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| <b>Regional School Unit 73 Board of Directors</b>   | <b>CODE: JICIA</b><br>Page 1 |
| <b>SUBJECT: Weapons, Violence and School Safety</b> |                              |
| <b>DATE OF ORIGINAL POLICY:</b>                     | <b>Jan. 24, 2002</b>         |
| <b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>                         | 2018                         |
| <b>CANCELS POLICY CODE:</b>                         | None                         |
| <b>REVISION DATE:</b>                               | None                         |
| <b>JURISDICTION:</b>                                | <b>RSU 73 Schools</b>        |

**POLICY: WEAPONS, VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL SAFETY**

The RSU 73 Board believes that students and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of violence, threats and disruptive behavior. Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, reasonable unwritten behavior expectations, and applicable state and federal laws.

**Grades K-5**

School staff will deal with incidents of prohibited conduct by students on an individual basis. All incidents of prohibited conduct by students will be recorded by completing a Checklist of Violent Characteristics, and parents/guardians notified. If deemed necessary by the involved staff, the incident will be reported to the school principal/designee for investigation and appropriate action. The school principal/designee may, at his/her discretion, suspend the student for 1-10 school days, refer the student to the School Psychologist and law enforcement, and/or recommend expulsion to the Superintendent. Parents/guardians will be informed of all action taken.

**Grades 6-12**

School staff will deal with incidents of prohibited conduct by students on an individual basis. School staff are required to immediately report incidents of prohibited conduct by students to the school principal/designee for investigation and appropriate action. The school principal/designee shall record the incident by completing a Checklist of Violent Characteristics, and notifying parents/guardians. The school principal/designee may, at his/her discretion, suspend the student for 1-10 school days, refer the student to the School Psychologist and law enforcement, and/or recommend expulsion to the Superintendent. Parents/guardians will be informed of all action taken.

**I. Prohibited Conduct**

Students, staff and all other persons are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct on school property, while in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or at any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school:

- A. Possession and/or use of articles commonly used as weapons or designed to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to firearms, BB guns, pellet guns, any other kind of gun, ammunition, explosives, cross-bows, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, Kung Fu stars and nun chucks;

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Regional School Unit 73 Board of Directors</b>   | <b>CODE: JICIA</b><br>Page: 2 |
| <b>SUBJECT: Weapons, Violence and School Safety</b> |                               |

- B. Use of any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to bats, belts, picks, pencils, compasses, objects capable of ignition (e.g., matches, lighters), files, tools of any sort and replicas of weapons (including toys).
- C. Violent or threatening behavior, including but not limited to fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property (e.g., verbal or written death threats, threats of bodily harm, bomb threats);
- D. Verbal or written statements (including those made using computers or other electronic communications devices or technologies) which threaten, intimidate, or harass others, or which tend to incite violence and/or disrupt the school program;
- E. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property;
- F. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property;
- G. Lewd, indecent or obscene acts or expressions of any kind;
- H. Violations of the school unit's drug/alcohol and tobacco policies;
- I. Violations of state or federal laws; and
- J. Any other conduct that may be harmful to persons or property.

## **II. Exceptions to Prohibitions on Possession and Discharge of Firearms on School Property**

The prohibition on the possession and discharge of firearms on school property does not apply to law enforcement officials acting in the performance of their duties.

## **III. Use of Other Weapons in Instructional Activities**

Nothing in this policy shall prevent the school system from offering instructional activities using objects other than firearms that are generally considered weapons (e.g., bows and arrows) or from allowing an object generally considered a weapon to be brought to school for supervised instructional activities (e.g., archery, boat-building) approved by the Board so long as the Board has adopted appropriate safeguards to ensure student and staff safety.

Any proposal to introduce an instructional activity involving such objects must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, who may [OR: will] make a recommendation to the Board. Such proposal must state the objectives of the activity and describe the safeguards that will be put in place to ensure student and staff safety.

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Regional School Unit 73 Board of Directors</b>   | <b>CODE: JICIA</b><br>Page: 3 |
| <b>SUBJECT: Weapons, Violence and School Safety</b> |                               |

No weapons or objects that are generally considered weapons may be used in instructional activities or brought to school for instructional activities unless the Superintendent/designee has given specific permission in advance.

#### **IV. Disciplinary Action**

Principals may suspend and/or recommend expulsion of students who violate this policy based upon the facts of each case and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Conduct which violates this policy is deliberately disobedient and deliberately disorderly within the meaning of 20-A MRSA § 1001(9) and will be grounds for expulsion if found necessary for the peace and usefulness of the school. Such conduct may also be grounds for expulsion under other provisions of 20-A MRSA § 1001(9 and 9-A) that specifically prohibits the use and possession of weapons, infractions of violence, and possession, furnishing and trafficking of scheduled drugs.

A Student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school or to have possessed a firearm at school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year, unless this requirement is modified by the School Board on a case-by-case basis as recommended by the Superintendent.

Disciplinary action against employees will be at the discretion of the Superintendent and Administrator.

All firearm violations shall be referred to law enforcement authorities as required by law. Other violations of this policy shall be referred to law enforcement authorities at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Students with disabilities shall be disciplined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws/regulations and Board Policy JKF.

#### **V. Notification Team/Confidentiality**

Maine law authorizes law enforcement officers and criminal justice agencies to share with a superintendent or principal information pertaining to a juvenile when the information is credible and indicates an imminent danger to the safety of students or school personnel on school grounds or at a school function. Maine law requires the District Attorney to notify the superintendent when a juvenile is charged with use or threatened use of force or is adjudicated as having committed one or more juvenile crimes that involve the use or threatened use of force.

Within ten days or immediately, if necessary for school safety, the Superintendent shall convene a notification team. The notification team must include the administrator/designee of the school building where the student attends, at least one classroom teacher to whom the student is assigned, a guidance counselor, and the student's parent/guardian. The notification team shall determine on this basis of need which school employees are entitled to receive information concerning allegations or adjudications of use or threatened use of force. Information received by the Superintendent/designee and disclosed to the notification team and/or disclosed to school employees is confidential and may not become part of the student's educational record.

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Regional School Unit 73 Board of Directors</b>   | <b>CODE: JICIA</b><br>Page: 4 |
| <b>SUBJECT: Weapons, Violence and School Safety</b> |                               |

The Superintendent shall ensure that confidentiality training is provided to all school employees who have access to this information.

**VI. Psychological Evaluation/Risk Assessment**

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to request an immediate psychological evaluation of a student who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy when, in his/her opinion, such an evaluation will assist in assessing the risk the student poses to school safety if the student were to remain in school.

The Superintendent is also authorized to request psychological evaluations of students who have been identified as posing a substantial risk of violent behavior.

All such evaluations shall be performed by a psychologist as designated by the Superintendent at the school unit's expense.

If the parents/guardians and/or student refuse to permit a requested psychological evaluation, the Superintendent and the Board may draw any reasonable inferences from the student's behavior concerning the risk the student poses to school safety for the purposes of determining the appropriate action.

Legal References:     5 MRSA § 4681 et. Seq.  
                               15 MRSA §§ 3301-A; 3308(7)(E); 3009  
                               17-A MRSA §§ 2(9); 2(12-A)  
                               20 USCA § 7151 (Gun-Free Schools Act)  
                               20-A MRSA §§ 1001(9); 1001 (9-A); 1055(11); 6552

Cross References:    ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students  
                               ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession  
                               EBCA – Crisis Response Plan  
                               JICH – Drug and Alcohol Use by Students  
                               JK – Student Discipline  
                               JKD – Suspension of Students  
                               JKE – Expulsion of Students  
                               JKF – Suspension/Expulsion of Students with Disabilities  
                               JIH – Questioning and Searches of Students  
                               KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

**Adopted: 10/24/2013**

**SUBJECT: Weapons, Violence and School Safety****CHECKLIST OF VIOLENT CHARACTERISTICS (Potentially dangerous students who may harm themselves and/or others)**

1. \_\_\_ Has a history of tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts.
2. \_\_\_ Characteristically resorts to name calling, cursing or abusive language.
3. \_\_\_ Habitually makes violent threats when angry.
4. \_\_\_ Has previously brought a weapon to school.
5. \_\_\_ Has a background of serious disciplinary problems at school and in the community.
6. \_\_\_ Has a background of drug, alcohol or other substance abuse or dependency.
7. \_\_\_ Is on the fringe of his/her peer group with few or no close friends.
8. \_\_\_ Is preoccupied with weapons, explosives or other incendiary devices.
9. \_\_\_ Has been truant, suspended, or expelled from school.
10. \_\_\_ Displays cruelty to animals.
11. \_\_\_ Has little or no supervision and support from parents or a caring adult.
12. \_\_\_ Has witnessed or been a victim of abuse or neglect in the home.
13. \_\_\_ Has been bullied and/or bullies or intimidates peers or younger children.
14. \_\_\_ Tends to blame others for difficulties and problems s/he causes her/himself.
15. \_\_\_ Prefers TV shows, movies or music expressing violent themes and acts.
16. \_\_\_ Prefers reading materials dealing with violent themes, rituals and abuse.
17. \_\_\_ Reflects anger, frustration and the dark side of school life in school essays or writing projects.
18. \_\_\_ Is involved with a gang or an antisocial group on the fringe of peer acceptance.
19. \_\_\_ Is often depressed and/or has significant mood swings.
20. \_\_\_ Has threatened or attempted suicide.