

Student Discipline Policy

Region(s): Tennessee

Safety, order, and student discipline are fundamental to learning at Rocketship. Rocketship expects all students to behave in a way that fosters a safe and welcoming environment for other students, Rocketship staff, and community members.

Students will be subject to disciplinary action if they engage in prohibited conduct while on school property, when attending any school-sponsored activity, or while in transit going to or coming from a Rocketship campus. Students may also be subject to disciplinary action for off-campus behavior if it creates a substantial disruption to the school environment or interferes with another student's ability to participate in the school program.

Some disciplinary infractions are so serious that they may subject a student to suspension and/or expulsion. A list of these infractions can be found in Rocketship's Suspension and Expulsion Policy, along with the procedures that Rocketship will take when considering suspension or expulsion of a student. This Policy outlines the Rocketeer Code of Conduct that we expect students to follow; expectations for students; examples of prohibited conduct that will subject a student to in-school disciplinary action; and disciplinary actions that Rocketship may take in response to behavioral infractions, including In-School Suspension.

I. Rocketeer Code of Conduct

The Rocketship Code of Conduct includes the following non-negotiable expectations for our Rocketeers:

- Adherence to the Rocketship Commitment to Excellence.
- Adherence to the Rocketship Core Values: Respect, Responsibility, Persistence, Empathy, and the fifth campus-specific Value chosen by each school.
- Adherence to the Rocketship Creed:

I am a Rocketship Rocketeer at home, at school, and in my community

I am respect of my myself, others, and the environment

I am responsible for my learning, actions, and achievements

I have empathy of my world.

And I am persistent in attaining excellence.

Together, we are all Rocketship Rocketeers.

II. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is prohibited by Rocketship and may subject a student to in-class disciplinary action in accordance with this policy.

- Engaging in acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined by Rocketship's bullying prevention policies.
- Insubordination (including, but not limited to, refusing to follow directions, refusing to identify oneself to a staff member, running away from a staff member, talking back to a staff member).

- Fighting or engaging in behaviors that threaten the safety of oneself or others.
- Disrupting school activities.
- Playing in the hallways or bathroom.
- Dishonesty/lying to staff members.
- Theft of property.
- Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or cheating.
- Inciting or attempting to incite others to violence or disruption.
- Aiding or abetting the infliction or attempted infliction of violence on another.
- Committing an obscene act or engaging in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- Recording or photographing students or staff members without their prior knowledge and consent.
- Using computers for non-school related activities, including viewing or accessing prohibited sites. ● Using cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices on school property, during school hours or during school functions, except when under express permission and supervision of a staff member
- Trespassing (including being on school grounds while school is not in session, being in unauthorized areas of the building, and use of the bathroom without permission) ● Leaving the classroom, school building, school property, or school activity without permission ● Intentionally altering, falsifying, destroying, or fabricating any official document (including 9-1-1 phone calls and setting off fire alarms).
- Repeatedly violating Rocketship's Student Dress Code.
- Violating Rocketship Public Schools' Code of Conduct, as described above.

III. In-school Disciplinary Actions

Rocketship relies on proactive, preventive supports to promote positive behavior at school. Rocketship has implemented a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework in all schools. The fundamental purpose of PBIS is to create learning environments that are more consistent, predictable, positive and safe. Key PBIS practices include clearly defined behavioral expectations and consequences, systems for recognizing and reinforcing positive behaviors, data-based decision making, multi-tiered systems of support, and the implementation of core social-emotional learning curricula.

Rocketship classrooms also use a variety of management systems to address behavioral issues. These may include color-coded card chart systems and other tiered consequences.

In the event that Rocketship's PBIS infrastructure and classroom management systems are insufficient to prevent disciplinary infraction, or a disciplinary infraction is serious enough to immediately warrant additional discipline, Rocketship may take alternative in-school disciplinary action. These actions depend on the circumstances of the offense and may include, but are not limited to, the following: ● Sending the student to the Principal's office.

- Excluding the student from classroom activities or privileges through a "time out" or temporary placement in another classroom.

- Calling or writing/emailing the student's parent/guardian.
- Arranging a conference with the student, parent, teacher and/or administrator.
- Implementing an individualized behavior plan for the student.
- Implementing counseling sessions with a designated staff member.
- Sending the student to a peer mediation.
- Requiring that the student complete a reflective essay or assignment.
- Requiring that the student take actions to counteract/ameliorate a problem (i.e. fixing something the student broke).
- Referring the student to a Student Support Team.
- Restricting the student's participation in after-school/extra-curricular activities or field trips.
- Holding the student for detention or additional instructional time during lunch or before/after school.
- Confiscating inappropriate items related to the disciplinary infraction.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. "Corporal punishment" includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, "corporal punishment" does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property. (See also Rocketship's Seclusion and Restraint Policy.)

As described above, severe infractions that threaten the safety or health of students, staff or others, may be cause for suspension or expulsion, as outlined in Rocketship's Suspension and Expulsion Policy.

IV. Student Relocation

Pursuant to T.C.A. 49-6-3701, a teacher trained in evidence-based behavior supports is authorized to manage the teacher's classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or the principal's designee to maintain discipline in the classroom, and to hold students in the teacher's charge strictly accountable for any disorderly conduct in school.

Pursuant to T.C.A. 49-6-3702, a teacher has the ability to relocate a student from the student's present location to another location for the student's safety or for the safety of others. The use of reasonable or justifiable force, as defined in T.C.A. §§ 39-11-603, 39-11-609, 39-11-610, 39-11-612, 39-11-613, 39-11-614, 39-11-621, and 39-11-622, if required to accomplish this task due to the unwillingness of the student to cooperate, is allowed. If steps beyond the use of reasonable or justifiable force are required, then the student must be allowed to remain in place until local law enforcement officers or school resource officers can be summoned to relocate the student or take the student into custody until a parent or guardian can retrieve the student. This policy also authorizes teachers to intervene in a physical altercation between two (2) or more students, or between a student and a Rocketship employee, as applicable, using reasonable or justifiable force upon a student, if necessary, to end the altercation by relocating the student to another location.

This policy is in effect on school property, as well as at official school-sponsored events, including, but not limited to, sporting events and approved field trips that take place away from school property; and covers teachers who are directly responsible for the student's education, and other Rocketship employees, as applicable, who interact with students on a professional basis. The Rocketship employees

described in this policy include, but are not limited to, administrators, teachers, school support staff, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and school resource officers while the employee is acting within the scope of the employee's assigned duties.

This policy requires a teacher to file a brief report with the principal detailing the situation that required the relocation of the student. The report must be kept either in a student discipline file, in which case the report does not become a part of the student's permanent record, or it must be filed in the student's permanent record, if the student's behavior violated the applicable zero tolerance policy. After the teacher files the report required under this policy, the student is subject to additional disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion from the school. The principal or the principal's designee must notify the teacher involved of the actions taken to address the behavior of the relocated student.

Each principal shall fully support the authority of each teacher in the principal's school to relocate under this section. Rocketship remains obligated to comply with all state and federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794).

V. Referrals to Principal and Annual Review of Policies

Pursuant to T.C.A. 49-6-3703, in order to manage student behavior, to ensure the safety of all students in the teacher's classroom and school, and to ensure students the opportunity to learn in an orderly and disciplined classroom, a teacher may refer a student to the principal or the principal's designee. When a teacher disciplines a student by issuing a written referral for the student's behavior, the referral must be returned to the teacher with a notation of the action taken. The referral must be kept in a student discipline file, and shall not become a part of the student's permanent record. If an LEA or school has adopted an electronic system of making disciplinary referrals instead of using written referrals, then the teacher making the referral must be notified of the action taken, but the notification may be made either electronically or in writing. The principal or the principal's designee must respond to a teacher's disciplinary referral of a student by employing appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with the school's policy. The director of schools, or the director's designee, must review the LEA's or school's discipline policies, practices, and data annually and recommend any necessary revisions to discipline policies to the local board of education or the public charter school governing body, as applicable, for adoption.

VI. Teacher Requests for Removal of Student

Pursuant to T.C.A. 49-6-3704, a teacher may submit a written request to the principal, or the principal's designee, to remove a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn, if the student's behavior is in violation of the school's student discipline policy or code of conduct. The written request must include documentation that the teacher has previously:

- (1) Taken action to address the student's disruptive behavior;
- (2) Provided consequences for the student's disruptive behavior;
- (3) Conducted an oral conference either by a documented telephone conversation or an in-person discussion with the student's parent or guardian regarding the student's disruptive behavior;

(4) Provided an opportunity for school counseling or other support services deemed appropriate to address the student's disruptive behavior;

(5) Developed and implemented a plan to improve the student's behavior in a conference with the student; and

(6) Issued a disciplinary referral under § 49-6-3703 to address the student's disruptive behavior.

The principal or the principal's designee must give the student oral or written notice of the grounds for the teacher's request to remove the student from the teacher's classroom and, if the student denies engaging in the conduct, then the principal or the principal's designee must explain what caused the teacher to submit a request to the principal or the principal's designee to remove the student from the teacher's classroom, and give the student an opportunity to explain the situation. If the student's account is deemed to be valid, albeit different from the teacher's account, and changes the principal's, or the principal's designee's, perspective of the incident, then the principal or the principal's designee must render a decision regarding the student's placement.

Principals and their designees shall respect the professional judgment of a teacher requesting to remove a student from the teacher's classroom under this policy and shall take an action consistent with the student discipline policy or code of conduct in response to the request, which may include:

(1) Assigning the student to another appropriate classroom for a specified period of time, or for the remainder of the student's assignment to the class from which the student was removed under subsection (a);

(2) Assigning the student to in-school suspension for a specified period of time, in compliance with § 49-6-3401;

(3) Remanding the student to an alternative school or to an alternative education program for a specified period of time, in compliance with §§ 49-6-3401 and 49-6-3402;

(4) Suspending the student pursuant to § 49-6-3401;

(5) Requiring the parents or guardians of a student who is removed from a teacher's classroom and assigned to another appropriate classroom under subdivision (c)(1) to participate in conferences before the student is permitted to return to the classroom from which the student was removed; or

(6) Denying the teacher's request to remove a student from the teacher's classroom and offering appropriate supports for the teacher to address the student's disruptive behavior.

Any action taken in response to a teacher's request to remove a student from the teacher's classroom must comply with all applicable policies of the local board of education or the public charter school governing body, as applicable, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794), the constitutions of the United States and Tennessee, and all applicable federal and state civil rights laws. Principals or their designees must notify law enforcement, as appropriate, when implementing this section.

This policy authorizes a teacher to file an appeal with the director of schools, or the director's designee, when the teacher's request to remove a student from the teacher's classroom is denied pursuant to subdivision (c)(6).

A teacher shall not be terminated, demoted, harassed, or otherwise retaliated against for filing a request for a student to be removed from the teacher's classroom, or for appealing a decision to deny the teacher's request to remove a student pursuant to this policy.

If a teacher abuses or overuses the student removal process provided in this section, then the principal or the principal's designee must address the abuse or overuse with the teacher in compliance with the local board's or public charter school governing body's policy, as applicable, and may require the teacher to complete additional professional development to improve the teacher's classroom management skills.

VII. In-School Suspension

In-school suspension ("ISS") provides an alternative to out-of-school suspension. ISS allows students to be counted present and provides an in-school opportunity for them to complete and receive credit for class assignments. During ISS, students will complete school work in a location separate from their class. ISS is not intended to be an alternative to or long-term replacement of the student's regularly scheduled class.

ISS may be used in the event that a student is engaging in prohibited conduct that is making the classroom environment physically or emotionally unsafe for other students or that severely disrupts a class or school-sponsored activity;

Only the Principal or Assistant Principal, with prior approval from his/her supervisor, shall assign a student to ISS. Students assigned to ISS must have written notification of the date and duration of the ISS assignment. Assignment to ISS and the scheduling of the days assigned are at the Principal's discretion.

Principals should place the student in ISS as soon as possible after the infraction is reported. The principal will ensure that:

- Students assigned to ISS are provided a safe, positive environment
 - Students assigned to ISS are properly supervised; and
 - Students assigned to ISS are allowed to complete class work assigned during his/her placement in ISS.
 - All class work for students is obtained, academic assistance is provided as necessary, and completed work is returned to the student's classroom teacher.
 - Activities of academic value are provided for the student when the classroom teacher's work is not provided or is insufficient for ISS time assigned.
 - Additionally, classroom teachers will:
 - Provide classwork commensurate to the work missed for a student in ISS.
 - Record a student in ISS as present. There will be no attendance-related penalty for assignment to ISS.
 - Evaluate the student's work completed in ISS and give credit for work completed in ISS.
- Ensure that students in ISS receive credit for attendance and full credit for work completed.

The student's parent/guardian must be notified of a student's assignment to ISS at the time that the ISS placement is scheduled. The Principal should contact a parent/guardian by phone or in-person meeting. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached in this manner, the Principal or his/her designee may make contact

through e-mail.

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