

## **Introduction**

Students at Polk State College Gateway to College High School are expected to act in a responsible manner so as to support and enhance the educational process. Polk State College has a tradition of excellent conduct by its students, and the degree of responsibility they exhibit is a reflection of the educational atmosphere of the College. Although the vast majority of students will never be affected when acts of unacceptable conduct occur, they must be dealt with in a manner supportive of our educational purpose.

Polk State College is an equal access/equal opportunity institution committed to excellence through diversity in education and employment. The College complies with all state and federal laws granting rights to applicants for employment or admission to the College, employees, and students. The College prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, sex, age, religion, marital status, veteran status, genetic information or disability in any of its employment, policies or practices, educational programs or activities.

Polk State College's District Board of Trustees (DBOT) has established rules that define unacceptable conduct, set forth the penalties and disciplinary procedures that apply when violations occur, and describe the due process requirements that will be used. College administration has created Polk State College Procedures to provide guidance for carrying out these rules.

The "Student Rights and Responsibilities" section of the Polk State College Student Handbook reflects the rules and procedures as it provides all students with guidelines expected of them. All collegiate charter high school students and parents are expected to read and understand this section of the handbook. The handbook states, in part, as listed below.

*Student safety is Polk State College's priority. To ensure safety, the following actions are prohibited on campus, at any College-related activity, or at other locations as may be provided by law. Violation of any Board rules may lead to disciplinary warning, probation, suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate and authorized penalty. The following are some examples of unacceptable conduct:*

- *Illegal use or possession of drugs or narcotics*
- *Actions which are disruptive to the normal, orderly, and peaceful operation of the College*
- *Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages in violation of State law and College policy*
- *Cheating or plagiarizing on tests, projects, or assignments*
- *Stealing*
- *Illegal gambling*
- *Use of indecent or abusive language*
- *Unauthorized use of the College name*
- *Lewd or indecent conduct*

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- *Violation of local ordinances or of State or Federal law*
- *Hazing*
- *Forgery, alteration, or misuse of documents or records*
- *Furnishing false information with the intent to deceive*
- *Possession and/or use of firearms, fireworks, explosive chemicals, and other lethal weapons*
- *Repeated offenses of a less serious nature*
- *Participation by students in disruptive activities at state institutions of higher learning as defined and prohibited under the provision of Section 877.13, Florida Statutes*

In addition to the DBOT Rules and the Polk State College Procedures, the collegiate charter high schools have created policies to address Florida State statutes that are specific to K-12 educational programs and schools and which supersede College rules and procedures to the degree specified in the text of the statutes. This handbook presents these collegiate charter high school policies.

### **Polk State College Gateway to College Charter High School Policies** *(Superseding DBOT Rules and PSC Procedures as specified by Florida Statute)*

#### **HS.1** Teacher and Principal Control of Students (State Statute 1003.31)

During the time a student is on a school bus or is on the school campus participating in a designated collegiate charter high school class or activity, the student is under the control and direction of the principal or his/her designee, the teacher, or other collegiate charter high school staff.

*(Please note that since school bus transportation is provided through a contract with the Polk County Public Schools (PCPS), students riding a school bus are also subject to all PCPS rules and policies while on the bus.)*

#### **HS.2** Authority of Teachers (State Statute 1003.32)

Each collegiate charter high school principal will support the authority of collegiate charter high school teachers to remove disobedient, disrespectful, violent, abusive, uncontrollable, or disruptive students from the classroom.

#### **HS.3** Tobacco Products (State Statute 386.212)

Students age 17 and under are not allowed to be in possession of tobacco products. Students caught in violation of this statute may be fined \$25.00 by a law enforcement officer.

**HS.4 Bullying and Harassment (State Statute 1006.147)**

Bullying or harassment of any collegiate charter high school student or staff member is prohibited during any charter school related or sponsored program or activity or through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a charter school computer, computer system, or computer network.

“Bullying” means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve teasing; social exclusion; threat or intimidation; stalking; physical violence; theft; sexual, religious, or racial harassment; public humiliation; or destruction of property. (*Definition related to stalking is found in State Statute 784.048.*)

“Harassment” means threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture or the use of data or computer software or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a charter school student or a staff member. It places a person in reasonable fear of harm or danger to his or her person or damage to his or her property. It has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunity, or benefit or has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the collegiate charter high school.

Bullying and harassment include retaliation against a student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered an act of retaliation.

The collegiate charter high schools provide opportunities for students and staff to report incidents of bullying and harassment. A reporting form is found on each of the collegiate charter high school websites, accessed through the Polk State College website at [www.polk.edu](http://www.polk.edu). This reporting form can be completed and put in the “bully box” located in the main office at each collegiate charter high school, or it can be submitted electronically via email to the principal or his/her designee. The email address is on each website.

A report of bullying or harassment will be investigated by the principal or assistant principal. The school counselor will not be involved in the investigation. However, the counselor will be involved in developing a plan of action for the victim if it is determined that bullying or harassment has occurred.

**HS.5 Attendance (State Statute 1003.04)**

Every collegiate charter high school student is expected to attend school. The school will monitor and record attendance in each high school class. A parent may be asked to justify a student’s absence. Since attendance has a direct impact on student achievement, poor attendance may result in a low course grade. It may also threaten a student’s overall success in the collegiate charter high school, and could result in

removal from the program.

**HS.6 Hazing (State Statute 1006.135)**

Hazing is defined in State Statute as follows:

*Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a school. Hazing shall include, but is not limited to pressuring or coercing the student into violating state or federal law, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, exposures to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance, or any forced physical activity which would adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student.*

*Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective.*

Collegiate charter high school students found to be engaged in hazing will be subject to Polk State College Rule 4.16.

**HS.7 Leaving School Grounds (State Statute 1003.31)**

State statute states that each student is to be under the control and direction of the principal or designee during the time he or she is in school or is otherwise in route to or from school (if on school bus) or is presumed by law to be attending school. For this reason, each collegiate charter high school student is to be on the assigned Polk State College campus from 7:15 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. unless an early release form is on file in the school's administrative office.

An early release form allows a student to come to campus after 7:15 a.m. or to leave prior to 1:45 p.m. in order to accommodate scheduled classes. Once a student exercises the early release and leaves campus on a given day, he or she is expected to remain off campus the remainder of the school day.

A student who must leave campus during the school day and who does not have an early release form on file to address the specific time to be off campus, must sign-out in the school's administrative office.

**HS.8 Withdrawal (State Statute 1002.33)**

Every effort will be made to assure student success at any of the collegiate charter

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high schools. However, a student may be withdrawn if remaining at a collegiate charter high school puts the student's high school graduation in jeopardy, and/or the student demonstrates an inability to be successful in a college environment.

### **HS.9 Discipline Appeals (State Statute 1006.09 )**

If a parent does not agree with the disciplinary action imposed by the principal or designee, the parent may appeal as follows:

- The written notice of disciplinary action shall inform the parent of the right to an appeal to be conducted by the principal within five days of the notice if requested by the parent.
- If the parent does not request a hearing or appear at a scheduled hearing, it shall be assumed that the parent is in agreement with the disciplinary action imposed.
- The student and parent must attend the hearing and may have one person in attendance at the hearing to represent them. Any witness directly involved in the incident may also be present at the hearing or may submit a written statement with the permission of his or her parent.

### **HS.10 Electronic Devices**

No student may have in his or her possession any wireless communication device or any other item that records, stores, or transmits data during any test. Students who choose to bring wireless communication devices to school do so at their own risk. Cell phones and other wireless communication devices are small and easily lost. There is also a high incidence of theft of these devices.

On occasion, the collegiate charter high school will loan out equipment (Kindle, Laptop, etc.) for students to use. Any equipment loaned out to students is to be returned in the same condition. Any equipment that is lost, stolen, or damaged will be expected to be paid for by the student/parent to whom it was loaned.

### **HS. 11 Extracurricular Activities**

Students may participate in extracurricular activities in accordance with school guidelines and procedures. If a student chooses to participate in an extracurricular activity (sport), it must be done at the student's zoned high school. Students are allowed to participate in any activity or program that Polk State College offers should they desire. Students understand that participation in an extracurricular activity is not an excuse for not maintaining acceptable academic progress at the school.

### **HS. 12 Transportation**

Transportation will be provided to the degree it is available in conjunction with the Polk County Public Schools. Where available, the transportation will be provided free of charge to the student.

### HS. 13 Grades

High school grades are reported four times during the school year. Final course grades are posted at the end of each semester. Students understand that a part of each course grade may include standardized testing and/or End of Course/End of Year assessments, as mandated by Polk County Public Schools or State of Florida.

College grades are recorded on the student's permanent record in the Registrar's Office and are issued in the form of a transcript upon request. Term grades are available online through the College's PASSPORT portal at no charge.

### HS. 14 Cheating and/or Plagiarism (College Rule)

Polk State College considers academic dishonesty an assault upon the basic integrity and value of a high school and/or college education. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts that erode the educational role and tarnish the learning experience, not only for the perpetrators but for the entire community. It is expected that all students understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they are willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts. The fundamental purpose of this rule is to emphasize that any act of academic dishonesty attempted by any student is unacceptable and shall not be tolerated.

Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Cheating or plagiarizing on tests, projects, or assignments
- Cheating is defined as the giving or taking of any information or material with the intent of wrongfully aiding oneself or another in academic work considered in the determination of a course grade

Plagiarism is defined (*Black's Law Dictionary*, Revised Fourth Edition) as "the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind." Plagiarism includes failure to use quotation marks or other conventional markings around material quoted from any specific source without citing that source, or paraphrasing a specific passage from a specific source, or using any sequence of material or order of wording without accurately quoting and citing that source. Plagiarism further includes letting another person compose or rewrite a student's assignment.

The following items have been identified, by the faculty and students at Polk State College, as a partial list of examples of cheating and/or plagiarism:

- Asking for information from another student before, during, or after a test, quiz, or exam situation.
- Copying answers from another's paper during a test, quiz, or exam situation
- Knowingly letting someone copy from one's paper during a test, quiz, or exam situation



- Using sources other than what is permitted by the instructor in a test, quiz, or exam situation
- Copying material exactly, essentially, or in part from outside sources while omitting appropriate documentation
- Copying or falsifying a laboratory report, clinical project, or assignment without doing the required work
- Changing answers on a returned graded test, quiz, or exam in order to get the grade revised
- Plagiarism in written assignments: Plagiarism also includes handing in a paper to an instructor that was purchased from a term paper service, created by another student or other individual, or downloaded from the Internet and/or presenting another person's academic work as one's own. Individual academic departments may provide additional examples in writing of what does and does not constitute plagiarism, provided that such examples do not conflict with the intent of this policy
- Furnishing false information to any faculty member
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any College document, record, or instrument of identification.

Violations of the high school and/or college's policies pertaining to academic dishonesty may result in academic penalties and/or disciplinary action at the discretion of the professor. Academic penalties may include, but are not limited to, a failing grade for a particular assignment or a failing grade for a particular course. Students charged with violating the Academic Dishonesty portion of this rule are not permitted to withdraw from the course.

### **HS. 15 Student Appeals and Complaints**

Polk State College students are assured the opportunity to express informal appeals and complaints and to initiate formal appeals and complaints regarding the operation of the high school and College and the actions of its employees performing their duties as stated in the DBOT Rule 4.26, 4.01, and 3.27 and in College Procedure 6076.

Students are encouraged to pursue resolution of their appeals/complaints with the appropriate high school or college staff in the informal phase. If resolution is not achieved, the formal phase may be pursued. Students who pursue the formal phase of the process should confer with the collegiate charter high school staff, who can provide information regarding this process.

### **HS. 16 Technology Access and Usage (College Rule or Procedure)**

All individuals who employ information technology resources provided by Polk State College (including but not limited to, telephones, computers, the Polk State College local-area and wide-area networks, and the Internet) may use these resources for academic purposes only. Use of the high school and College's computing and network resources are a privilege and not a right. Inappropriate use can result in suspension or

revocation of privileges.

Inappropriate use can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- The intentional sending or retrieval of obscene, slanderous, and/or harassing messages/materials
- The unauthorized access (or attempted access) of any networked computer system
- Violation of copyright, including unauthorized copying or modifying of files
- Use of networked resources for academic plagiarism
- Any use for commercial purposes
- Posting or downloading non-academic and/or inappropriate material to Usenet
- Participation in network activities that place a strain on computer resources (use of social networking sites or video material for non-academic purposes)
- Using IRC (Internet-relay chat) resources for non-academic purposes
- Playing games for non-academic purposes
- Any other behavior deemed inappropriate in the Polk State College Student Code of Conduct
- Unauthorized installation of software on Polk State College hardware

Violation of these terms results in notification of the appropriate administrative authorities as outlined in the Polk State College Student Conduct, Discipline, and Due Process policy. This may include the College administration and state and federal agencies.

#### HS. 17 Drug and Alcohol

#### HS. 18 Public Safety (Florida CS/SB 7026)

The bill improves school safety through a number of provisions. It requires each district school board to:

- Designate a threat assessment team at each school and requires the team to operate under the district school safety specialist's direction. The bill requires the threat assessment team to consult with law enforcement **when a student exhibits a pattern of behavior, based upon previous acts or the severity of an act that would pose a threat to school safety.**
- Formulate and prescribe policies and procedures, in consultation with the appropriate public safety agencies, for **emergency drills for hostage and active shooter situations and incorporate procedures to address active shooter situations** in the model emergency management and emergency preparedness procedures.



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- Requires each school safety specialist to coordinate with appropriate public safety agencies that are designated as the first responders to a school's campus to tour such campus once every 3 years and provide recommendations related to school safety.