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Department of Education Releases New Discipline Code That Shifts Away From Punitive Responses and Embraces Restorative Practices

NEW YORK, NY – After hosting seven community engagement sessions during these summer months, including one forum held to solicit feedback from current students, the Department of Education (DOE) has finalized and published a new [Student Code of Conduct](#). The Children's Defense Fund - New York (CDF-NY) applauds Chancellor Carranza and the DOE's Office of Safety and Youth Development for this tremendous commitment to ensuring students enter the new school year with a more equitable, and remarkably less punitive and exclusion-driven Discipline Code. Coupled with increasing schools' access to restorative practices, social workers, and social emotional learning supports, this new Discipline Code is a bold step toward achieving education justice in New York City.

The new Discipline Code reflects many of CDF-NY's education justice priorities, including limiting maximum suspension terms to twenty school days for most infractions – reduced (in many cases) from an entire school year under the former Code. The new Code also recognizes the importance of welcoming back students returning from suspension, includes new bullying prevention and intervention strategies, incorporates gender-inclusive language, and updates infraction definitions to reduce potential subjectivity and bias when reporting student behavior. With these changes, the DOE and the City demonstrate renewed commitment to advancing the dignity and wellbeing of students in New York City's public schools.

Two CDF-NY education advocates, who also attended the DOE's *Youth Engagement Session*, issued the following statements:

"This is a great way forward because it shows not only that student voices are being heard, but also that efforts are being made to meet the needs of students," said Khushayah Morris, a high school junior in Brooklyn. "The fact that the Department of Education hosted a meeting for students was a great move, and I look forward to next steps as schools are given resources to avoid relying on suspensions as a whole."

"I know long-term suspensions make it harder for returning students to get back on track and stay focused without becoming discouraged by the burden of catching up," said Brandon Gonzalez, a high school freshman in Manhattan. "Limiting suspension days on top of giving students the chance to speak out on school suspensions, and to speak for our school community and how we feel about it will bring us closer to making sure students are supported in school and avoid getting held back or pushed out."

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