

# **Rainier Valley Leadership Academy Community Council Policy**

**Effective Date: 10/19/2024**

**Revision Date: 7/10/2024**

**Policy Approved by: Rainier Valley Leadership Academy Board**

**Responsible Office: District Office**

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## **1. Purpose**

**Purpose and Function** The Rainier Valley Leadership Academy (RVLA) Community Council is a program designed to provide a supplemental advisory role to the Principal or designee on scholar and staff discipline and support-related matters. The council offers recommendations before the principal decides on support, discipline, or other restorative steps. The council aims to address barriers to education and ensure fair and transparent processes, involving community input in discipline and support for scholars.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all scholars, staff, and community members involved in the RVLA Community Council program.

### **Community Engagement and Transparency**

- The Community Council promotes a transparent and inclusive approach to discipline and support, involving diverse community perspectives.
- The Principal will maintain school-based policies and flows such as Sankofa, MTSS, attendance, etc.; this is not an all-inclusive list of these policies. The Principal retains disciplined decision-making authority over Council recommendations but must provide a rationale for any decisions that differ from the Council's suggestions.
- The Community Council is a support-based mechanism that does not make school discipline decisions

### 3. Definitions

- **Community Council:** A group of selected community members, school staff, and parents who provide recommendations to RVLA's Principal or designee on scholar discipline and support matters, including, but not limited to, other restorative steps at RVLA.

Missing assignments in 2 or more classes

Attendance- 10 absences or more

Fights - 2 or more, and after everyone thereafter

Suspension worthy occurrence

Using slurs- 2 or more times and every time thereafter

Bullying nature- 2 times or more and every time thereafter

Destruction of property

Signed consent form from scholar guardian

**Community Council Members are vetted and chosen based on the following criteria:**

#### **Diverse Representation:**

- **Parents/Guardians:** Ensure representation from parents or guardians, ideally with children in different grade levels or programs. It's important to have diversity in race, socioeconomic background, and family dynamics to reflect the student body.  
**Students:** Consider including high school students, especially those involved in leadership roles (e.g., student government), to provide peer perspectives on discipline and interventions.
  - *Please note that while parent and student involvement is a valued part of our Community Council, the nature of certain discussions may require additional sensitivity. Depending on the specific issues being reviewed, and the comfort level of the student and their family in sharing personal information, parent and student council members may not be invited to participate in every meeting.*

*This is to ensure that all students and families feel safe and respected in these discussions, and that their privacy is protected. We are committed to creating a supportive environment for all, and any decisions regarding participation will be made with the best interest of the student and family in mind.*

- **Teachers and School Staff:** Teachers who have experience with behavior management, student support staff (e.g., school counselors, social workers, special education staff), and other educators can be included for their professional insights.
- **Administrators:** Include a school administrator (e.g., principal or vice principal) to provide guidance on policies, rules, and regulations related to student discipline.
- **Community Members/Partners:** Include representatives from local community organizations, such as mental health services, youth support programs, or family services, who can provide insight into external resources.

#### **2. Relevant Expertise:**

- **Experience in Education or Child Development:** Members with a background in education, child psychology, social work, or counseling should be prioritized for their understanding of student development and behavioral interventions.
- **Knowledge of School Discipline and Interventions:** Members familiar with restorative justice practices, behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and the overall student code of conduct will be valuable.
- **Cultural Competency and Equity Advocacy:** Members with experience in promoting equity and inclusion, particularly those trained in working with diverse student populations, will be essential for ensuring unbiased, culturally sensitive decision-making.

#### **3. Commitment and Availability:**

- **Consistent Participation:** Members should commit to attending meetings regularly and being involved in reviewing cases and collaborating with school staff and families.
- **Time to Review Cases:** Members must have the time and willingness to review individual student cases thoroughly and thoughtfully, including follow-up and community referrals.

#### 4. Confidentiality and Ethics:

- **Understanding of Confidentiality Requirements:** Since the council will handle sensitive student and family information, members must have a strong commitment to maintaining confidentiality and handling information ethically.
- **Ethical Decision-Making:** Members should demonstrate sound judgment, fairness, and impartiality in their decision-making to ensure just and equitable outcomes.

#### 5. Training Requirements:

- **Willingness to Participate in Training:** Members should be willing to participate in relevant training on topics such as restorative justice, trauma-informed practices, and understanding implicit bias to ensure all decisions are informed and fair.

#### 6. Community Connection:

- **Familiarity with Local Resources:** Ideally, members should have a strong connection to the local community and an understanding of the resources available to students and families, such as community health services, youth mentorship programs, and family support services.

#### 7. Communication Skills:

- **Strong Interpersonal Skills:** Members should have strong communication skills, including the ability to actively listen to students, parents, and other stakeholders, and provide constructive feedback and guidance.
- **Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity:** Members must demonstrate empathy and the ability to understand and respect the diverse experiences and needs of students and families from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Principal or Designee:** The individual responsible for final decisions on scholar discipline and support matters, including, but not limited to, other restorative steps at RVLA.
- **FERPA:** The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), as amended, which protects the privacy of scholar education records.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Community Council Members

- **Liaison:**
  - Greet families and assist with sign-in.
  - Help families with required documentation.
  - Serve as the timekeeper.
- **Facilitator:**
  - Welcome participants and explain the Council's goals.
  - Lead the group through scholar intervention and Council's processes.

- Ensure the Council's session stays on track and maintains the flow.
- **School Administrator/Designee:**
  - Present school data related to attendance, grades, and discipline.
  - Provide history and information on previous interventions.
  - Assign a staff member for follow-up, as needed.
- **Secretary:**
  - Take notes during Council sessions.
  - Fill in agreements based on Council recommendations, as needed.
  - Collect signatures on agreements, as needed.
- **Community and Parental Council Members:**
  - Seek to understand and analyze the situation.
  - Make inquiries and analyze data.
  - Make recommendations in compliance with applicable law and RVLA policies and procedures, and aligned with RVLA's past practices for similar situations/conduct while maintaining confidentiality.

## 5. Meeting Protocol

### 5.1 Schedule

- The Community Council will meet monthly (or as needed).
- Council sessions can be conducted virtually if needed.

### 5.2 Participants

- Principal
- School Personnel
- Elders
- Scholar-leadership members
- Community members/partners
- Families
- Secretary

### 5.3 Council Session Process

- **Introductions:** Each participant introduces themselves with their title, role, and grade.
- **Session Goals:** State the hopes for the session and the overarching goal of fostering a collaborative and supportive community.
- **Review Concerns:** A designated member will provide an overview
- **Discussion:**
  - The involved staff, scholar, or family presents their perspective.

- Council members discuss the issue, barriers, and possible supports.
  - Council members recommend consequences or restorative actions as appropriate.
- **Wrap-Up:** The Secretary documents the minutes and recommendations. The Principal reviews the Council's recommendations and makes final decisions regarding next steps (e.g., discipline, restorative steps).

## 6. Consent and Confidentiality

- Participation in the Community Council program is a part of the RVLAs scope of support.
- Written informed consent is required for the release of scholar records to the Council members in compliance with FERPA
  - If consent is not given by the scholar's parent/guardian for that scholar's Council session, personally identifying student information will be redacted and the scholar's situation will be presented to the Council anonymously.
  - In any Council session, if informed consent is not provided by another scholar who is not the subject of the Council session but whose personally identifiable information is included in relevant evidence (e.g., witness statements), that scholar's personally identifiable information will be redacted from the evidence.
  - If a member of the Council is too close to the scholar in question (e.g., family member, close family friend), that member must recuse himself/herself/themselves from the Council session in which there is an actual or potential conflict of interest.
- All Council proceedings and records are confidential and must be handled in accordance with FERPA guidelines.

## 7. Consequences and Support Mechanisms

### 7.1 For Scholars

- Discipline
- Behavior plans
- Community service
- Restorative conversations
- After-school programs
- Required tutoring
- Participation in specific programs or training
- Counseling
- Relationship-building activities.

## 8. Review and Evaluation

The Academic and Culture Advisory, comprised of RVLA Board members, school leadership team members, and scholar leaders, will review this policy annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any amendments will be communicated to all stakeholders.

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### Acknowledgment

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the RVLA Community Council Policy.

**Print Name:**

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**Signature:**

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**Date:**

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For any questions or further information regarding this policy, please contact the District's Office, at 206-741-1016.