

Updated Sept. 2022

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 Cheshire Academy 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 harasses, discriminates, attacks, disparages, demeans, intimidates, or deliberately mischaracterizes an individual or group for any reason, particularly if due to a characteristic protected by law. This includes in person speech, or speech that occurs off campus, in remote classrooms, by phone/text/email, or via social media. Speech that violates our civil discourse expectations can take many forms, including but not limited to identity-based terms used in the pejorative, ethnic, racial, religious or gender-based slurs, derogatory 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 speech that violates this policy should report it to the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Tanasia Lea, Tanasia.lea@cheshireacademy.org) or utilize the Academy’s Bias Incident Reporting procedure.

Civil Discourse Key Points

Do's	Do Not's
Do remain open and respectful by allowing others to voice different perspectives and opinions.	Do not cut others off or speak over them.
Do show respect for individual differences by recognizing that the opinions, perspectives, and beliefs of others may differ from yours.	Do not try to force others to share if they are not comfortable doing so.
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.	Do not personalize your statements or use profanity, slurs, put downs, attacks, or generalizations to demean a particular group.
Do help create a safe campus climate by reporting incidents of bias, racism, and discrimination.	Do not ignore your role in creating a positive campus environment.