

**DIGITAL PIONEERS**

ACADEMY

**SCHOLAR HANDBOOK**

## **MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

### Mission Statement

Digital Pioneers Academy (DPA) is a rigorous, engaging college preparatory middle school preparing scholars from Ward 7 and Ward 8 in Southeast Washington, DC with the education necessary to be innovators in the digital economy and to be active citizens in our technology-driven world. The mission of Digital Pioneers Academy is to develop the next generation of innovators. We prepare scholars from underserved communities to meet or exceed the highest academic standards, while cultivating the strength of character necessary to both graduate from four-year colleges and thrive in 21st century careers. DPA opened its doors to 120 sixth-grade scholars in Fall 2018 and currently serves 240 scholars in grades 6th and 7th. DPA will continue to grow until we are a 6th-12th grade middle and high school.

The goal of Digital Pioneers Academy (DPA) is to ensure all families and children, from the most equipped to the most underserved, become the creators of the digital economy of the future, not just consumers. Our strategy:

- Launch the first middle school founded on computer science, innovation, and academic rigor in D.C. that will consistently be ranked as a Tier 1 DC public charter school.
- Over the next decade, expand to 3 schools of 6th-12th grades educating over 2,520 students.
- Set expectations in underserved communities nationally that all students must be prepared to thrive in the digital economy and be the innovators of tomorrow.

At DPA, we have ambitious goals that align to our mission of ensuring all scholars are college and career ready. Our goals are directly related to college readiness. We want to ensure DPA is a consistently ranked Tier 1 DC public charter school. This includes our scholars being proficient and advanced in PARCC standardized testing. Our long term goal is to ensure 75% of 8th graders are in the top quartile for MAP reading and math, and 100% of 10th graders in the top quartile of MAP for reading and math. In addition, we want scholars to take the AP computer science test in 10th grade. To achieve these goals, our scholars take rigorous college preparatory core classes, including math, ELA, science and social studies, and computer science.

DPA's model is based on strong Teaching and Culture linked with rigorous Learning that develops DPA Graduates who are innovators for life and prepared for success in college and the careers they choose to pursue. At DPA, every student must complete a rigorous curriculum of Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. We selected standards that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and we take the Common Core to the next level through engaging students in deep, joyful discussions about math and reading. DPA's curriculum also requires Computer Science as a core content area. Every student takes Computer Science and all students develop computational thinking skills, a set of capabilities that can be flexibly applied to succeed in four-year college and in a variety of fields.

Our curricula for all core classes prioritize soft skills as important as the hard skills and have embedded character strengths in our lessons and units. For example, each computer science project focuses on a transferable skill, including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, agility, adaptability, initiative, entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, curiosity, and imagination. The social and emotional wellbeing of our scholars is at the forefront of all our actions as we aim to create a known-loved-and-respected community.

We believe that school culture and climate are as important as academics. Our culture is based on the

values we instill in all students and adults. Our values are: *Innovation, Integrity, Growth, Results, Optimism, Empathy- (II-GROE)*. These values guide our creation of a positive school culture and climate between teachers and scholars. This bond between teachers and students also creates a safe learning environment for our students.

### **ENROLLMENT PREFERENCES**

DPA participates in the My School DC lottery process and will use the common timeline and lottery for enrollment. If the number of applications exceeds the number of spaces available, a lottery is held to determine the order in which scholars are offered seats.

Per the District of Columbia School Reform Act, DPA recognizes two lottery preferences during the open enrollment period: (1) siblings of current DPA scholars (scholars who share a biological parent with a DPA scholar enrolled during the 2018 – 2019 school year), and (2) siblings of scholars who were offered a lottery or waitlist spot for the upcoming school year.

Scholars applying after the open enrollment period will be added to the waitlist on a first-come first-served basis. For more information regarding My School DC, visit <http://www.myschooldc.org/>.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Daily and timely attendance is critical to Digital Pioneers Academy achieving the goal it has for both scholars and community. Scholars are expected to attend school every day that school is in session. Additionally, Scholars are expected to be on time every day. DPA defines an absence as the following:

- A day in which a scholar does not arrive at school at all
- Scholars arriving to school after 11am
- Scholars departing school (and not returning) before 2:30pm

Because daily attendance is critical to the success of the school but also a legal obligation to the city, DPA does have serious consequences for scholars who are frequently absent. While understanding that both sickness, emergencies, bereavement, and other reasons apply to scholar absences, it is critical that scholars put their best efforts into being at school daily. The following are consequences for excessive absences from school:

- If a scholar has 3 or more unexcused absences during scholar orientation (the first 8 days of school), a meeting with the scholar's family will be required immediately to discuss expectations.
- Scholars who reach 3 absences during one quarter, or 5 absences during the year, may be required to complete an attendance recovery plan, a plan intended to make up learning time missed while out of school.
- If a scholar has 10 or more unexcused absences (consecutive or nonconsecutive), DPA will report the absences to Child and Family Services.
- If a scholar has 20 or more consecutive unexcused absences, DPA will take the following action:
  - The scholar may be unenrolled;
  - Attendance data will be reported to Court Social Services and/or the OAG Juvenile Division and Child and Family Services;
  - Retention (repeating a grade) will be considered and the absences may be the primary reason for retention regardless of academic performance.

**How and When to Report Absences:** Parents need to report all absences to the school's Operations Team as soon as the need for absence is known. Additional information will be required for the absence to be excused (see below). If we do not receive notification of the absence in advance, we may call parents to determine the reason for an absence. All documentation of excused absences must be received no later than 5 days following the absence. If documentation is not received in the appropriate timeframe, the

absence will be considered unexcused. Documentation should be sent to [mainoffice@digitalpioneersacademy.org](mailto:mainoffice@digitalpioneersacademy.org).

**What Digital Pioneers Academy Considers an Excused Absence:** DPA makes exceptions for absences based on circumstances and available documentation. See the below list for excusable absences. If a scholar has more than 3 excused absences per quarter or 5 excused absences in a year, the scholar may be required to complete an attendance recovery plan, a plan intended to make up learning time missed while out of school. All absences will be reported as unexcused absences unless the school receives the following documentation within 5 days of the absence:

- For single day absences due to illness, DPA will accept a direct contact from the parent excusing the scholar for up to 3 total absences after which a doctor's note will be required.
- For illnesses lasting longer than a single day, or for scholars with more than 3 total absences a doctor's note is required.
- For regularly scheduled doctor, dentist, or other medical appointments, scholars are only excused for the duration of the appointment and the necessary travel time. Parents must request scholar releases with the scheduled time of the appointment prior to pickup.
- Religious holidays as communicated to the school by parents.
- Parent note indicating there is a family funeral – the child will be excused for the day of the funeral.
- Advance written notice to the Principal indicating that scholar will be visiting their parent or legal guardian, who is in the military; immediately before, during or after deployment.
- Parent note indicating there is a family emergency – emergencies include house fires, house floods, or incidents of violence in the home. An emergency is defined by the presence of an emergency response team (fire, ambulance, police, CPS, etc), unexpected hospitalization of a family member, or unexpected loss of a family member.
- Court documents mandating a court appearance – the child will be excused only for the day(s) indicated on the court documents.

**Long Term Absences:** If your child will be absent for a week or more please contact the office and teachers immediately to make arrangements for assignment completion and to provide adequate time for teachers to plan and prepare for accommodations. Teachers will put forth a reasonable effort to support scholar learning while away or allow for makeup work. DPA does not provide homebound instruction to scholars.

**Late Arrivals, Early Dismissals & Appointments:** If a scholar has a medical or dental appointment or a family emergency, requiring the parent or guardian to come to school requesting an early dismissal, the family should call the operations manager, use one of the school approved messaging systems. All early dismissals are made from the office, not from the classroom. Parents are required to sign-out scholars in-person from the office. The school will not send scholars to waiting or parked cars; parents must come into the office and present identification to the office manager prior to a scholar being released. A scholar will be dismissed early only to a parent or other properly authorized and identified adult. A letter from the parent or guardian properly identifying another adult whom you authorize to pick up your child is required. For appointments occurring prior to 11:00am or after 2:30pm, DPA will only authorize scholar leave for the duration of the appointment and time allotted for transportation to and from the appointment. For example, if a scholar leaves school at 12pm for a two-hour appointment with 30 minutes of travel, they are expected to return to school that day.

**Recovering Missed Work Because of Absence(s):** Scholars are expected to make up all work or learning missed as a consequence of absences, excused or unexcused. Teachers will use their discretion in creating policies for when work must be recovered due to absences. Scholars will be expected to complete missed work by the deadline imposed by the teacher's own policy. For example, if the Computer Science teacher requires that all missed work due to absence be submitted 72 hours after the absence, the scholar must abide by that teacher's policy in order to gain credit for that material.

**Assignment Deadlines on Day of Absence:** Teachers may impose a policy for work due on the date of the absence. Given DPA's digital nature, it is reasonable enough for a teacher to require that work due on a date of absence from a scholar still be submitted by the submission deadline. For example, if an assignment is due in Computer Science and a scholar is absent on that day, it is reasonable that a teacher still requires that material to be submitted electronically. It is the teacher's discretion to determine when and how scholars submit those materials.

**Tardiness:** Timely arrival to school and to each individual class is key to the success of our school and each scholar. Late arrivals are distracting to scholars who are on time and incur a loss of learning for the scholar who is late. At DPA, learning begins the moment a scholar enters the building and into each of their classrooms. Obtaining the goals of our school and the ambitious outcomes of our curriculum means that learning will always be the urgent priority at our school. Tardiness and its resulting distraction greatly limit our ability to achieve those goals. DPA will work with scholars towards habits of timeliness as it is critical to their college and career readiness. Tardiness is defined by a scholar arriving to class later than the allotted start time. For SY2020-21 Remote School and as long as DPA has remote learning measures, scholars must be seated in their first session class (if in-person) or be logged into their Zoom classroom with their uniform and video on by the first class each morning.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

At Digital Pioneers Academy, we utilize a positive behavior support approach to discipline. We believe that all scholars can learn the skills necessary to be successful in school, to demonstrate **DPA's core values and core character strengths**, and to use these skills and values to become successful college scholars.

A positive behavior support system approaches behavior from an educational, proactive perspective that requires positive relationships and a preventative approach, rather than a reactive approach.

### **DPA PROFESSIONALISM SCALE**

Our goal is for our scholars to be the best version of themselves at all times. We are working on being professional at all times to prepare for high school and beyond.

<b>School-Wide Professional Habits</b>	
<b>Expectation</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>100%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 100% of scholars follow directions 100% of the time the first time.</li> <li>● 100% of scholars complete 100% of their class work and homework.</li> <li>● 100% of scholars are always on task.</li> <li>● 100% of scholars are in uniform.</li> </ul>
<b>SPARK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seated: scholars sit up straight in their seat.</li> <li>● Standing: scholars stand up straight, face forward and refrain from leaning on the wall or furniture.</li> </ul>
<b>Tracking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scholars always track the speaker (teacher, peer, or their work at the direction of the teacher).</li> </ul>
<b>Participating in Class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scholars raise their hands in the air with their arm extended to participate.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent work is sustained, silent and remains uninterrupted.</li> <li>• Scholars do not call out or get out of their seat without permission.</li> <li>• Scholars react positively or neutrally when disappointed or challenged in class.</li> </ul>
<b>Speaking &amp; Writing in Class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholars share their thoughts loud enough to be heard by the entire space.</li> <li>• Scholars write and speak in full sentences</li> <li>• Scholars speak at the appropriate volume level</li> </ul>

### **SCHOOL-WIDE UNPROFESSIONAL HABITS**

To create clarity for our scholars, we have outlined some behaviors that will consistently be met with a consequence and will not be allowed at DPA:

- Chewing gum
- Using toys/electronics without permission
- Not following routines
- Misusing or not having the proper pass
- Being in forbidden areas
- Yelling or running in hall
- Getting out of his/her seat without permission
- Showing minor disrespect
- Calling out
- Engaging in side conversations
- Exhibiting inappropriate reactions
- Making negative comment

## **DPA BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

### **OUR APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE**

At DPA, we teach discipline. “Bad or unprofessional behaviors” are viewed as lagging skills - the kinds of things that we can teach and remediate through direct instruction, support, and celebration in the same way we instruct scholars in academic and athletic pursuits.

**The foundation of our approach is strong foundational teacher skills.** We fervently believe our thoughtful planning and practiced execution will set students up for success. Our excellent teachers at DPA understand the importance of their role in creating this foundation for teaching discipline.

**The next component is building relationships and trust.** Our value of empathy- creating a known, loved, and respected community- is critical to our approach to discipline. We know trust is built with consistency, explaining why, and celebrating success. Without strong relationships, any next steps (reminders, corrections, deductions or resets) will be less (or not at all) effective.

### **HIGH EXPECTATIONS HIGH EMPATHY, CONSISTENTLY**

Student compliance is absolutely necessary in our school, but student compliance on its own does not create the *heart* of our school and make our school *feel* like the school experience that we want for our students. Classroom managers establish compliance, but we are no-nonsense nurturers and influencers of culture. As no-nonsense nurturers and influencers of culture we want our students to feel wrapped up in our school and grow their desires to show up and work hard each day. While strong systems of discipline are a starting point, we must push ourselves to execute the habits that we see in strong leaders because this is what will truly transform our classrooms.

Great teachers (no-nonsense nurturers) keep misbehavior offstage, spin more positive narration, read situations, and generally avoid consequences when intent is positive. When done correctly, this builds investment in the class because students see a teacher who is being more reasonable and fair. Consistency is still important and great teachers are indeed still very consistent; however, they are consistent with a set of values in their class and a way of interacting with which students can identify. Since student behaviors can sometimes be very nuanced, implementing High Expectations, High Empathy will push us to understand student behaviors and intent in a way that fosters a truly fairer and enjoyable atmosphere.

**Bottom Line = We must implement techniques to reduce student misbehavior, not reduce our use of the discipline system.**

### **BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

When we build really strong relationships with our students, we are able to leverage those relationships during moments where it's critical that students are meeting expectations to learn and improve. Think about the best relationship you had with a teacher and the difference it made in motivating you to work hard and meet expectations. We want the same to be true for our scholars. This is not saying that we manage classroom misbehavior with relationships. What we are saying is that relationships with our students will set them up to *want* to meet our expectations with students, therefore usually avoiding the need for a consequence to be the lever.

### **Connect Before You Correct**

In our everyday interactions, we remember the good things and the bad things that happen to us. We rarely remember the neutral things. However, it is proven that negative interactions are remembered most often, even when followed by a positive interaction. There are times when negativity, whether real or perceived, will occur but our charge is to turn every moment into a time where students are reminded that we care about them and will seek to find the good in their choices. By seeking out and modeling

positivity we are fostering strong relationships and sending messages of success and hope to our students to combat the negativity that permeates around them.

Great teachers know (and act on) the belief that every moment can be used to strengthen a relationship with a student. Great teachers also go out of their way to ensure positive interactions, especially for those students whom they need to correct later. These positive interactions establish rapport with students and builds good will/influence that can be a huge lever at time of the consequence.

### **KLR In Practice**

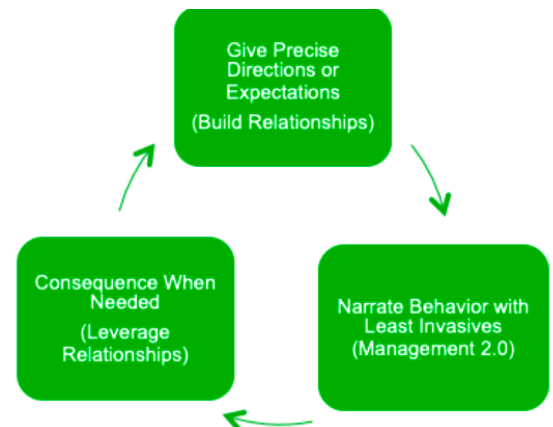
Creating a culture where everyone feels known, loved and respected is essential at DPA. As adults, we must commit to recognize, celebrate, and model KLR throughout the day, for our scholars. As a teacher, you are about to see scholars do amazing things every day. Scholars are going to excel in ways that you might not have thought possible. It's our job to find those moments, name them, celebrate them, and then keep looking for some more!

KLR is defined as giving public praise, using private redirections, framing actions in the positive, keeping whole class redirections short and teachable, and finding moments of private praise. At times it is important to address scholar misbehavior to the group. In those times, we believe in the motto "As private as you can, as public as you must." Above all else, we must operate with our core belief of assuming the best. If a teacher commits to living these elements of positivity, he or she will be on track to creating a culture that is built on trust and love.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CYCLE**

The third component to maintaining expectations is the Behavior Management Cycle. There are many strong techniques that master classroom leaders rely on; however, the strong techniques only work when consistently applied through the Behavior Management Cycle. The process of this cycle is very simple, but only works when used with fidelity. The basics of the cycle are as follows: Set up students for success by giving super clear instructions that leave no room for ambiguity, work for 100% through Narration and other techniques to help 100% of students meet expectations, and finally, issue consequences when absolutely necessary to remind students they are accountable for their choices. Ultimately, the cycle assumes the best in our students and gives them opportunities to meet the expectations before they would ever need a consequence.

In the Behavior Management cycle there are two parts before reaching the consequence: Precise Directions and Narration. In order for students to reasonably meet our expectations we must be explicitly clear about what we are looking for in terms of their actions. We cannot leave anything up to interpretation that could lead to gray area and misbehavior. If we are precise with our directions, we leave no room open for misinterpretation of expectations. However, we must constantly narrate what should happen and how it should happen. This is not praising students, but rather verbally outlining what other students are doing who are meeting expectations.





## **SCHOLAR ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM**

Our expectations are very high, but we remember that we are growing and supporting children who will become great students and great people. We want to build excellent habits now to set up students for a bright future. All of our students can succeed and meet high expectations when we set the bar high and help students reach it.

DPA uses a scholar point system to provide scholars, families, and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of scholar performance. A scholar's weekly point total is impacted by his/her fulfillment of behavioral, academic, and attendance expectations. Because Neutral behavior earns 5 points, scholars have the opportunity to earn points for being present and following basic expectations. Additional points are earned when students earn Professional at the end of class or are awarded High-Fives. Deductions occur for discipline, absences, and tardiness to school. The goal of this system is for scholars to learn self-monitoring and self-discipline with their daily behaviors by providing them constant feedback.

### **High-Fives**

In order to systematize positive recognition, we also implemented a merit program. High-Fives acknowledge individual acts of good citizenship that promote a positive community. Staff members can use this system to acknowledge specific students **exceeding expectations**. This is an important note because students should not earn merits for "stopping at the stop sign" or meeting basic expectations like being prepared. High-Fives are something to be shouted out for and show our students that we are actively on the hunt for positive decision making and leadership. Students love the public recognition and it encourages other students to rise to their fullest potential as well. The only caution with High-Fives is not to use them as a tool to make students behave. For example, don't assign a student who has been refusing to work a High-Fives because he/she finally picked up a pencil. This reinforces a mindset that you must "beg" or "reward" students to get them to meet expectations, which will undermine your leadership.

### **Deductions**

Students who fail to meet defined expectations will earn a deduction if they make choices not to correct. Deductions are delivered fairly to all students and teachers should remain emotionally constant when issuing the consequences. Remember, it's about correcting the misbehavior and gaining 100% because we want to keep all kids in class as much as possible. Identified below are some demerits that students could earn for different behaviors during the school day:

- Disrespect to peer
- Gum
- Ignoring/refusing directions (showing minor disrespect)
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Inappropriate reaction (making negative comments)
- Inappropriate use of technology
- No Pass/Misuse of Pass
- Not following routines
- Off-task
- Out of seat without permission
- Uniform
- Voice Level Infraction (calling out, engaging in side conversation, yelling in the hall)
- Other

### **Community Violation**

At DPA, we have strong teachers. While we can and will ALWAYS hold high expectations for respect and will ALWAYS support teachers, we believe that equipping teachers with an "Automatic Detention" for low level respect issues will better empower them to assert authority (as opposed to outsourcing to dean),

keep kids in class, and reduce “overloading” the Dean’s time (thus allowing the Deans to better follow up on each send out and otherwise build strong culture proactively).

Community Violations should be used only when there has been a clear, intentional break in cultural norms that does not necessitate that a scholar be out of class. It is an automatic detention and the teacher who assigns the CV is responsible for calling home to alert the family. Cultural Violations can be assigned for:

- Destruction or intentional disrespect of property/grounds
- Inappropriate language
- Leaving designated area without permission
- Unwanted and/or inappropriate contact with a peer
- Other- at a teacher’s discretion

### **P/N/U System of Feedback**

Because we view behavior as a skill to be taught, it is our role as educators to teach discipline through direct instruction, support, and celebration in the same way we instruct scholars in academics. The goal, first and foremost, is to be providing them constant feedback. As middle schoolers, they are learning about the world while experiencing it at warp speed. It is crucial for their ability to learn behavior that they be given multiple at-bats each day with immediate coaching from their teacher.

As such, we constantly give our scholars feedback on their behavior in the form of Professional, Neutral and Unprofessional points throughout the day. At the end of each class period, students earn either a P (10 point) an N (5 points) or a U (-5 points). They track their points in their planner. Everyone starts at neutral and must earn professional. They begin each period with a clean slate. It is important that this be a reflection of the entire class period and not the final few minutes. In order for a scholar to “turn it around” from an unprofessional they need to demonstrate sustained neutral to professional behaviors for 10-15 minutes.

Teachers track the PNUs they give out throughout the day and enter the data every night into the data management system. Students log in the following morning to see their behavior data from the previous day and are able to reflect and set goals for their day for themselves based on their data.

### **Positive Incentives**

We believe it is important to consistently recognize those scholars who are working hard and doing well. In the same way that behavioral incentives can motivate students to think about their actions, academic incentives can encourage goal-setting and persistence from scholars. Incentives are never given for ordinary, expected acts. Similarly, incentives connect to the accomplishment for which they are being rewarded. Please see the DPA Culture Manual for a full list of positive Incentives.

### **Detention**

We also believe it is important to have consistent backstops for misbehavior. Primarily, scholars feel the heat from deductions in a loss of points. Additionally, scholars who earn 3 Unprofessionals in a day will be required to serve after school detention on the following day that detention is held.

After school detention will be held Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday from 3:30-4:00PM. The first unit “Detention A” will be from 3:30-3:45PM and the second unit “Detention B” will be from 3:45-4:00. Detention is earned by accumulating three unprofessionals at the end of the previous day, a community violation (automatic detention) or being unable to meet expectations and successfully serve the first unit of detention. Detention is served the following day that detention is held (e.g. Detentions earned on Monday are served on Tuesday, Detentions earned on Tuesdays are served on Thursday), except when a scholar does not serve their first unit of detention at which point they will immediately serve their second detention. Families are notified via auto email/text by 6:30pm the day before a detention is to be served.

## **DEAN INTERVENTIONS**

Deans support classes in two primary ways: resets and removals. We use **resets** within the classroom or right outside the door to keep small things small and address issues that are not causing a safety concern to scholars or the classroom learning environment. We use **removals** to keep the learning environment safe from egregious or sustained unprofessional behavior.

In 99% of situations, we will try and fix early, fix small and avoid an escalated situation by having a dean “push in” BEFORE the scholar needs to be sent out of class. We will try and solve the problem as early as possible and try to keep scholars in class, but we are not lowering our standards for how scholars should behave or what is unacceptable in our classrooms.

### **Restorative Cycle**

If a scholar is removed from their class, they will be required to process their behavior through a reflection to be completed in the Restore and Reboot Center (RRC). Once a scholar has been sent to the RRC, it is imperative that they complete a full, thoughtful and complete reflection of their behavior and are able to close the loop with the referring staff member before returning to class. If the process is not followed with fidelity then it quickly loses its effectiveness for scholars and creates rifts in expectations between adults that leads to inconsistent school culture. Please see the DPA Culture Manual for a detailed description of the entire process.

### **Additional Interventions/Consequences**

If there has been a larger behavior infraction, the dean will propose a consequence to a school leader. Once finalized, the dean communicates additional requirements / consequences to the scholar (in person), teachers (via email) and the family (by phone) within two hours.

### **Progression of Consequences**

When issuing consequences to scholars, the progression at which they occur matters significantly to our scholars. The goal of consequences is to fix the behavior with minimal disruption to class. We are not seeking to implement severe punishments, but rather consequences that are proximate to the action, so scholars connect their misbehavior with a logical consequence.

### **Deductions & Unprofessionals**

- Earned if there is a trend of not meeting sustained expectations (Teacher is using a lot Least Invasives to no discernible effect)
- Earned for not meeting clearly defined default or directed expectations

### **Detention**

- Earned any time a scholar earns 3 Unprofessionals during the day or earns an “Automatic Detention” for slightly more serious (but not referable) behavior

### **Dean Intervention**

Note: We should employ the use of No-nonsense nurturer strategies to intervene with the scholar before the need for a dean intervention arises.

- Dean is called to support in either a reset or a removal
- See chart in section above for more guidance

### **In School Suspension (ISS)**

- Occurs when certain behaviors warrant more severe consequences
- Scholars remain in the RRC and have access to all curriculum and materials

### **OSS**

- Reserved for the most severe infractions
- Scholars are removed from school for a period of 1-5 days
- Scholars must have a meeting to re-enter school

## **IN-SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

In-school disciplinary consequences can include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior Plan

- Behavior/Academic Contract
- Community Conferencing/Restorative Justice
- Conference-Parent, Scholar, Counselor, Teacher, and/or Administrator
- Detention-Before or After School, During Lunch
- Homeroom Change
- Loss of Incentives
- Lunch Detention
- Office Visit
- Parent/Guardian Shadowing
- Peer Mediation
- Phone Call to Parent/Guardian
- Reboot and Restore Center (RRC)
- Reflective Essay (topic to be selected by teacher or administrator)
- Reprimands and Warnings
- Restriction of Participation in After School and/or Extracurricular Activities
- In-School Suspensions

### **OUT-OF-SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

DPA uses short and long-term out-of-school suspensions and expulsions as a last resort for egregious violations of its Culture Manual. It is within the sole discretion of the school leadership team, including Principal, an Assistant Principal or Grade Level Lead, and/or a Dean of Social Emotional Learning, to implement out-of-school disciplinary consequences for these violations.

### **SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS**

A suspension prohibits a scholar from attending school and taking part in any school function for up to and including five days. An expulsion permanently prohibits a scholar from attending school and taking part in any school function.

When a scholar commits an infraction that is eligible for a suspension or expulsion, the school leadership team will timely:

1. Inform the scholar of the infraction.
2. Conduct a thorough investigation.
  - a. Investigations may include but are not limited to (i) gathering statements from the scholar involved and any other individual(s) with knowledge of the incident, (ii) determining the accuracy of the infraction(s) based on this information, and (iii) searching a scholar's locker, desk, bag, etc. if potentially relevant to the incident.
3. Communicate the decision.

Once the investigation is complete, the school leadership team will review the evidence, make a decision about the incident in question using a substantial evidence standard of proof, and timely (i) inform the scholar of the short-suspension and the reason(s) for the disciplinary action and (ii) notify the parent/guardian by—

- Communicating the decision to them directly via telephone or in-person.
- Sending a Notice of Disciplinary Action, by the end of the school day when possible, that
- includes:
  - The length of the suspension.
  - The scholar's right to return to school at the end of the suspension.
  - The right to appeal and information regarding DPA's appeal procedures.
  - If it is not possible to provide written notification by the end of the school day, DPA will arrange for notification to be emailed within 24 hours.
- 4. Include a copy of this notification in the scholar's cumulative file.

### **APPEALING SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS**

The appeal process is as follows:

1. Submit request to appeal in writing.
  - Parents/guardians of DPA scholars must submit a written request to appeal the disciplinary decision to a member of the school leadership team within one school day of being notified of the suspension.
2. Schedule appeal hearing.
  - A member of the school leadership team will attempt to schedule the Appeal Hearing within two days of receiving the written request to appeal. If the parent/guardian fails to appear for the scheduled Appeal Hearing, the right to appeal is waived, and the original disciplinary decision will stand.
3. Conduct appeal hearing.
  - A member of the school leadership team will conduct the Appeal Hearing, which may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present.
  - The scholar subject to suspension, parents/guardians and one additional adult may represent the scholar at the hearing.
  - Requests to appoint a third-party individual to attend the hearing in the parent/guardian's absence must be submitted in writing no less than 24 hours before the hearing.
  - Appeal Hearings are closed to the public, cannot be video recorded under any circumstances, and can only be audio recorded as required to provide accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
    - Requests to audio record an Appeal Hearing must be submitted to a member of the school leadership team no less than 48 hours before to the hearing.
    - During the Appeal Hearing, a school staff member may take shorthand notes, a copy of which will be provided to the parent/guardian at the conclusion of the hearing.
4. Communicate final decision.
  - After the Appeal Hearing, a member of the school leadership team (who was not involved in the original discipline decision) will (i) review the evidence, (ii) apply an arbitrary and capricious standard of review when determining whether to uphold or overturn the initial decision, and (iii) communicate the final decision within three school days to the parent/guardian.
  - If the suspension is overturned, the scholar's cumulative record and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

### **SPECIAL NOTES CONCERNING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

Suspension days shall be counted as follows:

- If the scholar is suspended before 12:00 PM, that day shall be counted as a part of the suspension.
- The suspension terminates at 12:00 AM on the day identified as the last day of suspension on the Notice of Disciplinary Action letter.
- Days when school is officially closed shall not to be counted as part of the suspension time (e.g. holidays, parent/teacher conferences).

If a Discipline or Appeal Hearing is postponed for any reason, the additional days the scholar remained out of school will be taken into consideration when determining the hearing outcome.

- If a parent/guardian prevents their scholar from returning to school once a suspension is complete and does not provide a valid excuse pursuant to DPA's Attendance Policy, those absences will be recorded unexcused.

School staff will work with families to develop a plan for continued education to ensure scholars are provided with make-up classwork during out of school suspensions. Upon returning to school, scholars will also have the opportunity to complete classwork missed during out of school suspensions.

Scholars who are suspended from school shall not be eligible to participate in any school functions and

are prohibited from being on DPA property for the duration of the suspension. Scholars who are expelled from school are permanently barred from participating in school functions and/or being on DPA property, even as a spectator or visitor.

## **DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) is an important discipline procedure under the IDEA. At Digital Pioneers Academy, the IEP team examines the relationship between a student's disability and his/her misconduct. An MDR must occur when the team proposes to take specified serious disciplinary actions.

Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a student with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the LEA, the parent, and the relevant members of the student's IEP Team must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, suspension records, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability; or if the conduct in question was the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP.

If it is determined that the scholar's behavior is a manifestation of the scholar's disability, the scholar—absent extenuating circumstances—will receive consequences consistent with 34 CFR § 300.530(f), including the return of the scholar to the educational placement as appropriate. The IEP Team will either: 1. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless the LEA had conducted a functional behavioral assessment before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the student; or 2. If a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior, and return the student to the placement from which the he/she was removed, unless the parent and the LEA agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan or IEP.

If the team determined that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the disciplinary action may be applied with the provision that the LEA must continue to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If a scholar with a disability is suspended, DPA will make up specialized instruction and related services following that scholar's suspension, consistent with 34 CFR §300.530(d), and, if necessary, provide services at its administrative offices following that scholar's expulsion, pending their enrollment in another public agency.

## **INFRACTIONS & SAFETY VIOLATIONS**

The following infractions will be addressed with urgency. Violations in this category make it difficult for learning to proceed as successfully as it did before the violation occurred. These infractions may result in immediate removal from class, referral to the Reboot and Restore Center (RRC), out of school suspension, recommendation for a parent meeting, a disciplinary conference or, in rare cases, an expulsion hearing. A school leader, including Principal, Assistant Principals or Grade Level Leads, and/or Dean of Social Emotional Learning, may determine additional consequences or interventions (in addition to or in lieu of referral to the Restorative Center or out of school suspension) for scholars involved in safety violations. Scholars may not be allowed to ride the school bus, participate in co-curricular activities or attend any and all DPA sponsored functions. Scholars may be encouraged to participate in restorative repair actions.

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b>
Cultural Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not following geographic directions</li> <li>• Showing disrespect to others combined with failing to reflect and respond appropriately to correction</li> <li>• Disrupting learning of others in the classroom or hallway combined with failing to reflect and respond appropriately to correction</li> <li>• Saying or doing things that make others feel unsafe</li> <li>• Being negative about oneself, the school or others and not responding to redirection</li> <li>• Refusing to work in class after being redirected multiple times</li> </ul>	Reset in RRC and return to class
Failure to serve assigned consequence/ turn in electronic devices (cell phones)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholar has a cell phone or device visibly on and/or audible: Teacher requests confiscation of phone and the scholar refuses.</li> </ul>	See cell phone policy for more details. Scholar may be assigned to Restorative Center
Destruction of property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vandalism, graffiti or damage to the building or another person's property.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Obscene behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging in behavior of a sexual nature including consensual sexual activity at school or a school function and possession of sexual images in any form (e.g., computer, book, magazine, phone, drawing, etc.)</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Hate speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using language that undermines the dignity of a race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, exceptionality, etc.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Bullying/harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwanted or repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture. See "Bullying" section of handbook for more details.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC- Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Cyber bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwanted or repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture through any use of technology. Cyber bullying can occur on or off school property. See "Bullying" section of handbook for more details.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Leaving campus during school hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaving campus during school hours and/or attempting to leave and return to campus.</li> </ul>	Removal from class with possible reflection and reset or full day depending on the circumstances. School leaders of deans will conference with the scholar, identify the challenge, and come up with steps to ensure scholar can be successful in classes.
Tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using or possessing tobacco on campus, the school bus or at any school function.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Lighter/ Matches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using or possessing tobacco or a lighter on campus, the school bus, or at any school function.</li> </ul>	Contraband will be confiscated. Scholar will have a restorative conversation with school leader (principal/dean) if possession only, then be allowed to attend class if it is his/her first offense. If it is the scholar's second offense or if he/she used the item the scholar will be referred to RRC for further action.

Trespassing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unauthorized entering onto school property without permission. Or, when an individual who has been given prior notice that entry onto or use of the property has been denied, or who remains on the property once notified of the request to leave does not. This includes unauthorized presence of a scholar on school property while on a restrictive access, suspension, or expulsion.</li> </ul>	Removal from campus and possible referral to RRC upon return to school. Police notification if individual refuses to leave the school property
Sexual harassment or assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidation, bullying, or coercion of a sexual nature. Sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 2 day removal from classes. Sexual assault will result in recommendation for expulsion.
Theft/stealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theft or stealing (property valued over \$500.00 is greater penalty)</li> </ul>	Referral to RRCr- Minimum 2 day removal from classes.
Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possessing alcoholic beverages on campus or at a school function.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC- Minimum 3-day removal from classes. Required parent meeting. Required drug/alcohol counseling.
False alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulls fire alarm / bomb threat/ discharging a fire extinguisher.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRCr- Minimum 3-day removal from classes. Required parent meeting.
Arson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentional damage to property by any explosive substance or setting fire to any property.</li> </ul>	Police- Expulsion filed. If scholar is released from police custody, he or she will be referred to RRCr or to an out-of-school suspension for a minimum of 5 school days or until expulsion hearing outcome is determined.
Threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threatening a scholar or adult member of the community (e.g. "If you ___ then I'll ___").</li> </ul>	Removal from class with possible reflection and reset or 1-2 day removal from classes depending on the circumstances. A school leader/dean will conference with the scholar, complete a cool down plan, identify the challenge and come up with steps to ensure the safety of all parties.
Verbally or physically inciting violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A verbal altercation where a scholar is trying to physically fight another person and has to be restrained/held back to ensure the safety of others/or self.</li> <li>• Encouraging others to fight (pushing another person into a fight) or "bumping" someone in passing to provoke a fight OR a situation where a fight is going to happen or is happening and a scholar runs toward it and does not seek help or tell the scholars to stop.</li> <li>• Collegiate Baton Rouge takes seriously the actions of those who stand by to watch a fight or encourage it with words or gestures. Such actions are labeled inciting violence. The acceptable actions in the vicinity of a fight are: 1) telling the participants to stop and/or 2) getting an adult to help. Any other response is considered inciting violence.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC- Minimum 1 day removal from classes. A school leader/dean will conference with the scholar, identify the challenge and come up with steps to ensure scholar can safely return to classes.



Verbal altercation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal arguments between two or more members of the community.</li> </ul>	Removal from class with possible reflection and reset or 1-2 day removal from classes depending on the circumstances. A school leader/dean will conference with the scholar, complete a cool down plan, identify the challenge and come up with steps to ensure the safety of all parties.
Fighting or unwanted physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included but not limited to: fighting with physical contact outside of classroom or in the parking lot; fighting with physical contact in the classroom or cafeteria; fighting with physical contact on the bus or at any other school function on or off campus. Fighting that takes place off campus and creates a safety concern on campus.</li> <li>• We believe that when presented with a potential altercation with another scholar, a scholar should: walk away or seek adult assistance. Ignoring attempts at violence and/or seeking an adult's help are encouraged and rewarded; fighting back is not the best option and will carry the same penalties as those for any other individual involved in the violence. When a scholar is involved with a fight (where physical contact is made between two parties, including pushing, incident reports will be collected, parents will be notified, mediations will be scheduled and a return to community plan will be developed. Scholars involved in a fight may be out of the classroom for up to five school days.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 3-day removal from classes. Required parent meeting. Required peer mediation and restorative practices. If repeat or severe offense, scholar may be assigned out of school suspension.
Weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying or possessing a weapon on campus or a school-related function. This includes firearms, knives or any instrument that is used (or which is intended to be used) to harm another individual. This also includes look-a-like weapons and something intended for other purposes but used as a weapon.</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC - Minimum 5-day removal from classes. Corrective action determined based on investigation of circumstances. Out of school suspension may be assigned for up to five school days. Police may be notified and expulsion may be filed.
Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possessing, distributing, selling, giving, or loaning any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law (including over-the-counter prescription medications).</li> </ul>	Referral to RRC- Minimum 5-day removal from classes. Required parent meeting. Required drug/alcohol counseling. Recommendation for conference or expulsion hearing depending on circumstances. Police may be notified.

Please note that DPA reserves the right to:

- Involve outside agencies as necessary, including CFSA, a drug rehabilitation facility, etc.;
- Involve MPD for infractions that pose a serious and immediate threat to school safety as indicated below; and,

Take disciplinary action against scholars who are present during and witness to any of the below infractions if they do not cooperate with school administration during the course of investigation.

### **PROMOTION AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

The most important aspect of DPA is encouraging effective effort in our scholars to achieve outstanding academic achievement. We have set very high academic goals for all scholars and we have worked tirelessly to coach and inspire scholars to reach these goals. DPA established standards for promotion because we believe that without achieving these goals, we cannot be confident that our scholars will be able to achieve our mission.

Scholars who accumulate more than 15 absences during the school year will be considered for retention in their current grade-level. Please note that absences resulting from out-of-school suspensions are not excused. Scholars who fail two or more of their core curriculum classes for the year will be retained in their current grade level as a matter of policy.

When a scholar's academic performance, or attendance behavior, triggers consideration for retention, as described in the promotion policies above, the school principal will immediately notify the scholar and his/her parents.

Promotion recommendations will be made by classroom teachers, and final promotion decisions will be made by the principal. The school reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy given special circumstances. During the planning year, the leadership team will develop specific policies regarding scholar retention that include:

- The number of absences after which retention will be considered;
- The number of days tardy after which retention will be considered; and
- How significant a deviation from expected academic progress under which retention will be considered.

## **THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

Education records are considered confidential documents protected by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, a federal law designed to protect the privacy of, and provide access to, scholar education records. FERPA gives parents, legal guardians and scholars age 18 and older certain rights with respect to their education records, including, but not limited to:

- The right to inspect and review education records within 45 days
- The right to seek to amend education records
- The right to have some control over the disclosure of information from education records

### Education Records

Education records are defined as those records that contain information directly related to a scholar and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. Local education agencies (LEAs) are the main custodians of these records, not OSSE.

Education records include (but may not be limited to):

- For schools and LEAs – enrollment, grades, class schedule, assessment scores, academic standing, academic transcripts, and special education records
- For OSSE – enrollment, assessment scores, and special education records

### Eligible Requesters

The law gives parents, legal guardians, and scholars age 18 and older the right to access the education records within 45 days, upon request for themselves or for a third party, such as an attorney. OSSE does not release education records without written and signed consent, consistent with FERPA.

### Request Process

FERPA applies to public schools, LEAs, juvenile justice educational programs and state education agencies. As LEAs are the official, comprehensive source of scholar information, requests for scholar records should first be directed to the scholar's LEA:

- If the scholar attends a school that is part of District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) (or attended a DCPS school that is now closed), [request scholar records](#).
- If the scholar attends an open District of Columbia public charter school, [information about on how to access scholar records](#).
- If the scholar attended a District of Columbia public charter school that is no longer in operation, information about how to access scholar records is available by calling (202) 328-2660 or emailing [dcpublic@dcpcsb.org](mailto:dcpublic@dcpcsb.org).

In the event a requester is unable to obtain the record(s) requested from the LEA, after the **45th** day, the requester may reach out to OSSE by completing the following steps:

- Submit a request, via email, along with a completed and signed [Education Records Disclosure Authorization Form](#) and documentation that shows when and to whom the requests were made of the LEA, to Yvonne Huelcher at [Yvonne.Huelcher@dc.gov](mailto:Yvonne.Huelcher@dc.gov).
- Upon receipt, OSSE will review requests and process them in accordance with the guidance set forth under FERPA.

For additional information on FERPA, please visit the [US Department of Education's website](#). For any questions related to OSSE's process, please contact Yvonne Huelcher at [Yvonne.Huelcher@dc.gov](mailto:Yvonne.Huelcher@dc.gov).

### **Education Records Amendment Request Form**

Parents and guardians of scholars who are minors and scholars who have reached the age of 18 or who are attending a postsecondary institution at any age may request an amendment to education records that may be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of a scholar's privacy rights. This form permits a parent, guardian or adult scholar to request the amendment or removal of specific education records held by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

Access the [Education Records Amendment Request Form](#)

## **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary scholars certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- Consent before scholars are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)–
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the scholar or scholar’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the scholar or scholar’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the scholar or scholar’s parent; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a scholar out of –
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a scholar, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from scholars for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from scholars for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, scholars or educational institutions.)
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –
  1. Protected information surveys of scholars and surveys created by a third party;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from scholars for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a scholar who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Digital Pioneers Academy has policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect scholar privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Digital Pioneers Academy will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Digital Pioneers Academy will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of scholars who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Digital Pioneers Academy will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from scholars for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.

- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

DPA is committed to ensuring that all of its employees act in conformity with federal and District of Columbia non-discrimination laws, including Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977.

Accordingly, DPA provides educational opportunities without regard to, and does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment, and discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, related medical conditions, breastfeeding, and reproductive health decisions), age, marital status, personal appearance (including body type/size), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or credit information.

Employees found to have engaged in prohibited discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **PROHIBITED HARASSMENT**

Harassment is a form of discrimination.

- Prohibited harassment includes:
  - Any unwelcome physical, verbal, nonverbal, or electronic conduct
  - Based on an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment, and discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, related medical conditions, breastfeeding, and reproductive health decisions), age, marital status, personal appearance (including body type/size), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or credit information
    - That is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it adversely affects a scholar's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity (e.g., greater difficulty concentrating or studying, fear of going to class, lower grades, skipping a class or activity to avoid a harasser).
- Prohibited sexual harassment of a scholar by another scholar includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication (including electronic communication) of a sexual nature that adversely affects the scholar in the ways set forth above.

- Prohibited dating violence against one scholar by another scholar includes abusive or coercive behavior where a dating partner uses threats of, or actually uses physical, emotional, economic, technological, or sexual abuse to exert power or control over a current or former dating partner.
- Prohibited sexual harassment of a scholar by a school employee includes both welcome AND unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication (including electronic communication) of a sexual nature.

A hostile work environment exists if the harassment is sufficiently serious that it denies or limits the complainant's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's program (e.g., skipping class, dropping out of an activity, having trouble concentrating in class).

Employees or scholars found to have engaged in prohibited harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. DPA will not assist individuals who we know or have a probable cause to believe engaged in prohibited harassment with finding employment, except as required by law.

#### PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION

Retaliation includes any adverse action taken against an individual because they reported discrimination, provided information about an act of discrimination, or witnessed an act of discrimination. DPA prohibits retaliation against any individual who has made a complaint pursuant to this policy in good faith, assisted in an investigation, or otherwise exercised rights protected by law. DPA also prohibits taking any adverse action against an individual based on an unsubstantiated allegation or rumor of harassment.

#### REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any individual, including a scholar, parent/guardian, or visitor, who believes conduct that violates this policy has occurred should report the alleged acts pursuant to our Complaint Policy. Individuals should report potential violations of this policy to a teacher, counselor, Principal, or Director of Finance and Operations. A school employee who receives a report of harassment or who should reasonably know about an incident of harassment shall notify the Director of Finance and Operations and CEO immediately.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) prohibits DPA from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint alleging discrimination with OCR, contact OCR at:

Mail: Office for Civil Rights, District of Columbia Office  
Attention: Director U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
Fax: (202) 453-6021  
Web: [www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintprocess.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintprocess.html)

For more information, please contact OCR at:  
(202) 453-6020 (voice);  
800-877-8339 (TDD); or  
[ocr.dc@ed.gov](mailto:ocr.dc@ed.gov)

## **GRIEVANCE/BOARD COMPLAINT POLICY**

***Non-Discrimination Policy:*** Digital Pioneers Academy provides educational opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, disability or physical ability. Additionally, DPA prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, disability, or age in any matters involving its scholars, staff, programming, service providers, or families. This policy is governed by the Governance Board for DPA. Any questions regarding the regulation of or administration of school policies should be submitted to the DPA Principal.

***Grievance Policy:*** Any scholar, parent/guardian, employee or employment applicant who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, disability, or physical ability may discuss and/or file a grievance with the school's Principal or Chair of the Board of Directors. Reporting should be submitted in writing within 40 calendar days of the alleged discrimination.

Members of the Board of Directors designated to receive grievance complaints. Please submit complaints below:

Board of Trustees, Digital Pioneers Academy  
board@digitalpioneersacademy.org  
709 12th St. SE  
Washington, D.C., 20003