

100% Student Success



SECTION III

Policies 5500.015, 5500.01-5500.03

Rights and Responsibilities

Parents' Bill of Rights (Policy 5500.015):

Federal and State laws afford parents certain rights relating to the education of their children in public schools. This policy describes some of those rights, promotes parental involvement, and is adopted in compliance with the Florida Parents' Bill of Rights. For purposes of the law and this policy, the term "parent" means a person who has legal custody of a minor child as either the natural or adoptive parent, or as the legal guardian.

The School Board and District have developed policies, procedures, and practices to support strong, continuing family and community involvement in all aspects of school programs and activities. The resources described in the specific topic areas below represent the information most applicable to the topic areas discussed, but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all resources that address these topics.

- A. Pursuant to s. 1002.23, F.S. (the Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement Act), the District maintains plans for parental participation in schools to improve parent and teacher cooperation in such areas as homework, school attendance, and discipline. Such plans are located in the Code of Student Conduct, including in the "PCS Parent Communication & Engagement Expectations" and the "Get Engaged in Education" sections. Schools may create additional site-specific plans, and parents may inquire with their schools about these. The Code of Student Conduct may be found on the District's website (www.pcsb.org) under the "About Us" or "Families" tab.
- B. Pursuant to s. 1002.20(19)(b), F.S., the District maintains procedures for a parent to learn about their minor child's course of study, including the source of any supplemental education materials. School Board Policy 2520 ("Instructional Materials, Including Textbooks") contains these procedures, and the School Board Policy Manual can be found on the District's website (www.pcsb.org) under the "About Us" or "School Board" tab. In addition, the District's website discusses several curricular topics under the "Site Shortcuts" tab by navigating to "Curriculum." Parents may also learn about this topic through the District's single sign-on student information system accessible to parents by reviewing their child's courses and the materials posted by the teacher and/or school. Parents will also receive a syllabus or course of study from teachers or the school near the beginning of each semester. Ultimately, questions about specific materials may be directed to the child's teacher and/or the school Principal.
- C. Pursuant to s. 1006.28(2)(a)2., F.S., the District maintains procedures for a parent to object to instructional materials and other materials used in the classroom. Such objections may be based on beliefs regarding morality, sex, and religion or the belief that such materials are harmful. For purposes of this policy, the term "instructional materials" has the same meaning as in s. 1006.29(2), F.S. School Board Policy 2520 ("Instructional Materials, Including Textbooks") contains these procedures. In addition, the District's website discusses several curricular topics under the "Site Shortcuts" tab by navigating to "Curriculum" and more information about this topic may be found there.
- D. The District honors parents' rights, pursuant to s. 1002.20(3)(d), F.S., to withdraw their minor child from any portion of the District's comprehensive health education required under s. 1003.42(2)(n), F.S., that relates to sex education or instruction in acquired immune deficiency syndrome education or any instruction regarding sexuality if the parent provides a written objection to their minor child's participation. Parents may make such election by contacting their child's school Principal, and will be notified in advance of such course content so that they may make such an election. Further, the District's website discusses several curricular topics under the "Site Shortcuts" tab by navigating to "Curriculum" and more information about this topic may be found there.
- E. The District adheres to s. 1006.195(1)(a), F.S., and communicates information regarding clubs and activities offered at schools. This communication is accomplished through the Code of Student Conduct and information shared at the school level through school websites and/or other school-specific communications to parents. (f) Parents may learn more about parental rights and responsibilities under general law, specifically including the following laws and rights, by reviewing the District and school websites. If the websites do not provide the information sought, parents may contact their child's school Principal for more information. The Principal may refer the parent to another District employee based upon the subject matter. If the parent does not receive the information from the Principal or any person identified by the Principal, then the parents should contact the Area Superintendent/Chief with supervision over the school. The listing of schools and their applicable Area Superintendents/Chief can be found here: <https://www.pcsb.org/Page/6037>.
1. Pursuant to s. 1002.20(3)(d), F.S., parents have the right to opt their minor child out of any portion of the District's comprehensive health education required under s. 1003.42(2)(n), F.S., that relates to sex education instruction in acquired immune deficiency syndrome education or any instruction regarding sexuality. The District's website discusses several curricular topics under the "Site Shortcuts" tab by navigating to "Curriculum" and more information about this topic may be found there.
 2. The District shares information with parents about school choice options, including open enrollment, pursuant to s. 1002.20(6), F.S., through direct parent contact, local media, and its website, www.pcsb.org, by navigating to the "Families" tab and then to "Enrollment."

3. Pursuant to s. 1002.20(3)(b), F.S., parents have the right to exempt their minor child from immunizations required by law for public school attendance. Parents with questions or a desire to explore an exemption should contact their child's school nurse first, and then the school Principal if the nurse does not provide the information.
4. Pursuant to s. 1008.22, F.S., parents have the right to review statewide, standardized assessment results. Individual student's assessment results may be viewed in the District's single sign-on student information system by parents using their log-in information. School-level and District-level assessment results may be viewed on the Florida Department of Education's website (www.fldoe.org) under the "Accountability" tab.
5. Pursuant to s. 1003.57, F.S., parents have the right to seek eligibility for gifted programs and other exception student education programs. Questions regarding such eligibility may be directed to the school Principal.
6. Pursuant to s. 1006.28(2)(a)1., F.S., parents have the right to inspect school district instructional materials, and the District maintains a list on its website as required by law. Parents may access this list on the District's website under the "Site Shortcuts" tab by navigating to "Curriculum." From there, parents should navigate to "Curriculum Review and Adoption of Instructional Materials" to find the list.
7. Pursuant to s. 1008.25, F.S., parents have the right to access information relating to the District's policies for promotion or retention, including high school graduation requirements. This information can be accessed by reviewing School Board policies 5410 through 5465.
8. Pursuant to s. 1002.20(14), F.S., parents have the right to receive a school report card and be informed of their minor child's attendance requirements. Current and summative grades and attendance can be found in the District's single sign-on student information system accessible to parents.
9. Pursuant to s. 1002.23, F.S., parents have the right to access information relating to the state public education system, state standards, report card requirements, attendance requirements, and instructional materials requirements. School Board Policy 2520 ("Instructional Materials, Including Textbooks") discusses instructional materials. In addition, the District's website discusses several curricular topics under the "Site Shortcuts" tab by navigating to "Curriculum." Parents may also learn about these topics through the District's single sign-on student information system accessible to parents by reviewing their child's courses and the materials posted by the teacher and/or school, and by reviewing grade and attendance information. Ultimately, questions about these issues may be directed to the child's teacher and/or the school Principal.
10. Pursuant to s. 1002.23(4), F.S., parents have the right to participate in parent-teacher associations and organizations that are sanctioned by a School Board or the Department of Education. Information regarding these opportunities, including school advisory councils, can be viewed on each school's website.
11. Pursuant to s. 1002.222(1)(a), F.S., neither the School Board nor the District engages in any District-level collection of data or information regarding the political affiliation, voting history, religious affiliation, or biometric information of a student.

Notwithstanding any statutory or legal authority to the contrary, any employee of the district may be subject to disciplinary action if the employee encourages, coerces, or attempts to encourage or coerce, a minor child to withhold information from the minor child's parent.

This policy does not authorize a parent of a minor child to engage in conduct that is unlawful or to abuse or neglect their minor child in violation of general law. See, e.g., School Board Policy 8462 ("Student Abuse and Neglect"). Parental rights do not prohibit or impede child welfare activities, or any other statutory or legal duties or rights, when performed by a court of competent jurisdiction, law enforcement officers, or employees of a government agency.

School staff and parents must work together in order to maximize a student's success at school. The district commits to working with and supporting families and the district needs parents to work with and support the district.

Parental Responsibilities (Policy 5500.01):

- A. Get to know the people at their child's school by going to teacher conferences and school-parent activities like PTA meetings and the School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings.
- B. Provide accurate and complete contact information annually, including and not limited to completion of the clinic card. Promptly notify their child's school of any change in telephone numbers, including home phone, cell phone, work phone, emergency contact number, or home address.
- C. Read, become familiar with, and support the rules within the Code of Student Conduct and talk to their child about them.
- D. Support Pinellas County Schools by being a role model for their child, talking with their child about school and expected behavior, and communicating the value of education through words and action.
- E. Teach their child to adhere to the dress code, as school is a place to work and learn.
- F. Make sure their child arrives at school on time every day. Parents should be aware that if they live within two (2) miles of their child's school and the district has established safe walk pathways in that area, School District transportation would not be provided.
- G. Drop-off their child at school no more than thirty (30) minutes before the start of the school day or pick their child up no more than thirty (30) minutes after the school day unless the parent has made special arrangements with a teacher, administrator, or a before/after school care program. Supervision will not be provided beyond that time. This also includes school activities outside the regular school day such as clubs, dances, carnivals, practices, and games. Parents are responsible for their student's conduct and safety at all times prior to the arrival of the school bus in the morning and after the departure of the school bus at the end of the day.
- H. Make sure their child attends school regularly. If their child is absent, contact the school within forty-eight (48) hours to tell them the reason for that absence. Some schools require notes.
- I. Tell the school principal if there is a change in residence or custody of the student, even if the parent thinks the student is still in the school's attendance zone. Parents may be requested to provide verification of the student's address if school personnel believe a change in address has occurred. The parent must tell the principal within five (5) days of the change and contact Student Assignment to request a non-zone school.
- J. Encourage their student's academic and social-emotional growth by supporting learning at home and participation in extracurricular activities inclusive of creative arts, music and athletics.
- K. Work with school staff members to solve any academic or behavior concerns. Inform school officials about any concerns in a respectful and timely manner. The parent should also let the school know if something has happened at home that could affect how their child does in school.
- L. Be respectful and courteous to staff, other parents, families and students while on school premises and during school activities. Inappropriate behavior may result in restricted access to the school, school grounds and school activities. The parent or guardian will be notified in writing if this occurs.
- M. Present a photo ID and sign in at the office before entering campus.
- N. Identification must be shown to the office staff when someone takes an elementary or middle school student from school during the day. Identification may be required at high schools.

When parents are divorced or separated, both parents have full rights to participate in the child's school activities and know what is happening at school unless there is a court order limiting that access. If such an order exists then the principal must have a certified copy.

Absent prior permission from the parent, no student shall be permitted to leave school prior to dismissal at the request of or in the company of anyone other than an authorized school employee; a law enforcement officer; child protective investigator, or other official acting in the exercise of their lawful authority; or the parents of the student. Prior parental permission must be evidenced on the Student Clinic Card and Release Form or on a separate written instrument signed by the parent.

In the event that the school receives conflicting direction from divorced or separated parents (including parents who were never married) concerning a student, the school may rely on the direction of the parent identified by the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority:

 - First, the parent who is designated in a parenting plan or other Florida court order as having either educational decision-making authority or sole parental responsibility over the student; or
 - Second, if both parents are designated as educational decision-makers with shared parental responsibility, the parent who resides at the address specified in the parenting plan or other Florida court order as the address to be used for school assignment purposes; or
 - Third, if no such parenting plan or order exists or no such address is specified, the parent who resides at the address used by the district for student assignment purposes, whether or not the student is attending their zoned school; or
 - Fourth, if the address on file with the district is not valid or otherwise relevant, the school may rely upon the direction of the parent who enrolled the student.

- O. Give the school written permission if they want a stepparent who is not the legal guardian of the child to have information about the child or sign forms related to the child. Permission must be submitted to the school every year.
- P. Be prepared to pay for any damage done to School Board property by their child. If payment is not made and the amount is substantial, the principal will send the matter to the Superintendent.
- Q. Pay for lost or damaged books or other teaching materials. Failure to pay may mean that no other books or materials will be given to their child, their child will not be able to participate in extra-curricular activities, or their child will be required to pay the debt through community service at the school. The principal will make those decisions.
- R. Adhere to school developed, on-site traffic plans for vehicles when bringing students to school or picking them up after school, and encourage their children if they are walkers and bicyclists to follow safety rules and use pedestrian-safety features where available.

Student Rights (Policy 5500.02)

In General

To District students, a student has a right to an education, regardless of their race, color, creed, religion, sex, marital status, heritage, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Some of a student's basic rights include the right to:

- A. Learn
- B. Disagree
- C. Petition
- D. Freedom of expression
- E. Publish
- F. Assembly
- G. Privacy

A student's exercise of these rights must conform to the Code of Student Conduct. Things a student cannot do include:

- A. violate the rights of others;
- B. disrupt the classroom;
- C. disrupt the operation of the school;
- D. bring drugs, weapons, or contraband to school.

First Amendment Freedom of Expression

The United States Supreme Court ruled in 1969 that public school students do not leave their constitutional right to freedom of expression at the schoolhouse gate. A student has a right to freedom of expression; however, when a student exercises that right, the student must do so in a responsible manner that does not cause a disruption of the school or a school activity. A principal may impose reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on your exercise of First Amendment freedom of expression when there is evidence of imminent disruption of the school.

Searches and Seizures

A student's locker, vehicle, purse, backpack, and other personal possessions can be searched if there is a reasonable suspicion that any of them contain drugs, weapons, contraband or other items not permitted on campus. Trained sniff-screening dogs are allowed in the schools to prevent drugs and weapons at school. The routine checks by the dogs are not considered a search by law. They are safety preventions to give students a safe and healthy school in which to learn.

Sororities, Fraternities & Secret Societies

These organizations are not allowed in schools. A student cannot participate or join in any type of initiation to such organizations.

Investigations at School

A. Criminal

Law enforcement may have the lawful authority to question and arrest students on school property. If a student is a suspect in a criminal investigation by the police that may result in a student's arrest or criminal charges, an administrator will make an effort to contact the student's parent before the police begin questioning the student unless law enforcement confirms that prior notification of a parent would jeopardize public safety. If a parent cannot be located, the police may go ahead with questioning. If the student's parent is contacted, the police may allow the student's parent to be present during the student's questioning.

A school representative will ordinarily, when reasonably available, be present, in the absence of a parent, during suspect interrogation of students on campus by outside law enforcement concerning a non-school related offense. The law enforcement officer, parent, or student may direct that the school representative not be present. The school representative shall not be expected or required to advocate on behalf of the student, and neither the representative nor the School Board is responsible for the manner or outcome of the interrogation. The parties recognize that police interrogation is a law enforcement function. Chapter 39, F.S., prescribes different procedures in the case of child protective investigations, which shall be followed whenever applicable.

B. Administrative

If a student is suspected of violating the Code of Student Conduct, school officials can question the student without first contacting the student's parent. The student does not have a right to have their parent present or a right to an attorney when the student is questioned.

C. Victim or Witness

If a student is a victim or a witness, the police or administrative investigators are allowed to question the student without first contacting their parent. If the investigation involves child abuse, the official conducting the investigation will decide who can be present during the student's interview.

D. Removal of Student from School Property

If a student is a witness, the police cannot remove the student from school property without a subpoena or first obtaining the consent of the student's parent. If the student is subject to arrest, with or without a warrant, the officer can remove the student without their parents' consent or the consent of school officials. The administrator will try to notify the student's parent as soon as possible unless law enforcement confirms parent notification would jeopardize public safety.

If a student needs to be taken into protective custody, the police can remove the student. Anytime a student is taken from school by a police officer, the police officer must sign a Release Order, giving the original to the Area Superintendent, a copy to be filed with the school, and a copy for your parents unless law enforcement confirms parent notification would jeopardize the student's safety.

Student Responsibilities (Policy 5500.03)

To be successful and to help maintain an orderly learning environment, the student should:

- A. attend school each day;
- B. arrive on time;
- C. be prepared with proper materials and supplies;
- D. keep a planner/agenda;
- E. complete all assignments including homework to the best of their ability and on time;
- F. dress appropriately;
- G. be tolerant of and respectful to self and others;
- H. see teachers about makeup work and complete it in a timely manner;
- I. contact the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, teacher, or peer tutor regarding conflicts or concerns;
- J. set goals for success;
- K. get enough sleep;
- L. set responsible working hours outside of school.
- M. upon request, will properly identify him/herself to staff.

A student must participate in school crisis plan activities, practices and emergency drills, such as lock-down and fire drills. (Failure to meet these requirements may lead to disciplinary action.)

If a school uses I.D. cards, students will follow school guidelines related to the card.

A student living alone or away from home is subject to the same policies as all other students.