

Code of Conduct

Purpose

Springfield International Charter School (SICS) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment where all students can learn and thrive. The Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for student behavior and outlines disciplinary procedures in alignment with Massachusetts law and DESE regulations.

SICS emphasizes prevention, positive behavioral supports, and restorative practices to promote student growth and accountability.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Treat others with respect and dignity
- Follow school rules and staff directions
- Attend school regularly and be prepared for learning
- Maintain a safe and orderly environment
- Use appropriate language and behavior at all times

Prohibited Conduct

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for behavior, including, but not limited to:

- Violence, threats, or assault
- Possession or use of weapons
- Use, possession, or distribution of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Disruption of the educational environment
- Destruction of property
- Violations of civil rights
- Idling of motor vehicles on school grounds

Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary responses will be fair, consistent, and aligned with M.G.L. c.71 §§37H, 37H½, and 37H¾.

Students have the right to:

- Notice of the charges
- An opportunity to respond to the allegations
- Parent/guardian notification
- Interpreter services, if needed
- Appeal rights, where applicable

Types of disciplinary actions include:

- **In-School Suspension:** Removal from regular classroom activities but remaining in school, for up to 10 school days.
- **Short-Term Suspension:** Removal from school for 10 school days or fewer.
 - A hearing will be held with the principal or designee
 - The student may explain the incident and present information
 - The parent/guardian will be notified and may participate

- **Long-Term Suspension:** Removal from school for more than 10 school days or a pattern of removals totaling more than 10 days.
 - To review the student record and evidence
 - To be represented by counsel (at family expense)
 - To present witnesses and evidence
 - To cross-examine witnesses
 - To request an audio recording of the hearing

- **Expulsion:** Removal from school for more than 90 school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted by law.

Appeals

Students and families may appeal long-term suspensions to the Director:

- A written appeal must be submitted within 5 calendar days (extensions may be granted)
- A hearing will be scheduled
- The Director's decision is final

All disciplinary actions are documented by the school.

Emergency Removal

A student may be removed from school immediately if their presence:

- Poses a danger to persons or property, or
- Causes a substantial disruption

Emergency removal:

- May not exceed **2 school days**
- Requires immediate parent notification
- Must be followed by a hearing

Grounds for Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may result from behavior that:

- Threatens the safety of students or staff
- Disrupts the learning environment
- Violates school rules or expectations
- Infringes upon the rights of others, including civil rights

Serious offenses under Massachusetts law may include:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon
- Possession or distribution of controlled substances
- Assault on school staff
- Felony charges or convictions

Notice and Hearing

Before suspension:

- The student and parent/guardian will receive oral and written notice of the charges
- Notice will be provided in English and the primary language of the home, when applicable
- The student will have the opportunity to present their version of events

Use of Alternative Remedies Prior to Suspension or Expulsion

Prior to imposing a long-term suspension or expulsion, the principal or designee will consider and document the use of alternative remedies, including:

- Restorative practices
- Mediation
- Counseling
- Behavioral interventions and supports
- Conflict resolution
- Family engagement strategies

The principal or designee shall determine whether the student's continued presence in school would pose:

- A specific, documentable concern regarding the infliction of serious bodily injury to another person; or
- A serious disruption to the educational environment

Students will not be suspended or expelled until alternative remedies have been considered and documented, unless immediate removal is necessary to maintain safety.

Continued Access to Education

Students who are suspended or removed from school will be provided the opportunity to:

- Make academic progress
- Access assignments and instruction
- Receive support to successfully return to school

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of any decision to change the placement of a student with a disability, the IEP Team will determine whether the conduct:

1. Was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability; or
2. Was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP

If the behavior is a manifestation:

- The student will not be disciplined in the same manner as peers
- A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) will be conducted
- A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be developed or modified
- The student will return to their placement unless otherwise agreed

If the behavior is not a manifestation:

- The student may be disciplined similarly to peers
- The student will continue to receive services to:
 - Participate in the general curriculum
 - Progress toward IEP goals
 - Address the behavior

Parents/guardians will receive written notice and procedural safeguards no later than the date of the decision.

Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)

A student with a disability may be placed in an IAES for up to 45 school days if the student:

- Carries or possesses a weapon
- Uses or possesses illegal drugs
- Sells or solicits controlled substances
- Inflicts serious bodily injury

During this time, the student will continue to receive general education curriculum access, IEP services and behavioral supports.

Students Not Yet Determined Eligible

A student not yet identified may be protected if the district had prior knowledge, including:

- Parent written concern
- Request for evaluation
- Staff documented concerns

Exceptions apply if evaluation/services were refused or eligibility was denied.

If an evaluation is requested during disciplinary action, an expedited evaluation will be conducted.

Equity in Discipline

Disciplinary practices at SICS are applied equitably and without discrimination. The school is committed to ensuring that no student is disciplined differently based on race, disability, gender, or other protected characteristics.

Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination

SICS prohibits discrimination, harassment or bullying , and retaliation based on:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation
- Disability
- Religion

All students have equal access to school programs, services, and activities.

Students and families may report concerns to school staff or administration. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.

The school maintains a designated Civil Rights/Title IX Coordinator. Contact information is available through the main office.

Retaliation against any individual who reports concerns is strictly prohibited.

School-Wide Education Services Plan

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. c. 76, § 21), Springfield International Charter School (SICS) maintains a School-Wide Education Services Plan to ensure that students who are suspended or expelled from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days continue to have access to educational services.

During any period of removal, students will be provided the opportunity to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through access to assignments, instruction, and other educational supports.

At the time a suspension or expulsion is imposed, the school will notify the student and parent/guardian, in writing and in the primary language of the home where applicable, of:

- The opportunity to receive educational services
- The specific services available to the student
- How to access those services
- A school contact who can provide additional information

If a student withdraws from the school during the period of suspension or expulsion, the district of residence or receiving school will be responsible for providing educational services in accordance with state law.

Documentation and Review

The school documents disciplinary actions, interventions, and supports. Data is reviewed to ensure consistency, effectiveness, and alignment with school expectations and legal requirements.