsible for partnering with the district in being actively involved in, and assuming responsibility for your child's education.

Welcome to Pontiac Academy for Excellence!

## **Pontiac Academy for Excellence District Vision Statement**

We envision a school district where students are champions of excellence in learning and life, and are supported by highly qualified administration and faculty, involved parents and an invested community, who show their dedication to educational success through their own high moral and professional standards.

## **Pontiac Academy for Excellence District Mission Statement**

To provide students and families a safe, nurturing and challenging educational experience that will foster the strength of character necessary to succeed in career and life.

## **Pontiac Academy for Excellence District Belief Statements**

We believe that all students will learn in an environment that educates the whole child, centered on the district's Pillars of Excellence and values, which include:

### *Pillars of Excellence*

**Safety:** Ensuring that staff and students remain safe from all verbal, physical and emotional harm so that hearts and minds can be open to learning.

**Respect:** For each other, the rules and the educational process.

**Learning:** Choosing to put education first.

**Community:** Beyond the books, caring for and supporting each other.

### ***Values***

**Hard work:** Expecting to achieve excellence equal only to the effort given.

**Parent involvement:** Encouraging and giving every opportunity for parents to be aware of and active in their child's educational experience.

**Stability:** Providing a structured, consistent environment that students and families can depend on.

**Trust:** Developing open, honest relationships between administration, teachers, parents and students.

**Relationships:** Being more than simply teachers; offering compassion, guidance and resources to students, their families and the entire community.

**Responsibility:** Owning up to mistakes and talking out conflict to elevate maturity and encourage growth.

**Opportunity:** Connecting our students and their families with a path toward a successful future, through academics and resources at OLHSA, a Community Action Agency.

**Diversity:** Honoring the special perspective that each unique life experience brings to education.

#### **A. Pontiac Academy for Excellence School Board Meeting Dates**

The Pontiac Academy for Excellence School Board of Education meets the second Tuesday of each month. The scheduled times for Board Meetings are 4:00 p.m. unless otherwise posted.

*Special note: If, for any reason, such dates are rescheduled, information will be posted in the lobby area and main office of Pontiac Academy for Excellence.*

#### **B. Pontiac Academy for Excellence School Board Charter Statement**

Pontiac Academy for Excellence's objective is to involve the community, parents and other stakeholders in the life of the students by forming integral partnerships that will assist in the planning, development and implementation of educational programs.

Pontiac Academy for Excellence will explore and facilitate different learning styles (i.e., visual, auditory, hands-on) to meet the needs of every child in attendance. Pontiac Academy for Excellence will develop partnerships with our community. These partnerships will include family support and community outreach programs through OLHSA to assist families in need. We will also work with various community businesses and/or organizations to provide positive educational resources for our students and parents.

Pontiac Academy for Excellence will develop an Inclusive Special Education program to assist students with special needs. These services will include modified classroom instruction and individual professional assistance as needed and outlined within the students Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Teaching and learning at Pontiac Academy for Excellence will be achieved through cooperative partnerships established by administration, teachers, parents and students. Pontiac Academy for Excellence school curriculum emphasizes active participation through hands-on learning.

Pontiac Academy for Excellence's vision is centered on building the lives of the youth by not giving the child a tool or skill, but rather nurturing the tools and skills within the child. Students will be more self-sufficient through learning to be responsible for their education and develop leadership skills to improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their future families.

### **C. Handbook Responsibilities for Parents and Students**

Parents and students are responsible for the information, policies and procedures outlined within the Student/Parent Handbook. Lack of knowledge of such policies and procedures will not excuse any violations.

### **D. School Hours**

#### **Monday-Friday; Regular School Hours:**

8:30 a.m. – 3:20 p.m. (Class in session for Grades K-12)

#### **Friday School Hours:**

8:30 a.m. - 2:20 p.m. (Class in session for Grades K-5)

8:30 a.m. - 2:20 p.m. (Class in session for 6-12)

#### **Breakfast**

7:50 am– 8:20 am

Grades K-5 will be served in the first floor cafeteria (1st floor)

Grades 6-8 will be served in the first floor cafeteria (1st Floor)

Grades 9-12 will be served in the second floor cafeteria (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

### **E. Admittance to the Building**

All students must enter the building through designated doors (Elementary/Middle School - Building C & High School - Building D).

**Students are not to enter the school more than fifteen (15) minutes before their program begins and are to leave within ten (10) minutes after the end of their program unless they show legitimate cause (athletic activities, school events, etc.) for arriving earlier or remaining longer.**

**Students are not to leave the school building during the school day. They must follow their complete schedule. School administrators must approve exceptions to this rule. Students will also need proper authorization to re-enter the school building.**

#### **Parents/Visitors**

Upon arrival parents/visitors must enter into Building C and check in with the Security Desk. They will then proceed to the Office. Visits to classrooms are not permitted during the school day unless you have made prior arrangements with the teacher. Please schedule appointments with the teacher during their prep time when they are not teaching.

### **F. School Calendars**

School Calendars are available in each school's main offices, and are posted on the district's website ([www.pontiac.academy.org](http://www.pontiac.academy.org)). Items and events on the school calendar are subject to change and will be announced if changed. Parents and students are responsible for the information outlined within the school calendar.



## **1. Field Trips and School Sponsored Events**

Pontiac Academy for Excellence sponsors several academic and social awareness field trips throughout the school year. It is our goal to ensure that all students participate in such activities. Students that are on a suspension during the time of a scheduled field trip or event may not participate in any field trips/school sponsored events. Students receiving a suspension just before an event will be placed in a classroom inside the school to focus on the grade level academics for the duration of the field trip. Parents will be notified in advance of such activities. Please note that there may be costs and fees associated with activities if they choose to attend. Parents are asked to be involved and attend field trips whenever possible. Parents may also have to absorb the cost of such activities if they choose to attend. Parent chaperones that bring children who are not students of Pontiac Academy for Excellence are not permitted to ride school transportation. Parents who bring additional children on the field trip will be responsible for paying the cost of each additional child who attends. Based on a student's behavior record, that child's parent may be required to attend the field trip for the student to participate. Parents interested in chaperoning a field trip or a school-sponsored event may be asked to provide information to the school and are subject to a background check. As representatives of Pontiac Academy for Excellence, students are expected to dress in school uniforms, unless otherwise approved by the principal. Parents interested in chaperoning a field trip are expected to dress appropriately as well. Students who wish to attend/participate in a school event or activity must be present for a full instructional day on the day of the event/activity. This includes, but is not limited to, after school athletic events.

## **2. End of Year Awards Assembly**

At the end of each school year, the staff of Pontiac Academy for Excellence holds Awards Assemblies for students. It is our effort to recognize as many students as possible. Parents and students will be informed prior to such assemblies.

## **3. Graduation/Promotion Ceremonies (Kindergarten, 5th, 8th & 12th Grades)**

Parents and students are responsible for purchasing a cap and gown for Graduation/Promotion Ceremony. Parents will receive advanced notice regarding any additional graduation/promotion ceremony activities that require parent/student funding.

## **G. Student Application, Registration & Enrollment Process**

All students seeking entry to Pontiac Academy for Excellence must go through the registration process. Applications and registration information may be picked up in the School Office. Please be advised that all required paperwork must be completed prior to enrollment.

A student who has been suspended or expelled by another public school may be denied admission to Pontiac Academy for Excellence. Even if that student would otherwise be entitled to attend school in the local school district. Prior to denying admission, however, the building principal may offer the student an opportunity for a meeting to review the circumstances of the suspension, expulsion, and any other factors.

## **H. Cafeteria/Lunch Program**

Students are allowed to bring their own lunches. Pontiac Academy for Excellence sponsors a districtwide free breakfast and lunch program. In order for students to participate, a lunch form is required by the State of Michigan for all students. Lunch forms are available from the lunchroom managers or the school office(s). Food is not allowed out of the cafeteria, unless it has been prearranged and approved by the Office. No exceptions will be made.

Parents are not allowed to deliver/drop-off food for students during the school day.

All students attending Pontiac Academy for Excellence are required to have lunch on campus. Any students found off campus will be

subject to disciplinary actions, detention, community services, long-term suspension and/or expulsion.

No birthday celebrations are allowed during instructional hours. Birthday celebrations must be conducted during the students specific lunch period.

## **I. Cafeteria Rules**

1. Respect the lunchroom staff
2. Use inside voices
3. No throwing food
4. Clean up after yourself
5. Prior to leaving your seat, you must receive permission from the appropriate staff members
6. Keep your hands to yourself
7. No combing hair
8. Food is not to be taken out of the lunchroom
9. No spitting
10. No gum chewing
11. Students must receive one complete meal.

## **J. Safety Drills Fire, Tornado, Lockdown & Evacuation Drills**

Fire, Tornado, Lockdown & Evacuation drills are required of all public learning environments. All students attending Pontiac Academy for Excellence are required to participate in such drills. Students that refuse to participate in and/or disrupt these drills will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **K. False Fire Alarms and Bomb Threats**

Any student that participates in falsely pulling fire alarm emergency systems on school property is subject to the discipline code. Anyone participating in making a bomb threat is subject to the discipline code. Please note that such actions are in violation of local, state and federal law and are subject to being prosecuted in a court of law.

## **L. Weather and School Closings**

During the winter months, severe weather may occur. In the event that conditions are determined to be unsafe for students, a decision to close school is made by 6:00 a.m. Should severe conditions occur after classes are in session; our general policy will be to keep students in the building. If a School Closing Emergency situation goes into effect during school hours, the school will release students to parents, guardians, or contact persons on the emergency contact list. Cancellations, delays and closings will be announced to parents by email, robo calls and text messages through our School Messenger system. Parents should keep cell phone numbers and preferred email addresses up to date in the school office(s) to ensure that these alerts and notifications can be delivered. These announcements will also be made on selected radio and television stations during regular news programs. Pontiac Academy for Excellence does not control the time closing announcements may be broadcast via these systems.

## **M. Early Dismissals**

No student will be allowed to leave Pontiac Academy for Excellence prior to dismissal time without a written request signed by the parent/legal guardian, or an emergency contact, provided by the parent/legal guardian, which is on file. Also, the parent/legal guardian may come to the office to verbally request the student's release. No student will be released to a person other than the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian. Parents are expected to refrain from interrupting classroom-learning time.

#### **N. Medications**

If it is necessary for a child to take prescribed medication or over-the-counter medication during school hours, an authorization form with instructions must be completed and signed by the physician and/ or parent and returned to the school office. These forms are available in the school office. Students must not transport medicine to and from school. Parents must bring medications into the office. No medications are allowed in the classrooms or in student lockers at any time.

#### **O. Immunizations**

Students must be current with all immunizations, as required by law, or have an authorized waiver from the state. If a student does not have the necessary shots or waivers, the building principal may need to remove the student or require compliance within a set deadline. This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with state law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the building level main offices.

#### **P. Control of Casual-Contact Communicable Diseases and Pests**

Because a school has a high concentration of people, it is necessary to take specific measures when the health or safety of the group is at risk. Pontiac Academy for Excellence's professional staff has the authority to remove or isolate a student who is, or has been ill or has been exposed to a communicable disease or highly transient pests, such as lice.

#### **Q. Possessions/Lost and Found**

Clothing, footwear, personal books, lunch boxes, etc., should be marked with the student's first and last name. This is especially important in the primary grades, as many children have identical clothing and boots. There are lost and found boxes located in or near each school office. Please check or ask your child to look there if an item is lost. Students are requested not to bring items of value to school. Pontiac Academy for Excellence is not responsible for their safekeeping and not liable for loss or damage to personal valuables.

#### **R. Transfer from Pontiac Academy for Excellence**

Parents/guardians must complete and submit a withdrawal request form to the school office, to notify the Principal about any plans to transfer their student to another school. The transfer will be completed only after the student has completed the arrangements, returned all Pontiac Academy for Excellence's materials and paid any fees or fines that are due. Pontiac Academy for Excellence's records may not be released if the transfer is not properly completed.

#### **S. School Scheduled Conferences**

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled two times per school year. All parents are expected to participate in each conference to discuss their child's academic and behavioral progression.

## **T. Individual Conference Times**

Any parents or guardians requesting individual conference time are asked to communicate such needs to the classroom teacher. Teachers have a scheduled planning time during the school day, and parents are requested to make appointments with teachers during this time, or at another time agreed upon by the teacher before or after school.

## **II. ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS**

### **A. Introduction**

Michigan Law places responsibility on each student to attend school on a daily basis, and on each parent/legal guardian to send their children to school, for a full day of instruction, on a daily basis. Regular attendance in class is of vital importance if a student is to succeed in school. Absences will negatively impact students' learning progression and should be avoided. All students are expected to be in school every day and arrive on time for each class. Any student age fifteen (15) and younger with absences of 20 days or more may be subjected to court action regarding school compulsory laws.

It is believed that the major responsibility for regular attendance lies with the student and his/her parent/guardian. Staff persons have the responsibility to assist parents/guardians and students in achieving the goal of good attendance.

Parents will be notified once a day of a student's unexcused absence by phone, email and text message through our School Messenger system. NOTE: Parents should keep cell phone numbers and preferred email addresses up to date in the school office(s).

### **B. Attendance Policy**

Per *Oakland County's Early Truancy Intervention Protocol* (2008):

“There are three ways in which the Prosecutor's Office and the courts can become involved. First, the Compulsory School Attendance law requires that “every parent, guardian, or other person in this state having control and charge of a child from the age of six to the child's sixteenth birthday, shall send that child to public schools during the entire school year. The child's attendance shall be continuous and consecutive.” MCL 380.1561(1) A parent or other person in a parental relation who fails to comply with this compulsory school attendance law is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail, a fine of up to \$50.00 or both. MCL 380.1599. These “compulsory school attendance” cases are handled in District Court.

Second, the Probate Code gives the Family Court jurisdiction over children and their parents where a parent or other person legally responsible for the care and maintenance of children under the age of 18, “when able to do so, neglects or refuses to provide property necessary education. . . .” MCL 712A.2(b)(1). This is considered “educational neglect” and the case is brought against the parents of the child.

Third, the Probate Code also gives the Family Court jurisdiction over children and their parents when a child “willfully and repeatedly absents himself or herself from school or other learning program intended to meet the child's educational needs. . . .”

Under the truancy protocol, Oakland Schools and the Prosecutor's Office consider 10 days absent and/or tardy a potential truancy concern.”

#### **1. Tardy/Early Dismissal Policy**

To provide students of Pontiac Academy for Excellence an opportunity to master the content outlined in the district-approved curriculum, students must be in attendance at school for the full instructional day. Students who chronically arrive after the start of the instructional day and/or dismissed prior to the end of the instructional day are placed at a disadvantage to master the content standards.

To protect the integrity of the full school day, and maximize the mastery of the content taught, the following policy on unexcused tardies and early dismissals will be enforced:

The instructional day begins at 8:30 a.m. each day.

Students who arrive at school after 8:30 a.m., without a valid excuse and/or documentation, will be marked **tardy**.

The instructional day ends at 3:20 p.m. Monday through Thursday

The instructional day ends at 2:00 p.m. Friday for elementary and 2:20 for middle and high school

Students who leave school prior to the scheduled end of the school day will be marked as an **unexcused absence**.

All tardies and early dismissals referenced in this policy will be treated as **unexcused**.

An accumulation of three (3) unexcused tardies and/or unexcused early dismissals will result in a one (1) day unexcused absence. After ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year, the school will consider the matter to be a truancy concern. *In addition to the matter being considered a truancy concern, please be advised that any student missing more than 20 school days may be at risk for retention, and may be required to attend after-school tutorial sessions until grades are brought up to a satisfactory level.*

## **2. Supportive Services**

**Truancy** from school and/or class results in supportive services being provided by the school. These supportive services may include one or more of the following:

1. When a student accumulates 3 unexcused absences in a school year, the parent will receive a phone call from the school office, notifying them of the current accumulation of absences and reminder of the attendance policies.
2. When a student accumulates 6 unexcused absences in a school year, the parent will be required to attend a conference with the home/school liaison and/or parent liaison, will be presented with a corrective action plan to address the attendance issue, and will receive a letter via mail, following-up on the discussion and previously-implemented interventions.
3. When a student accumulates 9 unexcused absences in a school year, the parent will be required to attend a conference with the principal, home/school liaison and/or parent liaison to review the corrective action plan, and to receive formal notice that any additional unexcused absences will result in the school considering the matter to be a truancy concern, resulting in formal communication with the county's truancy office. The parent will also receive a formal letter via mail, following-up on the discussion and previously-implemented interventions.
4. When a student accumulates 10 or more absences, the school will complete the process outlined by Oakland County regarding truancy referrals, turning the matter over to the county's truancy office.

## **C. Responsibilities**

### **1. Students**

- Attend all classes on time each day.
- Follow school attendance procedures.
- Present proper excusals in writing for all absences.
- Be responsible for requesting make-up assignments for excused absences within one (1) day of return to school.
- Confer with parents and school staff regarding personal concerns due to absences.

### **2. Parent/Guardians**

- Be responsible for the student's regular attendance.
- Parents should keep cell phone numbers and preferred email addresses up to date in the school office(s) to ensure proper notifications and alerts via School Messenger.

- Notify the school when the student is absent.
- Contact the school on a regular basis about the student's attendance and academic progress.
- Be responsible for requesting make-up assignments for excused absences within one (1) day of return to school.
- Cooperate with and support the school in enforcing the attendance rules and regulations, per the State of Michigan, Oakland County, and the school district.

Students of Pontiac Academy for Excellence are guaranteed the right to a public education. The United States Supreme Court has held that a student may not be deprived of this right to a public education without adherence to procedural due process. It is the responsibility of Pontiac Academy for Excellence Board of Education and its staff to ensure that no student is arbitrarily denied the right to an education. It is the responsibility of each student and parent to attend school.

### **III. SCHOOL JURISDICTION**

The Student Code of Conduct provides that offenses are prohibited by this policy whenever they occur on school grounds, on school buses, during school-sponsored field trips, when connected with school related events and activities and when students are en route to or from school. Each off-premise incident must be treated individually. Specific consideration will be given, for example, when the incident involves the student's proximity to the school, the length of time elapsed since the student was on school premises, whether there is a connection to an on-premise altercation or confrontation, whether the student stopped at a restaurant or store on the way home, and whether the student has returned to the custody of his/her parents. Students are advised that all staff employed by the School District of the City of Pontiac are required to function in accordance with this Code.\*\* Thus, whenever an employee discovers a student engaging in unacceptable conduct, the employee is required to take prompt action. Prompt action may include directly addressing the student, seeking the assistance of other staff persons, and/or reporting the incident to an administrator.

\*\* This Code is written in accordance with the Michigan Revised School Code and Federal Regulations. This Code will be reviewed and updated whenever regulations affecting the behavior of students are revised.

It is the responsibility of all students, staff and their parents to become familiar with the Student Code of Conduct. The responsibility lies with the Pontiac Academy for Excellence School District to inform parents of the contents of the Student Code of Conduct. When students engage in unacceptable conduct, they will be subject to disciplinary action. In all instances, disciplinary measures shall be administered so as to correct the behavior of the student.

## **IV. DELEGATION**

### **A. Board of Education/Superintendent/Designee**

The Board of Education and the Superintendent/Designee have the authority to develop administrative rules, regulations and procedures necessary for the implementation of this Code and for the administration of student rights, responsibilities, discipline and attendance within the District.

The regulations related to student rights, due process procedures, or appeal procedures are provided within this document. The Student Code of Conduct Handbook for School Administrators shall be available for review by staff, students and parents in each school office.

### **B. Principals**

The school principal, or other administrator assigned responsibility for an educational facility may develop supplementary administrative rules, regulations, and procedures necessary to implement this Code and the Board and Superintendent's regulations. However, such additional regulations may neither substitute for nor negate any policy or regulation of the Board or Superintendent.

## **V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others.
- Behave in a responsible manner.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Appear well-groomed and dressed appropriately, in the assigned school uniform.
- Obey all district and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of faculty, staff and guests of the district.
- Respect the property of others, including district property and facilities.
- Cooperate with or assist the staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **A. Participation**

Students have the responsibility of fully participating in the learning process. Students must report to school and to all scheduled classes on time with appropriate supplies required to work. Students are expected to contribute to the learning environment, complete assignments to the best of their ability and request help when it is needed.

### **B. Behavior**

Students have the responsibility to reasonably avoid any behavior that impedes their own or other students' educational goals. Students must cooperate in taking reasonable care of books, other instructional materials, technology, and encourage a climate where learning is cherished. Most particularly, students must refrain from engaging in behavior that violates the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **C. Respect for Staff**

Students have the responsibility of showing respect for the knowledge and the authority of school staff. Students must obey reasonable directions, use only acceptable and courteous language, and avoid actions that show contempt, and appeal decisions through the channels as described in the Student Code of Conduct. Students are protected under Michigan Law from the use of unlawful corporal punishment by staff.

### **D. Respect for Students**

Students have the responsibility of showing respect for the rights and human dignity of fellow students. For example, students must refrain from name-calling, horse-playing, fighting, bullying, harassment, belittling or engaging in deliberate attempts to embarrass, intimidate, or harm another student.

## **VI. STUDENT RIGHTS**

### **A. The Fair Administration of Discipline**

The Pontiac Academy for Excellence Board of Education has the authority to adopt policy and the Superintendent/Designee does not discriminate in disciplinary actions, nor deny benefits to or exclude participation of any person in its programs, activities or employment on the basis of race, gender, color, national origin, creed, religion, disability or any other basis prohibited by law.

### **B. The Right to Not Be Discriminated Against or Harassed While on School Property**

While on school property and or involved in school sanctioned activities, students retain all rights provided by local, state and federal law; including, but not limited to, the right to not be discriminated against, or harassed on the basis of their race, gender, color, national origin, creed, religion, disability or any other basis prohibited by law.

Students shall not be subjected to any inappropriate or unwanted touching by other students, staff or other persons.

### **C. Guidelines for Make-Up Work**

In certain circumstances outlined below, students who are removed from a class or school will be allowed to receive make-up work. Make-up work information will be provided to the parents by the principal/designee; however, the parents must request the work through the person identified by the principal in the letter sent to the parents with the notification of the disciplinary action. Parents are responsible for picking up assignments and returning the completed work for grading. Assignments must be completed and returned before new assignments are issued. Parents must receive graded assignments as an indication that the assignment is completed. Full credit for assignments may not always be given.

1. Students will be given the opportunity to make up missed academic coursework assignments during a **Short-Term Suspension**. A student who remains out of school past the 1-10 days of Short-Term Suspension, **WILL NOT** be allowed to make up work beyond the actual suspension dates. All make-up work must be completed within three (3) days of the student's readmission to school.
2. Students may be allowed to make up all missed academic coursework assignments, with the possible exception of projects (at the teacher's discretion). If a project or assignment cannot be made up, a teacher will assign an alternative assignment for credit recovery.
3. A student recommended by the principal for an **Expulsion** is entitled to make up work until the student's placement is completed.
4. A student charged with an offense which may result in a **Long-Term Suspension** is entitled to make-up work prior to, and throughout the long-term suspension, while the student remains enrolled in the district.
5. A student charged with an **Expulsion** offense is entitled to make-up work until a final decision is made by the Pontiac Academy for Excellence School Board.
6. Students are entitled to take required examinations at a specified and approved location by the principal, when an incident that requires disciplinary action occurs.
7. Students are not entitled to make up academic coursework missed during absences due to truancy.



## **D. The Rights to Freedom of Expression**

### **1. Expression of Beliefs and Opinions**

Students have the right to express their beliefs and opinions on issues orally, symbolically and through publication, so long as such expression is made in a reasonable manner. However, freedom of expression does not include engaging in libelous, obscene or personal attacks on individuals and groups; defamation of character; commercial solicitations; or the distribution of materials of a racial, ethnic, sexual or religious nature, that are likely to result in disruption; nor materials that otherwise endanger the health and safety of people or threaten to disrupt the educational process. Furthermore, written expressions must bear the name of the circulator.

Students have the right to disagree. The exercise of the right to disagree must not infringe in any way upon the rights of others. The right to disagree does not include participation in student sit-ins, assemblies not authorized by the principal or the obstruction of halls and stairways, building entrants and exits pathway. Students have the right to petition to seek redress of grievances or to express dissatisfaction with policies affecting them. The Superintendent/Designee will establish procedures for such grievances. These procedures must be published and followed so that orderly process will result.

### **2. Student Dress**

The Pontiac Academy for Excellence School Dress Code was adopted to provide students with an educational environment that is conducive to the learning process. The District retains the right to monitor student attire and take corrective action when such distractions, in the sole judgment of the District, present a health, safety hazard, or disrupt the classroom settings.

Whether or not a student is dressed appropriately or properly groomed shall be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. A student whose clothing or apparel violates the dress code may be removed from class for the day or until the dress code violation is corrected.

#### **a. APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR MIDDLE/HIGH STUDENTS:**

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children are in uniform daily. Parents will be notified if students are not in compliance. Pontiac Academy for Excellence students are expected to come to school every day in the dress code as stated in this handbook. Students coming to school out of the dress code will be sent to the school office to call parents to bring them clothes that meet the dress code. Violating the dress code policy is an identified disciplinary infraction, and this infraction will be tracked and accounted for in the school's student database. Students who are in chronic violation may be subject to further disciplinary consequences. Any questions regarding this policy may be directed to the school office. The dress code is effective starting the first day of school.

All students are expected to exemplify proper grooming standards in a manner that projects an appropriate image for the student, school, and district. Young men are expected to have their shirts tucked inside slacks. At all times, all students must wear belts.

The District does not require specific brands of clothing. All clothing items must be of an approved color from the common color selections presented in this dress code policy. Parents will be notified in advance of any dress down days. Students are not allowed at any time to dress down for special occasions (example: birthday, early dismissal, holiday, etc.), nor are they permitted to change into clothes that are not aligned with the school's dress code, while on school grounds at any time, unless issued approval by the building principal.

## **b. INAPPROPRIATE DRESS FOR STUDENTS:**

- Dresses, skirts, and skorts may not be shorter than at the knee or below.
- Clothing that is either revealing or provocative, showing the abdomen region or cleavage, T-shirts or halter tops, biker pants, or pants allowed to sag below the waistline or are excessively tight, including leggings, jeggings, tights, and yoga pants.
- Bedtime attire such as pajamas, or undershirts or undergarments as outerwear is prohibited.
- Students' clothing or tattoos may not have printed statements or pictures on either that are related to the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or sex, or that promote hate and/or violence or signify gang affiliations.
- Uniform tops may not have designer logos appearing on them.
- Attire that may be considered weapons, including but not limited to chain belts or wallet chains.
- Earrings – only stud earrings are allowed, for girls; **male students are not allowed earrings on campus.**
- Dangling jewelry, including chain necklaces with pendants that are larger than the size of a quarter, are prohibited.
- Jewelry or similar artifacts that are obscene or may cause disruptions to the educational environment is prohibited.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, or do-rags, except headwear worn for legitimate religious purposes.
- Flip-flops, sandals, house slippers, steel-toe-shoes or boots, or any other type of footwear that could constitute a safety hazard is prohibited.
- Hair rollers, hair curlers, head scarfs, bonnets, plastic hair bags, hairnets, sweat bands and skullcaps.
- Unless given permission by the building principal, students must keep purses and backpacks in their assigned lockers throughout the course of the instructional day.
- Solid black or white stockings/tights are permitted; fishnet and/or other decorative/revealing leg garments are prohibited.

## **3. Elementary School (Kindergarten-5th grades)**

- Tops
  - Yellow, white, black, and burgundy polo-style shirt
  - Solid color, plain undershirts (as needed)
  - Black, **solid color**, pull-over or cardigan sweaters may be worn over the polo style shirt. **No hooded sweatshirts or hooded sweaters are permitted.**
- Bottoms
  - Black, bottoms, and khaki dress pants, skirts, or jumpers (skirts and jumpers must be at least knee-length)
- Shoes
  - **Solid** black dress shoes or **solid** black athletic shoes
- Belts
  - **Solid** black belts are required of all students

\*All male students are expected to have their shirts tucked in through the entirety of each instructional day.

## **4. Secondary School Uniforms (8th - 12th grades)**

- Tops
  - Gentlemen—White buttoned-down dress shirt with collar and tie
  - Ladies—White buttoned-down blouses with collar
  - Yellow, white, black, and burgundy polo-style shirt
  - Solid black or white, plain undershirts (as needed)
  - **Black, solid color, pull-over or cardigan sweaters may be worn over the button-down dress shirt/blouse. No hooded sweatshirts or hooded sweaters are permitted.**
  - School-Issued Pontiac Academy for Excellence High School blazers (for seniors only)
- Bottoms
  - Solid black dress pants, or skirts (skirts must be at least knee-length)
- Shoes
  - Solid black dress shoes or solid black athletic shoes
  - Solid black or white socks; no designs or logos appearing on socks
- Belts
  - Solid black belts are required of all students

- Hair Accessories
    - Solid black or white headbands only
- \*All male students are expected to have their shirts tucked in through the entirety of each instructional day.

## **5. Student Identification Cards Grades 6-12**

As an expectation of the schools' uniform policies, all students in attendance are required to maintain a visual student I.D. card while on campus. If for any reason the cards are lost, stolen, misplaced and/or vandalized, the cards are to be replaced at student/parent expense. Students are required to wear student ID cards on campus and at other events. No student is allowed to wear someone else's badge at any time. The cost for a replacement card is \$3.00.

## **6. Request for Exemption from Dress Code**

A parent or guardian of a student may request the student be exempted from the mandatory dress code requirement on the basis of a religious objection or medical condition.

## **E. Freedom from Unreasonable Searches and Seizures**

Students have rights, which have been established and guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution protecting their right of privacy of their person and freedom from the unreasonable search and seizure of property.

A signed receipt shall be provided to students of all items seized.

The school district may conduct reasonable searches and seizures such as the following:

### **1. Search of Lockers, Desks and Other Assigned Spaces**

Property assigned to a student by the school district remains the property of the district and under joint control of the school district. Lockers, desks and other spaces assigned to or used by a student are subject to search if the school administration has a reasonable suspicion that the locker, desk or other space contains materials which are illegal or violate school rules.

Searches of such spaces shall be conducted with at least two (2) school staff members present. The school district retains the right to search regardless of whether the student has given consent or is present for the search.

Except in the case of an emergency as described below, students will be permitted to be present when school spaces are searched by school personnel.

The school district retains the right to search in emergency situations such as a bomb threat or a reasonable suspicion that a weapon or dangerous materials are on the premises. In the event of such a clearly defined emergency, the principal or designee has the right to enter school property assigned to or used by the student. After the search has been completed, the student should be notified of such action as soon as possible.

In order to conduct a search, there must be reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is either in possession of an illegal or prohibited article as defined by this Code or applicable laws, or using the locker, desk or other property in violation of school policy or regulation.

### **2. Random Searches**

At various unannounced times, a principal or designee may conduct a random search of a student's backpack, or any other similar accessory (duffel bags, purses, briefcases, etc.) that a student may carry with them into school. The search will be conducted in the presence of the student and another staff member.

At various unannounced times, a principal or designee may conduct a random search of a student's locker. Searches will be conducted in accordance with the procedure listed above for suspicious searches.

### 3. Personal Searches of Students and their Property

The principal/designee may conduct personal searches of students and searches of student property brought onto school grounds whenever there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of an article which is illegal or prohibited under this Code of school rules.

The principal/designee is authorized to seize any items found during a search, which are illegal or which violate the Code or regulations. **Items seized, which are not illegal but violate this Code or school rules, should be returned to the student's parents within ten (10) school days. Searches can include asking students to present illegal or prohibited articles, requesting a student to empty his/her pockets, and search for clothing or personal property.**

Pat-down searches can be conducted but must be limited to searches for illegal items. Whenever possible, pat-down searches should be conducted out of the presence of other students. Pat-down searches must be conducted by a person of the same gender as the student and in the presence of a second staff member.

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of dangerous items that can do bodily harm and the student refuses to permit a search, the student should be detained by administrative staff, reported to the police and suspended on an emergency basis.

No strip searches shall be conducted by school personnel. If the school personnel has a reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of an illegal, dangerous item that can do bodily harm, which cannot be obtained without use of a strip search, the student should be detained by administrative staff, reported to the police, and suspended on an emergency basis.

### 4. Students Rights when Questioned by the Police

Principals are authorized to permit police officers and identified representatives from the court to interview pupils on official business. Students may be searched or arrested when such action is authorized by a warrant or otherwise permitted by law.

When considered appropriate, such interviews shall be conducted in the presence of the principal or a designee. The principal or designee will inform parents of this questioning and, whenever possible, they may be present.

Principals are authorized to permit police officers and identified representatives from the court to interview pupils on official business. Students may be searched or arrested when such action is authorized by a warrant or otherwise permitted by law.

Students of Pontiac Academy for Excellence Schools have the right to learn, and no student has the right to disrupt the learning activities. Students may not endanger or threaten to endanger the safety of others, damage property or impede the orderly conduct of the school program while at school, at a school related activity, on a school bus or en route to or from school. In all regards, the best interest of the child should be a priority when disciplinary action is considered. Appropriate corrective discipline should be administered in accordance with the severity of the offense.

Gang-like activity is typically identified by law enforcement as an ongoing organization, association or group of three or more individuals who:

- Use a common identifying name, sign or symbol;
- Have a high rate of interaction among themselves to the exclusion of others; and
- Are frequently involved in anti-social, delinquent or criminal activity.

## **VII. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

**The information on the following pages is important! Please make certain that you read and understand the Student Code of Conduct section.**

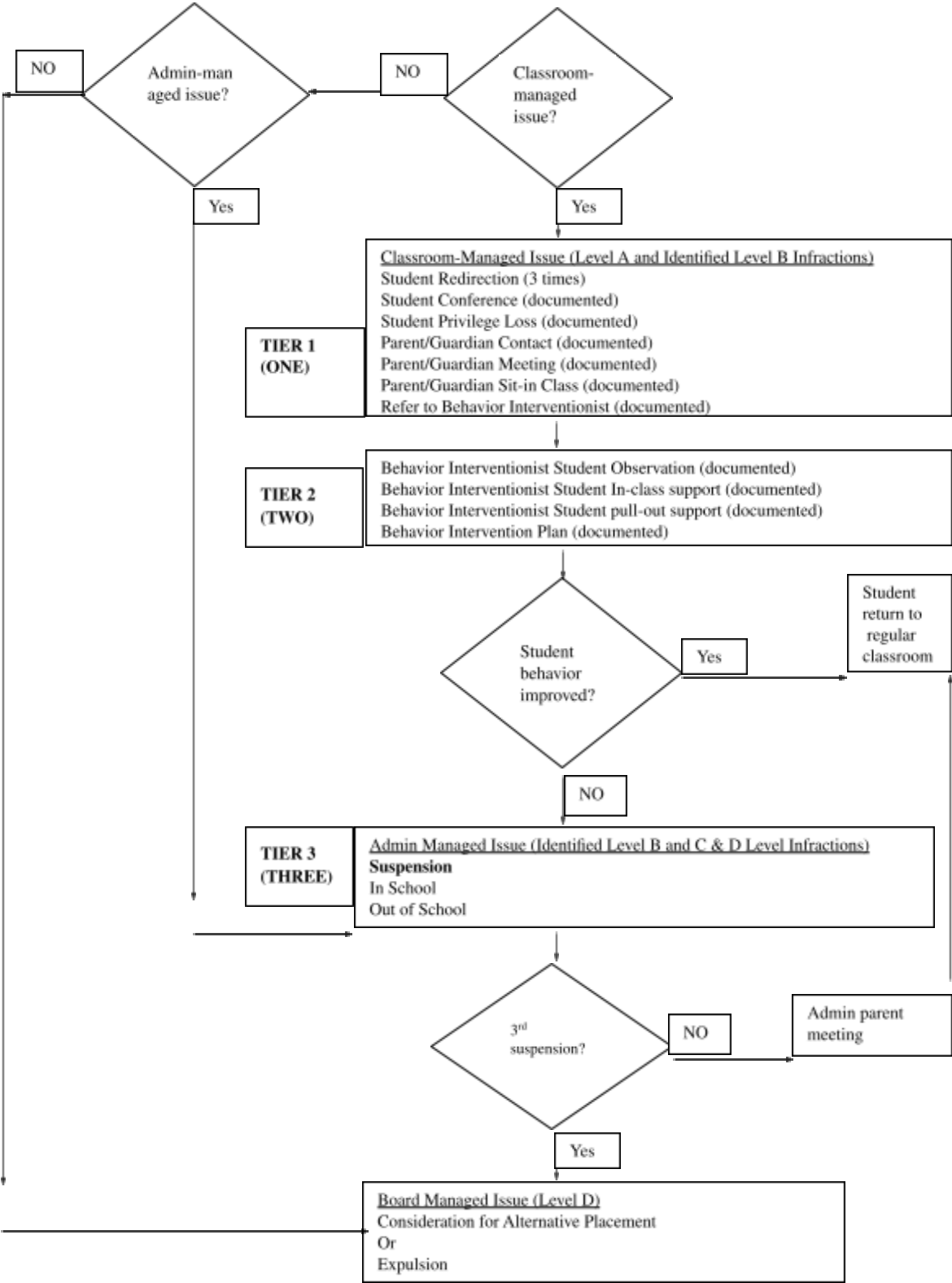
**Purpose:** Pontiac Academy for Excellence schools are *indeed* schools of excellence. Our students are held to a high standard that sets our schools apart from others in the surrounding area. As part of this standard, Pontiac Academy for Excellence students are expected to come to school each and every day, exhibiting appropriate behavior. Education in this community represents a significant commitment of financial and human resources. The benefits a student derives from this investment depend very much on the student's attitude toward learning and the student's adherence to high standards of behavior.

The Student Code of Conduct that follows is the district's specific response to requirements of the law. The law requires the District to define misconduct that may or must result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences. This Code provides information and direction to students and parents regarding standards of behavior as well as consequences of misconduct.

**Prohibited Behaviors** and possible consequences are listed in the next section. Students engaging in the offenses under this section will be processed by the school administration. Please note: In addition to the rules/behaviors listed, the district also has campus, classroom, and district transportation rules.

Unacceptable conduct is divided into **four (4) levels of offenses (Infraction Levels A, B, C and D)** which may result in disciplinary action under this Code. Please see the discipline procedure flowchart. The following list of unacceptable behavior is meant to be instructive and not all-inclusive. A student who commits an act of misconduct that is not listed is also subject to disciplinary action. All illegal activities will be reported to proper authorities as required by law.

**PAE District  
Discipline Procedure  
Flow Chart 2019-2020**



## **Level A Infractions**

- Failing to follow directions
- Conduct causing a disruption to the educational environment
- Violation of dress code
- Violating bus safety rules
- Engaging in any inappropriate physical or sexual contact (affectionate hugging)
- Violating the district's regulations on taking or possessing prescription drugs and/or over-the-counter medication
- Behaving in a way that disrupts the educational process
- Distributing and/or posting prohibited materials not in accordance with school procedures
- Bringing skateboards onto school property or school buses
- Falsifying school-related documents including but not limited to permission slips, hall passes, and progress reports
- Removing food items from the cafeteria/possessing or consuming food items outside of the cafeteria without permission issued by the school administration
- Violating the school's rule pertaining to the operation and/or parking of vehicles on school property
- Accumulating three (3) tardies (not including late arrivals and early dismissals)

## **Level B Infractions**

- Insubordination (gross) (Refusal to obey the reasonable and lawful directions of authorized school personnel. A student will not ignore or refuse to comply with directions or instructions given by school authorities. In the school setting, refusing to open a book, write an assignment, work with another student, work in a group, take a test or do any other class or school-related activity not listed herein, refusing to leave a hallway or any other area, or running away from school staff when told to stop constitutes insubordination)
- Plagiarism, cheating and copying
- Horseplay
- Stealing, assisting in stealing, or possessing a stolen item of minimal value
- Damaging, defacing, applying graffiti to, or vandalizing school property and property owned by others of minimum value, when on school campus or at a school-sponsored event
- Teasing, name-calling, using profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students, employees, or visitors
- Unwarranted physical contact
- Hazing
- Disruptive behavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence, including instigating acts of violence
- Possessing matches, lighter, or tobacco products
- Violating computer rules including but not limited to using a computer without the consent of the staff
- Truancy/Loitering in restricted areas (OTEC students must go directly to their assigned area). Unexcused absences from school, classes, lunchroom, study hall, homeroom or record room fall under the category of truancy. A student will not fail to report to the school's assigned class or activity without prior permission, knowledge or excuse by the school or parent/guardian.
- Recording the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individuals being recorded or administrative approval
- Refusing to show or wear an identification card and/or give your correct name when requested to do so by school personnel, or using another person's name or identity.
- Possession of a prohibited item that may cause a disruption to the educational environment.

## **Level C Infractions**

- Discharging a fire extinguisher or fire alarm without valid cause
- Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
- Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
- Stealing, assisting in stealing, or possessing a stolen item with a value of up to \$100
- Stealing, assisting in stealing, or possessing a stolen item with a value of greater than \$100
- Damaging, defacing, applying graffiti to, or vandalizing school property and property owned by others when on school campus or at a school-sponsored event
- Engaging in any conduct that constitutes sexual harassment whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors
- Engaging in harassment of any kind, including, but not limited to, harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or age directed toward another student or district employee, including through the use of any form of technology
- Using or distributing matches, lighter, or tobacco products
- Abusing or sharing/giving/selling vitamins, minerals, herbal dietary supplements, or something represented to be drugs to other students
- Gang related activity (drawings, photographs, verbal sounds or gestures)
- Gambling
- Engaging in any misbehavior, including demonstrations and/or protests that give school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence that is conducted in a manner that violates legal restraints.
- Possession of a prohibited item that can cause harm to another individual
- Repeated gross insubordination (habitual offenses)

## Level D Infractions

- Possessing, selling, or distributing drugs, contraband, or related paraphernalia. This includes prescription medication.
- Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail (obtaining money or another object of value from an unwilling person), or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
- Gaining unauthorized access to school/district data; breaching the school/district security system; causing malfunction; altering, damaging, or destroying school/district data; viewing/printing inappropriate material from the Internet
- Engaging in sexual activity, including sexual abuse.
- Making false accusations, *written or verbal*, or perpetrating hoaxes regarding school safety
- **Fighting**
- **Threatening a District student, employee, or volunteer, including off school property. This includes, but is not limited to making verbal and written statements, hit lists, mail and e-mail, threats of a graphic nature (drawings, graffiti), and joking about threatening subjects that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.**
- **Committing simple assault (the use of one's body to inflict harm upon another) against a student or staff.**
- **Bullying, including intimidation, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements that school officials have reason to believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence**
- **Engaging in inappropriate or indecent exposure of body parts**
- Possession of a cell phone/electronic device
- \*Committing arson on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- \*Physically assaulting a staff member, volunteer, or contractor of the school district
- \*Possession of a dangerous weapon, including a firearm, dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife with a blade over 3 inches in length, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, iron bar, or brass knuckles
- \*Committing criminal sexual conduct in a school building or on school grounds

*Please note that students found to be aiding a student or students in committing these behaviors will receive similar consequences as those students who committed the prohibited behaviors.*

\*State-mandated expulsion infractions

## **Transportation Behavioral Expectations Policy for Students**

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and passengers, and must be obeyed. The assigned bus aide will be responsible for the behavior of the students while the driver remains responsible for the safe operation of the bus. Students must obey both driver and bus aide.
2. Students must follow the PAE Student Code of Conduct while traveling on PAE buses. The driver or aide should attempt to achieve cooperation through verbal warnings (this may include assigned seats, etc.). If there is no change in student behavior after verbal warning(s) the bus driver or aide will move to a formal written action. Written violations of the PAE Student Code of Conduct while traveling on PAE buses will result in the listed progressive discipline actions (This process may be accelerated [steps will be skipped] and/or when a student's behavior threatens the safety of the driver or passengers.
  - a. **First Written Violation** – Written warning given to student must be signed by parent/guardian and returned to driver/bus aide before bus privileges are reinstated.
  - b. **Second Written Violation** – One day suspension from bus privileges with written notice given to student with a copy sent to the school administrator and parent/guardian.
  - c. **Third Written Violation** – Three day suspension from bus privileges with written notice given to student with a copy sent to the school administrator and parent/guardian.
  - d. **Fourth Written Violation** – Five day suspension from bus privileges with written notice given to student with a copy sent to the school administrator and parent/guardian. The parent/guardian may appeal the suspension by requesting a conference with the school administration. The decision of the school administration is final.
  - e. **Fifth Written Violation-** Suspension for the remainder of the semester or the school year from bus privileges, at the discretion of the school administration with a notice given to the student and sent to the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian may appeal the school administration's decision and request review by the superintendent and Board representatives.



3. Students shall ride only on their assigned bus unless school administration has received written permission for the student to do otherwise.
4. Students shall be permitted to leave the bus only at his/her regular stop unless school administration has received written permission for the student to do otherwise.
5. Students should refrain from talking to drivers while the bus is in motion unless necessary.
6. Students will sit only in their assigned seats unless permission to change has been approved by the driver/bus aide.
7. Students must go directly to their assigned seat and remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
8. If lap belts are available on the bus, students must use them.
9. Students must maintain a safe environment which includes not engaging in any noise making or other actions to avoid distracting drivers.
10. Students will not open windows without the driver's permission.
11. Students will not extend any part of their body out of the bus windows at any time.
12. Students must help to keep the PAE buses clean. Eating and drinking are not allowed.
13. Students are not permitted to bring animals on buses, except for service animals.
14. Students may get up to exit after the bus has come to a complete stop.
15. Students must exit the bus orderly with no pushing and shoving when boarding or leaving the bus.
16. Students must stand away from the roadway curb when any bus is approaching or leaving a stop
17. Emergency Exit Drill procedures will be followed as prescribed by the driver.

**Electronic Device Policy**

Every moment of education is critical for every student. As our culture continues to grow with advances in technology, we are challenged with the disruption to the educational process brought by student use of cell phones and other electronics. Not only are students off task, academic misconduct, bullying, and inappropriate picture messaging has increased via cell phone and electronic device communication. The following policy will be in effect during the school year:

Cell phones and all electronic devices must be turned in, upon entry into the school building. Students may retrieve their cell phones and all of their electronic devices during dismissal.

**Please be advised that students who refuse to submit their electronic device upon entry into the school building are subject to disciplinary action.**

The following consequences will be strictly instituted:

<i>First Offense</i>	<i>Three Day Phone Withheld</i>	<i>Device Returned to Parent Only</i>
<i>Second Offense</i>	<i>Five Day Phone Withheld</i>	<i>Device Returned to Parent Only</i>
<i>Third Offense</i>	<i>Suspension/Parent Meeting</i>	<i>Device Returned to Parent Only</i>

*Repeat offenders are subject to receive further disciplinary action up to long-term suspension.*

*Parents, we understand that this requires a change in habits for many of us as well. We ask that you do not text or call your student during school hours and to contact the main office to deliver important messages. If necessary, students will be allowed to use the phone in the main office. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.*

**Prohibited Items**

The District also prohibits students from possessing certain other items without administrative approval while on school property, while using district transportation, or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school property.

Radios	Permanent/Sharpie markers	Correction fluid	Aerosol spray cans Spray paint Mace and Pepper spray
Audio/video recording/playback devices	Pornography or Literature of Weapons or Violence	Paintballs, paintball guns, water guns, super soakers, water balloons, balloons	Animals
Cameras	All forms of cards and dice	Incendiaries, smoke or stink bombs fireworks, or any other pyrotechnic device, stun, air, "look alike" weapons	Starter Pistols Ammunition Tazers BB Guns
Lighters, matches, and tobacco products	All knives, regardless of blade length, and any type of firearms ( real or otherwise), razors, box cutters, and chains	Laser pointers Sling Shots	Scoters Inline skates Roller skates Roller shoes or "wheelies"
<b>Other items that the campus or district administration determines to be disruptive to the educational environment.</b>			

## **VIII. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:**

### **A. Teacher Disciplinary Actions**

Teachers have the authority to utilize various behavior management techniques to encourage positive student behavior within the classroom. Teachers are authorized to address incidents of minor misbehaviors with positive support strategies so long as such techniques do not violate District policies, administrative regulations developed by the principal, or State and Federal Regulations.

Teachers have the authority to utilize various behavior management techniques such as but not limited to the Student Achievement Team (SAT) to encourage positive student behavior within the classroom. The assistance of the parent or legal guardian, other educational support services and/or other community agencies may be utilized, as well.

Teachers and other school staff are responsible for communicating student code violations to parents. Prior to issuing a disciplinary referral, the parents must be notified of the code violation and disciplinary action that has taken place.

Whether the teacher is present shall be determined by mutual agreement between the principal and the teacher. The teacher shall be informed as to the results of the conference and/or the adjustment before the student returns to class. If someone other than the teacher files an action on a student, that staff member shall follow the procedures outlined above.

### **B. Administrative Disciplinary Actions**

When disciplinary action is appropriate, it shall at all times:

- Depend upon the substantiation of the charges
- Involve a reasonable and logical relationship between the seriousness of the act and the severity of the discipline
- Be constructive in intent
- Take into account such factors as age, stature, and intent of the student and his/her past record
- Take into account the use of positive support strategies and the use of the school's Student Achievement Team (SAT)

In those instances in which the seriousness of the offense does not dictate an immediate disciplinary response, the administrator or the designee will attempt to take actions designed to encourage a change in the student's behavior. For example, the administrator might warn the student that the behavior was unacceptable. The assistance of the home, other educational supportive services and/or other professional community agencies may be utilized as well as the school's Student Achievement Team (SAT).

Each building principal/designee or home/school liaison is authorized to adopt disciplinary actions for use by building administrators in situations which do not warrant Short-Term Suspension, Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion. **Building disciplinary rules and procedures must be written and distributed to staff, parents and students on an annual basis.**

In those instances where the seriousness of the offense requires the removal of the student from a class or building, the following forms of disciplinary action are authorized:

#### **1. Short-Term Suspension**

The temporary removal of a student from the building and all school sponsored activities.

- A student in grades K-12 may be suspended for one to 10 school days.
- Short-Term Suspensions should only be applied after the consideration of all other alternatives available to correct the student's behavior have been exhausted.

Before a suspended student may be returned to school, he/she will be required to attend a readmission meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss the behavioral problem(s). In the event that the administrator is unable to arrange the meeting by the date set for readmission, the principal may authorize an alternative method of achieving the meeting or may waive the requirement of the meeting.

## **2. Long-Term Suspension**

The temporary removal of students in Grades 6-12 from Pontiac Academy for Excellence School District for more than ten (10) school days. Upon return to the school district from a Long-Term Suspension, a referral may be made to the Student Achievement Team (SAT) and the student will be placed on a behavior plan. Student may receive a long-term suspension, up to 20 days, as determined by the district superintendent or beyond 20 days by the school board.

## **3. District 10-Day Policy**

After an accumulation of 10 days out of school due to suspensions in a school year, a student will be placed on a behavioral contract. If said student has had another code of conduct violation while on said behavioral contract, he/she will be recommended for an expulsion hearing facilitated by the PAE School Board.

Students placed on a behavior contract will remain on the contract for a period of 12 months.

## **C. School-Level Meetings**

The school administrator hearing the case will decide whether the charges against the student have been sustained. If it is decided that the student engaged in the conduct as charged, the administrator will impose the appropriate disciplinary action.

### **1. First Step in the Appeal Process**

Parents must notify the superintendent/CAO in writing within two (2) school days that they wish to appeal the principal's decision. The request may be initiated by a telephone call to the superintendent's administrative assistant, followed by a written request.

A parent or student may not appeal a decision of the principal to suspend a student pending a disciplinary hearing.

### **2. Second Step in the Appeal Process**

An appeal hearing will be scheduled to take place within five (5) school days after receipt of the appeal request. At the hearing, the CAO/superintendent will review the facts and the procedures utilized by the principal to arrive at a decision. No hearings will be held over the telephone.

All evidence must be presented to the student at that time. Staff shall be present if requested by the parent. The student's parents and advisor, who may or may not be an attorney, may be present at the hearing and may present evidence and review statements from witnesses, if any.

The decision of the Superintendent/CAO is final.

*For policies regarding the discipline of students with disabilities, please refer to the [Discipline of Students with Disabilities Handbook](#).*

## **D. Disciplinary Hearing with the Superintendent/CAO**

For disciplinary infractions leading to a long-term suspension and/or possible expulsion, a school-level meeting shall take place, prior to any referral to the superintendent/CAO for a disciplinary hearing. During a disciplinary hearing, the superintendent/CAO will make a recommendation for the subsequent steps to be taken to address the matter, which includes a referral for a school board hearing, where a decision for disciplinary intervention may include long-term suspension, and/or expulsion.

### **Disciplinary Hearing Protocol**

1. Parent/guardian (or authorized designee) and student are expected to attend all disciplinary hearings. The principal/designee must hold a hearing even though a parent/guardian is unable to, or chooses not to, attend. The principal must document all attempts to reach parent/guardian.
2. Parents may be represented by an advisor of their choice, who may or may not be an attorney. Parental authorization for an advisor to appear on behalf of the student must be on file in writing with the principal at or before the time of the hearing. Only the parent/guardian or the advisor may speak for the child at the hearing. The selected speaker will be determined before the hearing starts.

3. The staff person(s) making the charges of misbehavior shall be present at the hearing as requested by the principal.
4. While parents do not have the right to confront student witnesses, they may request their questions be asked of school representatives or witnesses.
5. At the hearing, the student and the parents must first be fully informed about the alleged breach in behavior and then be afforded the opportunity to present their side of the case.
6. Within one (1) school day of the formal hearing, the principal or designee will forward communication to the student's parents by certified mail and phone, where possible, advising them of the decision as to whether the student engaged in the behavior as charged, and what the recommended disciplinary action will be (if the charge was substantiated).

Any permanent record that results from the student's actions should clearly state whether the charges of misbehavior were or were not substantiated.

## **E. School Board Disciplinary Actions**

Michigan Law mandates the permanent Expulsion of a student, subject to possible future reinstatement, for certain acts. These acts include possession of a dangerous weapon, commission of arson or criminal sexual conduct in a school building or on school grounds, and for students grade 6 and above, commission of physical assault at school against an employee, volunteer or contractor.

The Law provides further that the School Board may authorize permanent Expulsion from school for additional Class III offenses.

### **1. School Board Hearings**

The School Board will convene an expulsion hearing for all cases recommended for expulsion by the superintendent/CAO. The decision of the School Board is final. Parental authorization for any advisor to appear on behalf of the student must be on file in writing in the Central Administrative Office at the time of the hearing. Only the parent/guardian or advisor may speak for the student at the hearing. The selected speaker will be determined before the beginning of the hearing. Parent/guardian may bring witnesses to the hearing.

### **2. Expulsion**

The Board shall suspend or expel a student in grade six or above for up to 180 school days if the student commits physical assault against another student. The Board shall suspend or expel a student in grade six or above for a period of time as determined at the Board's discretion if the student commits verbal assault at school against a school employee, volunteer, or contractor or makes a bomb threat of similar threat directed at a school building, property, or a school-related activity. Verbal assault is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on another person.

State Law requires expulsion for the following offenses:

1. Committing arson on school property or at a school-sponsored event
2. Physically assaulting a staff member, volunteer, or contractor of the school district
3. Possession of a dangerous weapon, including a firearm, dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife with a blade over 3 inches in length, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, iron bar, or brass knuckles
4. Committing criminal sexual conduct in a school building or on school grounds

### **3. Readmission Hearings**

Although Expulsion is permanent, the State of Michigan and the Pontiac Academy for Excellence Schools have established conditions under which the student/parent/guardian or student eighteen (18) or above may petition for readmission. The student must meet criteria set by the State and/or Pontiac Academy for Excellence Schools before readmission will be considered and/or approved.

#### **4. Readmission Guidelines**

Once the conditions for readmission have been met, the parents/student/guardian or student over eighteen (18) may petition for readmission. Pontiac Academy for Excellence Schools is not required by law or policy to provide any assistance in preparing the readmission petition.

- a) A petition requesting readmission must be sent to the Pontiac Academy for Excellence District Office.
- b) The Superintendent/CAO shall review all petitions for readmission where a student has been expelled for a non-mandatory expulsion offense.
  1. The Superintendent/CAO will review the evidence presented and make a decision.
  2. If the decision is to readmit the student, a contractual agreement regarding expected behavior, attendance, and academic progress may be required to be signed by the student, parent, the Principal and the Superintendent/CAO.
  3. If the decision is not to readmit the student, the Superintendent/CAO will outline the steps that student and parents must take before admission may be considered.

#### **5. BOARD OF EDUCATION READMISSION HEARINGS**

1. **The Board of Education** shall review all petitions for readmission where a student has been expelled for a mandatory expulsion offense.
2. **The student** will be referred to the Central Administrative Office for placement and follow-up.

#### **6. BOARD OF EDUCATION REINSTATEMENT PROCESS**

1. Within 10 days of receiving a petition for reinstatement the Central Administrative Office will process petition for Board review.
2. Upon the scheduling of two (2) Board Members, one (1) School Administrator, one (1) teacher and a parent of a child enrolled in the district. The panel members will rotate except the chair.
3. Within 10 school days from appointment of a Reinstatement Review Panel, and confirmation from the Central Administrative Office to the Board Secretary's Office, the Panel will review the petition and any supporting information; will provide the student, parent, and/or guardian an opportunity to appear and address the panel; and shall submit a written recommendation to the full board at its next scheduled regular Board meeting.
4. The reinstatement review panel may recommend unconditional, conditional or against reinstatement. If the recommendation(s) is for conditional reinstatement, it must include any recommended conditions. The reinstatement recommendation shall be based on consideration of all of the following factors:
  - a) The extent to which reinstatement of the individual would create a risk of harm to pupil or school personnel;
  - b) The extent to which reinstatement of the individual would create a risk of school district's liability or individual for the school board or school district personnel;
  - c) The age and maturity of the individual;
  - d) The individual's school record before the incident that caused the expulsion;
  - e) The individual's attitude concerning the incident that caused the expulsion;
  - f) The individual's behavior since the expulsion and the prospects for remediation;
  - g) If the petition was filed by a parent or legal guardian, the degree of cooperation and support that has been provided by parent or legal guardian and that can be expected if that individual is reinstated including, but not limited to, receptiveness toward possible conditions placed on the reinstatement.

The standards of conduct contained within this Student Code of Conduct apply to all students, including those students enrolled in special education, Section 504, those suspected of having a disability or the district has knowledge that the student is suspected of having a disability. However, due to the unique needs of students with disabilities, appropriate disciplinary action and implementation of the Student Code of Conduct will vary in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

## **IX. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **A. Definitions**

#### **1. “STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY” (IDEA) DEFINED**

“Student with a Disability” means an individual enrolled in school who is under twenty-six (26) years of age and who is determined by an Individualized Education Program Team (IEPT) to have a characteristic or set of characteristics that necessitates special education or ancillary and other services, or both.

1. Determination of impairment shall not be based solely on behaviors relating to environmental, cultural or economic differences.
2. These individuals are commonly referred to by local, state, federal and education agencies as students who are included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA students.

#### **2. “SECTION 504 STUDENTS” DEFINED**

“Section 504 Student” means any student with a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment.

1. Major life activities means functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning or working. Major life activities include but are not limited to functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning or working.
2. The student has a 504 Evaluation, Summary and Education Plan developed by a 504 team.
3. All IDEA students are protected from discrimination under Section 504. However, all Section 504 students are not eligible for programs/services under IDEA.
4. Implementation of Section 504 is not the responsibility of Special Education.

### **B. Short-Term Suspension/Long-Term Suspension/Expulsion/Expulsion Procedures of IDEA or Section 504 Eligible Students**

Whenever an administrator is considering disciplinary action involving removal of a special education or 504 eligible student, the student’s records shall be reviewed to determine the total number of days during the current school year that the student has missed due to disciplinary action. Once the number of days that a student has been out of school due to disciplinary action has been determined, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Under federal laws, an IDEA/504 student facing disciplinary removal from school, whose current recommended disciplinary removal from school is in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days, or will result in excess of ten (10) cumulative days constituting a pattern characterized by similarities in the student behavior that caused the removals and the length, frequency and proximity of the removals in relation to each other, must have an IEP meeting that determines whether or not the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability. Under federal laws, an IDEA/504 student facing disciplinary removal from school, whose current recommended disciplinary removal from school is in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days, or will result in excess of ten (10) cumulative days constituting a pattern characterized by similarities in the student behavior that caused the removals and the length, frequency and proximity of the removals in relation to each other, must have an IEP/504 meeting that determines whether or not the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability.
2. This meeting must take place within ten (10) school days of the decision to remove the student from school.
3. In cases where the offense involves the current use and/or possession of drugs/alcohol, the Section 504 meeting is not necessary and the student may be disciplined in the same manner as non-disabled students.
4. If the IEP team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability, the student is not subject to further disciplinary action and must return to his/her original placement unless the parent agrees otherwise through the IEP process. If the IEP team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability, the

student is not subject to further disciplinary action and must return to his/her original placement unless the parent agrees otherwise through the IEP/504 process.

5. If the disciplinary action recommendation is a result of the student carrying a weapon to or possessing a weapon at school or at a school function, knowingly possessing or using illegal drugs, selling or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function, school personnel may remove the student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability. Regardless of the manifestation determination outcome, in cases where the offense involves the student carrying a weapon to or possessing a weapon at school or at a school function, knowingly possessing or using illegal drugs, selling or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function, or inflicting serious bodily injury upon another person, school personnel may remove the student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days.

6. In the event that PAE administration believes reinstating the student to his/her current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, it can appeal to a Hearing Officer for placement in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days. In the event that PAE administration believes reinstating the student to his/her current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, it can appeal via an expedited due process that is facilitated by the Office of Specialized Student Services, for placement in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days.

7. The parent can request a due process hearing to appeal manifestation determinations or decisions regarding the student's placement during the disciplinary removal. Likewise, the parent can request an expedited due process hearing from the Office of Specialized Student Services, to appeal manifestation determinations or decisions regarding the student's placement during the disciplinary removal.

8. During such an appeal, the student's placement would remain in the disciplinary removal setting pending the decision or until the expiration of the removal issued by PAE, whichever comes first.

### **C. STUDENTS SUSPECTED OF A DISABILITY OR THE DISTRICT HAS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT A STUDENT IS SUSPECTED OF BEING DISABLED**

Students suspected of a disability are those who prior to the behavior subject to disciplinary action meet one or more of the following situations.

- They have requested a disability evaluation.
- Their parent(s) have requested a disability evaluation.
- Their parent(s) have expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the PAE, or a teacher of the child that the child is in need of special education and related services.
- Their teacher, or other personnel, has expressed concern about a behavioral pattern demonstrated by the child directly to the appropriate director of special education for PAE or to other appropriate supervisors of special education for PAE.
- PAE shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student is a student with a disability if the parent of the student has not allowed an evaluation of the student or has refused services if the student was evaluated and found to be a student with a disability.

1. The parent(s) have expressed specific concerns in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the PAE, or a teacher of the student, that the student is in need of special education and related services.
2. The parent(s) have formally requested/consented to a special education evaluation.
3. The student's teacher, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student, directly to the appropriate supervisor or director of special education for PAE.
4. PAE shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student is a student with a disability if the parent of the student has previously refused to consent to an evaluation of the student, or has refused special education and related services, or the student was found ineligible for special education.



## **D. SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION/LONG-TERM SUSPENSION/ EXPULSION OF STUDENTS SUSPECTED OF BEING IDEA OR 504 ELIGIBLE**

When considering the Short-Term/Long-Term Suspension, or Expulsion of a student, if there is reasonable cause to believe that the student is eligible under IDEA or Section 504 or is suspected of being disabled, the student has the right to assert any of the disciplinary protections available to students with disabilities.

1. If PAE does not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subjected to disciplinary measures applied to students without disabilities who engaged in comparable behaviors.
2. If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the student remains in the disciplinary removal setting and the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner.
3. If the student is found to be a student with a disability, PAE shall provide special education and related services as appropriate, and pending the results of the evaluation, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities. **IX. RECORDS**
4. When a student is not eligible to attend his/her assigned school because of a Short-Term Suspension, Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion, the principal or designee will complete a suspension report. The Special Ed. or school offices will provide the appropriate forms. The same process will be followed when corrective action requires contact with parents, even though the student may continue in regular attendance. The Special Ed or school offices shall maintain a file on all appeals, long-term suspension, Expulsions, and expulsion reviews resulting in corrective action.
5. Each school must complete Disciplinary Action Worksheets (Form 4549) and enter all information into the computer indicating the number of Short-Term Suspensions, Long-Term Suspensions, Expulsions, Expulsion Reviews, and type of behavior and THE NUMBER OF DAYS OF THE SUSPENSION. Upon request, copies of the disciplinary summaries will be distributed to schools reporting disciplinary actions.
6. An Undesirable Incident Report (Form 63) **must** be completed when the incident results in any disciplinary action.
7. If the student's Short-Term, Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion, or Expulsion is changed, modified, or set aside, all records, including the Undesirable Incident Report, must note the change.
8. Unsubstantiated charges will be expunged from the student's "record". If on appeal, the student's Short-Term, Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion is changed, modified or set aside; the disciplinary records must note the change.
9. All records where appropriate and legally authorized should be provided to parents/guardians upon request. Records subject to exclusion include student statements with identifiable information or personal information about school staff and employees.

**As used in this Student Code of Conduct, the word "days" means school days.**

### **PONTIAC ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE SCHOOLS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

1. A student will be given the opportunity to receive make-up work for missed assignments that occurred as a result of a Short Term Suspension, Long Term Suspension, Expulsion or Expulsion Review.
2. A student charged with an expulsion offense is entitled to make-up work until a decision is reached by the Expulsion Hearing Officer.
3. Students are entitled to take required examinations when an incident occurs that requires disciplinary action. Parents must contact the principal or the Home school liaison to make arrangements for testing.
4. School officials will inform the student orally and in writing of the charges against him/her, including the basis (evidence) for such charges.
5. When a student is suspended, a disciplinary hearing will be held at the school.

6. If the parent/guardian cancels the appointment, the school principal must reschedule the hearing date one time.
7. Parents may be represented by an advisor of their choice.
8. While parents do not have the right to confront witnesses, they may request for school officials to present questions, on their behalf, to the witnesses.
9. At the hearing, the student and the parents are to be fully informed concerning the alleged breach in behavior. After this, the student must be afforded the opportunity to present his/her side.
10. If the charges are substantiated at the school level hearing, the parent has the right to appeal the charges to the Code of Conduct Supervisor for a Short Term Suspension, Long Term Suspension or an Expulsion.
11. A parent or student may not appeal a decision of the principal to suspend a student pending an expulsion review.
12. Students have the right to petition for readmission after expulsion.
13. If a student with a disability is suspended beyond the initial total of 10 days, the school determines if the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.
14. The Central Administrative Office must expunge any student's unsubstantiated charge placed on the District's database.
15. If a student believes any rights set forth in the student code have been violated, the student, and/or parent or guardian, should make a written report to a school administration and/or Board of Education office.

## **X. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Appeal-** To resort to a superior administrative level to review the decision of a lesser administrative level.

**Arson-** To unlawfully and intentionally damage or attempt to damage, any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device.

**Physical Assault-** Intentionally causing physical harm to a student through force or violence.

**Breaking and Entering-** Unlawful entry into a school building or other school structure.

**Cyber Bullying-** The use of the internet or technology to intimidate harasses, bully or threaten.

**Expunge-** To permanently remove from a student's discipline record.

**False Alarms-** The act of initiating a fire alarm or initiating a report warning of a fire or an impending bombing or other catastrophe without just cause.

**Fighting-** The act of involving hostile bodily contact in or on school property, including any activity under school sponsorship (i.e. dance, athletic events, and etcetera).

**Free and Appropriate Public Education-** Section 504, the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Michigan Revised Administrative Rules require that all students with a disability, aged birth through 25 have a right to receive a free appropriated education. Free means that the educational and related services are provided without cost to the parent, except for those fees that are imposed on students without disabilities.

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) -** An assessment of the factors that affect a student's behavior, typically including a review of the environment and the student's needs.

**Gang Activity-** An ongoing organization, association or group of three or more individuals who use a common identifying name, sign or symbol; have a high rate of interaction among themselves to the exclusion of others; and are frequently involved in anti-social, delinquent or criminal activity.

**Gang Like Activity-** Activity that is associated with or similar to gang activity.

**Group Violence-** Three or more persons inflicting physical harm upon a victim or victims.

**Hazing-** An abusive, often humiliating form of initiation into or affiliation with a group.

**Illegal Activity-** Against or in violation of local, state and or federal law.

**Incendiary Device-** Any material/object which cause a fire or explosion.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP) -** A specially designed instruction program developed by the IEP team that describes the student's eligibility, the student's present level of performance, annual goals and short term objectives, specific educational and related services, amount of time spent in education, the least restrictive environment, the reasons why the IEP is accepted or rejected, transition services, and the dates and frequency of services. The IEP shall be reviewed annually or more often as needed.

**Intimidation/Bullying-** To place another person in reasonable fear or bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical assault.

**Insubordination-** Refusal to obey the reasonable and lawful directions of authorized school personnel.

**Jurisdiction-** The power to hear and determine a school matter.

**Larceny-** The unauthorized taking, carrying, leading or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another person.

**Loitering-** The act of being in or about any school building or in a specifically Restricted area of school building at unauthorized times or without the specific authorization of school personnel.

**Petition-** Formal written request.

**Refusal to Identify Self-** Refusing to show identification card and/or give a correct name when requested to do so by school personnel.

**Student Achievement Team (SAT) -** The Child Care Team is a school-based problem solving group that works collaboratively with parents, staff and community members in addressing individual and school-wide issues.

**Tardiness-** The act of unauthorized lateness to school to school or classes for a specified period as outlined in the district's attendance policy.

**Terrorist Activity-** To threaten or cause violence to any person or property with intent to cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency authorized to deal with emergencies; prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of an area, building or room or to cause interruption of public communication, water gas or power supply.

**Trespassing-** To enter or remain on a public school campus or facility without authorization and with no lawful purpose for entry.

**Truancy-** Unauthorized and or unexcused absence(s) from school or classes.

**Parents/Guardians are requested to read the handbook with their student/s and discuss to ensure their understanding of the rules and expectations of Pontiac Academy for Excellence. Parents: After reading and discussing the handbook, please sign and return the back page. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!**

**TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**The Pontiac Academy for Excellence Division**

## Student Agreement and Contract

It is important that I work to the best of my ability. Therefore, I shall strive to do the following:

- \* Finish my schoolwork and participate in classroom activities.
- \* Attend school regularly and come on time.
- \* Come to school with all the materials needed for learning.
- \* Show respect for myself, my school, other students and their properties.
- \* Do my part in keeping our school safe and clean.
- \* Set aside time each night to complete all homework assignments.
- \* Treat all members of the school family and community with respect.
- \* I will honor my teacher by showing a positive attitude and respect toward adults at school and at school functions.
- \* Believe that I can learn and I will

## Parent /Guardian Agreement and Contract

It is important for my/our students to achieve. Therefore I/we will encourage my/our student by doing the following:

- \* See that my/our student is punctual and attends school on a daily basis.
- \* Support the school in its effort to maintain proper discipline.
- \* Encourage my/our student to be the best that he/she can be and maintain a positive attitude.
- \* Maintain ongoing communication with the school and my/our student's teacher(s).
- \* Attend parent/teacher conferences and other functions.
- \* Establish a time for sharing daily school experience and completing homework.
- \* Read with my/our student several times during school week.
- \* Volunteer in the classroom.
- \* Encourage my/our students to respect others and their property.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_