

DIGITAL PIONEERS

ACADEMY

SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

2024-2025

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.

SY 24-25 Attendance Plan

Digital Pioneers Academy maintains a goal that 95% of our scholars have 90%+ daily attendance. In order to achieve this goal we must engage parents as partners, engage scholars in the classroom, and be consistent in our efforts around attendance.

When scholars are not in school, they are not in front of high quality instructors, receiving high quality instruction. Scholars who are Chronically Absent and/or truant, on average, see a 20% decrease in proficiency & growth, compared to scholars with satisfactory attendance. It is mission critical for scholars to have satisfactory attendance this school year.

The metrics around attendance have changed, in the past schools were rated based on their truancy rates (Scholars with 10 or more unexcused absences). This year the DCPCSB will evaluate a school's attendance health based on Chronic Absenteeism Rates (90% attendance or Less than 18 total absences).

Excused Absences

The following absences may be classified as an excused absence upon submission of a parent/guardian note and, if required, supporting documentation.

- Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for a student absent five or more consecutive days)
- **Illness of a child for parenting students (a doctor's note is required for a student absent five or more consecutive days)**
- Medical or dental appointments for the student; • Death in the student's immediate family
- COVID or Contagious Health Emergency
- **Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding or court-ordered activity, as a party to the action or under subpoena.**
- Observance of a religious holiday.
- **Absences to allow students to visit their parent or guardian, who is in the military immediately before, or immediately after deployment;**
- **An emergency or other circumstance approved by DPA.**
- College visits for students in 9th through 12th grades (up to three cumulative days in a school year)
- **School visits for students in K through 8th grades.**
- Absences of expectant or parenting students for a time period specified by their doctor and any accommodations mandated by law
- **Take Our Children to Work Day**
- Religious events or celebrations outside of a religious holiday (up to five cumulative days in a school year).

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

Excuse Notes: Parents can write notes to excuse scholars for any of the above absences for up to 4 consecutive days. When absences last for 5 or more days further documentation needs to be provided - Doctors note, funeral arrangements, court docs, COVID test..etc Emails, Texts, Written notes, and

High School Interventions

1st Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Call home - walk through the attendance policy.
- Letter Sent Home - No

3rd Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** In School Meeting with a grade level dean and call home during the meeting
- Letter Sent Home - Yes

5th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Student Support Team - SST meeting (Required by DC Law) to help students work on attendance issues. SST meetings should include the school dean, a teacher, an administrator, social worker, and Parent.
- Letter Sent Home - Yes

7th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Members of the SST team conduct a home visit.
- Letter Sent Home - Yes

10th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Mandatory IN PERSON - Attendance Meeting, during this meeting scholar is placed on an [Attendance Recovery Plan](#).

12th Missed Day - Written Warning

- **Recommended Intervention:** Letter is sent home to the family informing them of their scholars attendance.

15th Missed Day - DOH/DHS Referral

- **Recommended Intervention:** Court Referral / DOH Referral is made - all documentation must be complied, and sent to the Court/DOH for review.

18th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Scholar has surpassed the Chronic Absenteeism Threshold for the year - The scholar is at risk of summer school. In order to avoid summer school the scholar must meet their MAP Goals and pass all of their classes.

30 Missed days

- **Recommended Intervention** - Mandatory Family Conference - Social worker, Dean, Principal, Teacher and Parent (No Scholar). Family is informed that their scholar must attend Credit Recovery to be promoted/graduate.

20 Consecutive Days Missed

- **Recommended Intervention:** Email the withdrawal letter to parent and make a phone call to student's home to notify parent/guardian that the student is eligible to be withdrawn from school. If no response is received then we will send a final email stating that we are going to withdraw the student. The Enrollment Team then removes the scholar from the roster.

Middle School Interventions

1st Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Call home - walk through the attendance policy.
- Letter Sent Home - No

3rd Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** In School Meeting with a grade level dean and call home during the meeting
- Letter Sent Home - Yes

5th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Student Support Team - SST meeting (Required by DC Law) to help students work on attendance issues. SST meetings should include the school dean, a teacher, an administrator, social worker, and Parent.
- Letter Sent Home - Yes

7th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Members of the SST team conduct a home visit or an In Person Parent Meeting is held. The Scholar will be placed on an [Attendance Recovery Plan](#).
- Letter Sent Home - Yes

10th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** CFSA Report is made - all documentation must be compiled, and sent to CFSA for review.
- Letter Sent - Yes

12th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Letter is sent home to the family informing them of their scholars attendance.

18th Missed Day

- **Recommended Intervention:** Scholar has surpassed the Chronic Absenteeism Threshold for the year - The scholar is at risk of summer school. In order to avoid summer school the scholar must meet their MAP Goals and pass all of their classes.

30 Missed days

- **Recommended Intervention** - Mandatory Family Conference - Social worker, Dean, Principal, Teacher and Parent (No Scholar). Family is informed that their scholar must attend Summer school to be promoted.

20 Consecutive Days Missed

- **Recommended Intervention:** Email the withdrawal letter to parent and make a phone call to student's home to notify parent/guardian that the student is eligible to be withdrawn from school. If no response is received then we will send a final email stating that we are going to withdraw the student. The Enrollment Team then removes the scholar from the roster.

CAASS - Entry & Exit System

- All scholars are provided with a CAASS One Card and are required to carry it with them at all times.
- All scholars will use their CAASS One Card to scan in every morning - this scan marks scholars present for the day.
- All scholars who leave for early dismissal will use their CAASS One Card to scan out.

Parent Resources and the Law

- [OSSE Attendance and Truancy Resources for Schools](#)
- [Attendance and Truancy Resources for Parents](#)

ASPIRE Framework

Chronic Absenteeism Rate				
Student Group	PK – 8		HS	
	Floor	Target	Floor	Target
All Students	62.5	12.9	81.9	23.4
Economically Disadvantaged	69.5	29.5	86.1	30.5
Not Economically Disadvantaged	48.7	8.6	69.6	13.6
Students with Disabilities	71.4	23.7	85.8	36.7
Emerging Multilingual Learners	49.9	10.3	69.6	13.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	18.2	1.5	35.7	7.3
Black/African-American	63.5	19.0	81.7	24.8
Hispanic/Latino of any race	49.9	10.5	71.6	23.4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Metric Calculation

$$\left(\frac{\text{The count of students who were absent 10\% or more of the instructional days in which they were enrolled in school}}{\text{The number of students with unduplicated enrollment records for the minimum instructional days at the school}} \right) \times 100$$

Measure Description

This measure is the percentage of enrolled students who were absent, including both excused and unexcused partial and full-day absences, for at least 10.0% of enrolled instructional days.

Team Action Plan

- Present plan to other school leadership for any feedback
- Update student attendance policy in student handbook to reflect the “attendance plan”

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.

School-Wide Professional Habits	
Expectation	Description
100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of scholars follow directions 100% of the time the first time. • 100% of scholars complete 100% of their class work and homework. • 100% of scholars are always on task. • 100% of scholars are in uniform.
SPARK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seated: scholars sit up straight in their seat. • Standing: scholars stand up straight, face forward and refrain from leaning on the wall or furniture.
Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholars always track the speaker (teacher, peer, or their work at the direction of the teacher).
Participating in Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholars raise their hands in the air with one arm extended to participate. • Independent work is sustained, silent and remains uninterrupted. • Scholars do not call out or get out of their seats without permission. • Scholars react positively or neutrally when disappointed or challenged in class. • Scholars are actively engaged in the lesson
Speaking & Writing in Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholars share their thoughts loud enough to be heard by the entire space. • Scholars write and speak in complete sentences • Scholars speak at the appropriate volume level

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:

- Eating at unauthorized times
- Using toys/electronics without permission
- 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 and major disrespect
- Calling out (speaking without raising hand and receiving permission)
- 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

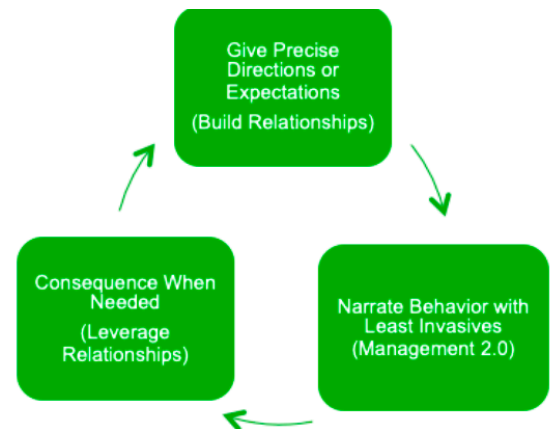
Creating a culture where everyone feels known, loved and respected is essential at DPA. As adults, we must commit to recognize, celebrate, and model KLR throughout the day, for our scholars. As a teacher, you are about to see scholars do amazing things every day. Scholars are going to excel in ways that 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.

Merits

In order to systematize positive recognition, we also implemented a merit program. Merits acknowledge individual acts of value implementation 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. Merits 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 Merits 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 Merits 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 deductions that students could earn for different behaviors during the school day:

- Disrespect to peer or staff member
- Eating at unauthorized times
- Ignoring/refusing directions (showing minor/major disrespect)
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Inappropriate reaction (making negative comments)
- Inappropriate use of technology
- No Pass/Misuse of Pass
- Off-task
- Out of seat without permission
- Uniform
- Voice Level Infraction (calling out, engaging in side conversation, yelling in the hall)

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. Community 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

Cell Phone Policy

In order to provide a safe and productive learning environment, DPA must remain cell phone free during the school day. Scholars are required to turn in their cell phone into the designated box in their homeroom. Teachers will return phones to scholars at the start of the last transition. If families need to reach scholars during the school day, families may contact scholars via the Main Office, Deans or classroom teachers.

If a cell phone is seen throughout the school day and scholars refuse to turn in their cell phone, the cell phone will be taken and the parent will be responsible for picking it up. For the first infraction, scholars will receive an automatic lunchtime RRC. For the second infraction, scholars will receive a parent conference and loss of monthly incentive. For the third infraction, scholars will receive an in school suspension (ISS).

HS

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.

Reset and Reboot Center (RRC)

We also believe it is important to have consistent backstops for misbehavior. Primarily, in Middle School scholars feel the heat from deductions in a loss of points. Additionally, scholars who earn 3 resets in one class period will be required to serve lunch RRC.

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

- 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

RRC

- Earned any time a scholar earns 3 resets during a class period earns an "Automatic Detention" for slightly more serious (but not referable) behavior

Dean Intervention

- We 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

Out of School (OSS)

- Reserved for the most severe infractions
- Scholars are removed from school for a period of 1-5 days. Scholars may receive a 10- day suspension for egregious behavior that threatens the safety of the DPA community.
- 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, Saturdays
- Homeroom Change
- Loss of Incentives
- 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 Culture, to implement out-of-school disciplinary consequences for these violations.

SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

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

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 to the scholar, family and teachers.

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, the next business day shall be counted as the first day 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 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. 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.

Infraction	Definition	Corrective Action
Cultural Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not following geographic directions • Showing disrespect to others combined with failing to reflect and respond appropriately to correction • Disrupting learning of others in the classroom or hallway combined with failing to reflect and respond appropriately to correction • Saying or doing things that make others feel unsafe • Being negative about oneself, the school or others and not responding to redirection • Refusing to work in class after being redirected multiple times 	Reset in RRC and return to class
Failure to serve assigned consequence/ turn in electronic devices (cell phones)	• Scholar has a cell phone or device visibly on and/or audible: Teacher requests confiscation of phone and the scholar refuses.	See cell phone policy for more details. Scholar may be assigned to Restorative Center
Destruction of property	• Vandalism, graffiti or damage to the building or another person's property.	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Obscene behavior	• 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.)	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Hate speech	• Using language that undermines the dignity of a race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background, exceptionality, etc.	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Bullying/harassment	• Unwanted or repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture. See "Bullying" section of handbook for more details.	Referral to RRC- Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Cyber bullying	• 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.	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes

Leaving campus during school hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving campus during school hours and/or attempting to leave and return to campus. 	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"> Using or possessing tobacco on campus, the school bus or at any school function. 	Referral to RRC - Minimum 1 day removal from classes
Lighter/ Matches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using or possessing tobacco or a lighter on campus, the school bus, or at any school function. 	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"> 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. 	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"> Intimidation, bullying, or coercion of a sexual nature. Sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. 	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"> Theft or stealing (property valued over \$500.00 is greater penalty) 	Referral to RRCr- Minimum 2 day removal from classes.
Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possessing alcoholic beverages on campus or at a school function. 	Referral to RRC- Minimum 3-day removal from classes. Required parent meeting. Required drug/alcohol counseling.
False alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pulls fire alarm / bomb threat/ discharging a fire extinguisher. 	Referral to RRCr- Minimum 3-day removal from classes. Required parent meeting.
Arson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional damage to property by any explosive substance or setting fire to any property. 	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"> Threatening a scholar or adult member of the community (e.g. "If you __ then I'll ____"). 	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"> • 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. • 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. • 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. 	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"> • Verbal arguments between two or more members of the community. 	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"> • 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. • 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. 	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"> • 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. 	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"> • Possessing, distributing, selling, giving, or loaning any controlled dangerous substance governed by the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law (including over-the-counter prescription medications). 	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.
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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. 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@dcpsb.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.
- 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.

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](#)

DIRECTORY INFORMATION AND OPT-OUT PROCESS

Digital Pioneers Academy may designate certain student information as "Directory Information," which may be disclosed without prior consent. Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Email address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major fields of study
- Date of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

Parents or eligible students (students who are 18 years old or older) who wish to opt-out of the disclosure of directory information must submit a written request to the school administration. This

request should specify which information they do not wish to be disclosed. The opt-out request will remain in effect for the duration of the student's enrollment at Digital Pioneers Academy unless it is revoked in writing.

For the purposes of student privacy and access to education records, a "School Official" is defined as any person employed by Digital Pioneers Academy as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school's board of trustees; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A "Legitimate Educational Interest" is defined as a school official's need to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. This includes tasks directly related to a student's education, the discipline of a student, providing a service or benefit relating to the student or student's family, such as health care, counseling, job placement, or financial aid, and maintaining the safety and security of the campus.

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

For more information, please contact OCR at:
 (202) 453-6020 (voice);
 800-877-8339 (TDD); or
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:

PROCESS FOR RESOLVING PARENT/STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Digital Pioneers Academy (DPA) is committed to addressing any concerns or complaints that parents or students may have. The process for resolving complaints is as follows:

Initial Concern: The parent or student should first discuss the issue with the relevant teacher or staff member involved. Often, many issues can be resolved at this level through open communication.

Escalation to School Leadership: If the issue is not resolved after speaking with the teacher or staff member, the parent or student should then bring the concern to the attention of the school leadership, specifically the Principal or Assistant Principal. The concern should be submitted in writing, detailing the issue and the steps already taken to address it.

Escalation to Administration: If the parent or student feels the issue has not been adequately addressed by the school's leadership, they may escalate the complaint to the CEO Mashea Ashton. Complaints to the CEO should be submitted in writing, addressed to the CEO, and include all prior correspondence and a detailed explanation of the unresolved issue.

Final Decision: If the parent or student feels the issue has not been adequately addressed by the CEO Mashea Ashton, they may escalate the complaint to the Board of Trustees. Complaints to the Board of Trustees should be submitted in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees Mary Wells, and include all prior correspondence and a detailed explanation of the unresolved issue.

The Board of Trustees will review the complaint and provide a final decision on the matter. This decision will be communicated in writing to the parent or student.

DPA is committed to handling all complaints with transparency and in a timely manner.

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