



CODE OF **CIVILITY**



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The education of a child happens only through a partnership between the child, school faculty and staff, parent(s) or guardian(s), the community and district office employees. Partnership is an active state that includes sharing responsibilities, having meaningful communication and welcomed participation.

When people who are working together agree, the partnership runs smoothly. Two people will not always agree, and that can make partnership difficult. The partnership is most powerful when we agree on how to disagree. We must be civil in our discourse.

Civility is often described by its absence. We hear of harmful actions, such as road rage, physical confrontation, ethnic stereotypes and slurs. But civility is not just an absence of harm. It is the affirmation of what is best about each of us individually and collectively. It is more than saying “please” and “thank you.” It is reflecting our respect for others in our behavior, regardless of whether we know or like them. It is not simply being politically correct and should not be used to stifle criticism or comment. It is being truthful and kind and taking responsibility for our own actions, rather than blaming others.

As we communicate with each other, we need to remember that we are working together to benefit the children of this community.

Therefore, the Board requires that, as we communicate, students, PCS faculty and staff, parents, guardians and all other members of the community shall:

1. Always treat each other with courtesy and respect.

This means:

- We listen carefully and respectfully as others express opinions that may be different from ours.
- We share our opinions and concerns without loud or offensive language, gestures or profanity.

2. Treat each other with kindness.

This means:

- We treat each other as we would like to be treated.
- We do not threaten or cause physical or bodily harm to another.
- We do not threaten or cause damage to the property of another.
- We do not bully, belittle or tease one another, and we do not allow others to do so in our presence.
- We do not demean and are not abusive or obscene in any of our communications.

3. Take responsibility for our own actions.

This means:

- We share information honestly.
- We refrain from displays of temper.
- We do not disrupt or attempt to interfere with the operation of a classroom or any other work or public area of a school or school facility.

4. Cooperate with each other.

This means:

- We obey school rules for access and visitation.
- We respect the legitimate obligations and time constraints we each face.
- We notify each other when we have information that might help reach our common goal. This will include information about safety issues, academic progress, changes that might impact a student’s work or events in the community that might impact the school.
- We respond when asked for assistance.
- We understand that we do not always get our way.

PROMOTING POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

The main components of a school's climate include the student and adult relationships, teaching and learning, the physical environment, and safety. Having positive relationships is essential to creating a positive school climate. Therefore, school leaders and teachers work to incorporate empathic practices to foster a climate that allows students to learn and carry out their best behavior in the school community.

A positive school climate includes:

- positive relationships among all stakeholders (students, parents/families, all school personnel and community partners);
- engaging, culturally relevant academic and extracurricular activities for students that meet behavioral, developmental, and academic needs;
- effective two-way communication between schools, parents and communities;
- training and resources to resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully, with suspensions used only as a disciplinary measure of last resort;
- support for students who are experiencing an emotional crisis, trauma or serious challenges in their homes and communities;
- clean and well-maintained environments that support school pride and the importance of life-long learning; and learning environments where students and staff feel physically and emotionally safe.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

PCS has implemented a continuum of restorative practices based on the needs and responsibilities of community members. At Tier 1 and 2, restorative practices/approaches focus on building relationships, a sense of school community and rebuilding and repairing relationships for students who have committed a non-violent behavioral offense in violation of the Code. At Tier 3, approaches focus on restorative interventions for students involved in high-risk behavior, including, but not limited to, alcohol, drugs or theft.

The restorative circle is a versatile community-building technique that can be used in both cases. Circles can be used proactively to develop relationships and build community and reactive capacities. They can also be used to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts and problems. Circles help the students and adults understand interpersonal relationships, maintain respectful attitudes, and find solutions to conflicts. Circles provide an opportunity to speak and listen in a safe atmosphere. They allow adults and students to be heard and offer their perspectives. Circles can also be used to celebrate students, begin and end the day, and are especially useful for putting difficult topics on the table.

All interventions should balance the student's needs, those affected by the behavior, and the overall school community's needs. When using restorative strategies/practices to structure learning opportunities and help them make more constructive choices, teachers and administrators should consider the following factors:

- Student's age, developmental level and grade
- Student's prior behavior patterns and responses to interventions
- Student's willingness to acknowledge their behavior
- Student's willingness to make restitution
- Impact of the incident on the overall school community
- Student's intent and the severity of harm caused
- Parent/family's type of involvement

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a nationally recognized approach to supporting positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. In Pinellas County Schools (PCS), PBIS is the behavioral component of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

Extensive research shows that PBIS utilizes a positive approach to discipline. PBIS helps both teachers and administrators explore and adopt positive and preventative approaches that improve their ability to reduce disruptions which lead to office referrals, in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions that decrease students' instructional time. PBIS ultimately affects the school's very culture to shift attention to positive behavior and successful learning systems for students, teachers and administrators.

PBIS is not a specific intervention or curriculum. By focusing on data collection and analyses, PBIS provides a framework of proactive, evidence-based prevention and intervention behavioral strategies that help schools define, teach and support appropriate student behaviors in positive school culture. Data is used to provide insight to the problem-solving process.

In PCS, PBIS is not fully implemented until it is culturally responsive.¹ Culturally Responsive PBIS systems (CR-PBIS) are uniquely designed to fit the cultural backgrounds of the individuals they serve. This approach sometimes requires educators to change how they think about, support and address student behavior. CR-PBIS systems are characterized by:²

- Student-centered focus
- Strengths-based perspective
- Authentic and meaningful collaboration
- Integration of staff, student, family and community perspectives
- Self-reflection as a regular part of professional practice

Additionally, schools that have effectively implemented PBIS implement the following processes:³

- Define and teach a common set of three to five positive behavioral/social expectations throughout the school.
- Acknowledge and reinforce the behavioral/social expectations.
- Establish and use consistent, equitable consequences that are aligned to the function of the student's behavior.
- Collect and record when, where, why and to whom disciplinary interventions are given to make informed decisions about resources and assistance.
- Develop and utilize multi-tiered support: Tier 1 interventions for all students, Tier 2 prevention for students at risk, and Tier 3 interventions focused on students and families who are the most chronically and intensely at risk of negative behavior and in need of greater supports.

Visit the following sites for more parent, educator and school administrator supports, including training opportunities and related guides: Florida Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support Project A Multi-Tiered System of Supports or Center on PBIS.



¹ Leverson, M., Smith, K., McIntosh, K., Rose, J., & Pinkelman, S., (November 2016)

² Culturally-Responsive PBIS - Florida PBIS Project. <http://flpbis.cbcs.usf.edu/foundations/CR-PBIS.html>

³ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports - VTSS RIC <https://vtss-ric.vcu.edu/all-educators/positive-behavioral-interventions-and-supports/>

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a term used to describe an evidence-based schooling model that uses data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. The integrated instruction and intervention is delivered to students in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need. “Need-driven” decision-making seeks to ensure that district resources reach the appropriate students (schools) at the appropriate levels to accelerate the performance of ALL students to achieve and exceed proficiency. Within the MTSS framework, the learning rate over time and performance level are used to inform instructional decisions. The problem-solving/response to intervention (PS/RtI) component of MTSS is required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). Problem-solving and measuring the response to intervention through progress monitoring ensure the quality and validity of classroom instruction. In an effective Multi-Tiered System of Supports: Learning is accelerated to close gaps and prevent new ones.

In an effective Multi-Tiered System of Supports:

- Fewer students are at risk over time.
- Decisions about who needs additional support can be made rapidly.
- Rates of intervention success are high.
- Goals are defined in terms of improved achievement.

Center on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support <https://mtss4success.org/>

For more information on the problem-solving process and multi-level prevention system, which includes a continuum (Tiers 1, 2, and 3) of integrated academic, social, emotional, and behavioral instructional and intervention supports that are evidence-based and culturally and linguistically responsive, please visit the MTSS Center and Florida’s MTSS. PCS MTSS Handbook, MTSS Center (link above) and Florida’s MTSS