

October 2020

**Civil Discourse**

As reflected in the Eight Pillars of Bowden, Cheshire Academy strives to foster citizenship and responsibility among students by encouraging curiosity for and participation in the political process. We believe that the capacity to listen to others with opposing viewpoints builds empathy, understanding, and awareness. With this in mind, we encourage engagement in conversations where diverse viewpoints can be shared—also known as civil discourse.

Cheshire Academy’s diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Developing the ability to show respect for others—even those with whom we disagree—helps to create a more inclusive climate. When engaging in civil discourse, all members of the CA community are expected to adhere to the Pillars of Respect, Caring, Civility, Morality, and Fairness. Demonstrating mutual respect and regard is especially warranted when engaging in subjects such as race, sex and sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, and other aspects of people’s identity.

Our community is committed to combatting bias, racism, and prejudice in all forms, including in speech. Words can have the power to harm others. While we encourage civil discourse, Cheshire Academy prohibits any speech that discriminates, attacks, disparages, demeans, intimidates, or deliberately mischaracterizes an individual or group for any reason, and particularly because of their identity. This includes the use of such speech in person, in remote classrooms, by phone/text/email, or via social media. Offensive speech can take many forms, including but not limited to negatively biased categorical statements, racial/ethnic/gender-based slurs, stereotypes, and epithets. Aligning with the Pillar of Responsibility, our school strongly promotes allyship.

Therefore, we encourage all members of our community to identify incidents of offensive speech when they occur. We also recognize that not all participants may feel comfortable doing so. Any member of the community who would like to report an incident of offensive speech may contact Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Aleesha Grier-Rogers at [aleesha.grier-rogers@cheshireacademy.org](mailto:aleesha.grier-rogers@cheshireacademy.org).

**Civil Discourse Key Points**

Do's	Do Not's
<b>Do remain open and respectful by allowing others to voice different perspectives and opinions.</b>	Do not cut others off or speak over them.
<b>Do show respect for individual differences by recognizing that the opinions, perspectives, and beliefs of others may differ from yours.</b>	Do not try to force others to share if they are not comfortable doing so.
<b>Do always use respectful language. Topics such as race, sex and sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, and other aspects of people's identity are especially sensitive.</b>	Do not personalize your statements or use profanity, slurs, put downs, attacks, or generalizations to demean a particular group.
<b>Do help create a safe campus climate by reporting incidents of bias, racism, and discrimination.</b>	Do not ignore your role in creating a positive campus environment.