

# 2023 SDLC STUDENT HANDBOOK

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The National Association of Independent Schools (“NAIS”) is pleased to welcome members of the independent school community to participate in the NAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference (“SDLC”). Attending this event is the same as attending other events or participating in field trips, travel, or activities organized by or associated with the student’s school (the “School”). The School is responsible for its students, and School rules (or School trip, travel, and activity rules) apply. Additionally, NAIS has set forth its own expectations and policies, which serve to guide participants and act in conjunction with— not as a replacement of— the School’s own policies. This Student Handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to create, nor does it create a contract or part of a contract in any way. Nor does it include an exhaustive list of all expectations and prohibited conduct. It may be revised by NAIS at any time, and the policies and policy application will be interpreted or determined by NAIS. Questions or concerns regarding any School policy should be directed to the School. If there are questions regarding the policies in this document, please contact NAIS. If a student finds a conflict between any applicable School policy and any applicable NAIS/SDLC policy, the student should inform their chaperone who, in turn, should inform NAIS.

For the purposes of this document, the NAIS contact is **Caroline G. Blackwell, NAIS Vice President, Equity and Justice**, at [blackwell@nais.org](mailto:blackwell@nais.org) or (202) 973-9700.

## ABOUT THE SDLC EXPERIENCE

SDLC convenes student delegates from across the country to actively explore issues of diversity and belonging. Participants take a critical look at themselves, others, and society at large. The conference curriculum focuses attention on age, ability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class. Students discuss how these identifiers and others impact ways of knowing, being, experiencing the world, and communicating cross-culturally about these impacts. Further, student leaders build capacity in peer facilitation, conflict de-escalation, collaboration, networking, and more. Because SDLC’s mission is to support and advance student leadership, each delegation is encouraged to develop and share its own action plan upon returning to School. The skill-building and idea exploration experienced at SDLC is proven to help students develop strategies for creating meaningful dialogue and collaborative change in their School and communities.

## CORE VALUES

NAIS is committed in its efforts to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals participating. Such an environment precludes behaviors that are disrespectful of and physically and/or emotionally harmful to others. All participants play important roles in maintaining these standards. NAIS expects all participants to treat others with civility, respect, and dignity, and to interact honestly, politely, and appropriately. Before acting, participants should carefully consider how their communications— through words, appearances, actions, or otherwise— may negatively impact others. NAIS believes that open communication about these sensitive topics is integral to fostering a culture of personal responsibility, mutual accountability, and positive peer leadership. Should participants have any questions about NAIS’s expectations, or if they are concerned about another participant’s conduct, they should inform their chaperones who, in turn, should inform NAIS.

## APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

NAIS is pleased to support independent schools as they educate student leaders and future world leaders. NAIS strives to create a safe, secure, and supportive environment for participants that is also enriching and fun. Therefore, NAIS calls on its participants to make safe, respectful, and smart choices to ensure that SDLC is the best possible experience for all. All student participants are expected to act in a manner befitting the important role they play as leaders in their School communities. Therefore, NAIS asks students to be mindful of their conduct and how they present themselves at SDLC. NAIS expects participants to adhere to the following standards as well as any rules or protocols for a specific SDLC program or event.

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**Respectful Speech and Conduct:** NAIS does not tolerate verbal or physical behavior that constitutes bullying (including cyberbullying), discrimination, or harassment. When participating in SDLC, and in any related interactions, it is of the utmost importance that participants maintain and model the highest standards of conduct, respect, and integrity, including refraining from any activity that might constitute or contribute to bullying, discrimination, harassment, or other interpersonal misconduct. NAIS seeks to foster cultural competency in participants and expects all participants to respect others— even those with whom they disagree. The practice of mutual respect and regard is especially warranted when engaging in discussions of subjects such as race, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, and other aspects of peoples’ identities. We strive to combat prejudice in all forms, including in speech. We recognize that words have the power to negatively impact others, and we prohibit conduct including speech that discriminates, attacks, disparages, demeans, intimidates, or deliberately mischaracterizes an individual or group, for any reason, and particularly because of their identity. Offensive conduct may take many forms, including physical gestures or unwelcome touching, illustrations, and speech. Offensive speech likewise can take many forms, including but not limited to negatively biased categorical statements, stereotypes, and epithets, whether written or said aloud. This policy serves as a guide to NAIS’s expectations and does not outline all specific forms of offensive conduct. NAIS invites sincere discussion and questions, and it recognizes that there will be moments when insufficient information, erroneous belief, or faulty presentation will create opportunities to review conduct, statements, and clarify impact. NAIS encourages participants to address those incidents directly when they occur and recognizes that not all participants may feel comfortable doing so. NAIS’s goal is to have all participants treat each other with respect, to learn from each other, and to grow as individuals. If any participant has questions about their own conduct, the conduct of another participant (whether student or adult), or questions about how to address an incident, they should contact their chaperone who, in turn, should communicate with NAIS.

**Attendance:** SDLC student participants are expected to attend all conference sessions and activities, and to be on time for all such commitments. Only SDLC-registered students, SDLC faculty, and NAIS staff and representatives may participate in the conference. Students are expected to congregate in public areas only and avoid socialization in private rooms and areas. During SDLC event hours, students should inform SDLC faculty and their chaperones of their whereabouts. During non-event hours, chaperones are solely responsible for students and their whereabouts; students are expected to communicate with chaperones about their whereabouts at all times.

**Curfew:** At the conclusion of each SDLC program day, students will be released to their chaperone(s), who may be required to provide proper identification. Chaperones are responsible for ensuring that the students adhere to the conference curfew and be in their respective rooms no later than 45 minutes after SDLC dismissal, unless an earlier curfew has been imposed by the student’s School. SDLC Dismissal will take place between 9:45-10:15 PM (local time) on Thursday and 10:30-11:00 PM on Friday.

**Activities:** Sightseeing, shopping, and other chaperone-supervised activities are only appropriate before or after the conference.

**Use of Electronic Devices:** Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off or put away during conference sessions. This includes during meals and social events. NAIS’s conduct rules, including the prohibition of bullying, harassment, and discrimination, apply to conduct online or otherwise on electronic devices.

**Dress Code:** Participants are expected to be appropriately dressed, which requires that participants refrain from wearing revealing clothing or items with inappropriate words or logos. The dress code is based on common sense, moderation, and respect for self and others. The expectation is that all clothing be modest, neat, clean, in good repair, and fit properly so that participants are comfortable. If SDLC faculty/NAIS staff

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determine a participant's attire violates the dress code, the student's chaperone will be notified to escort the participant for a change of clothes. Additionally, all other conduct rules (e.g., Respectful Speech and Conduct) shall apply to the choice and use of clothing items, to the extent applicable. NAIS shall determine, in its sole discretion, whether such a policy has been violated and reserves the right to implement the appropriate consequence, including but not limited to removal from the conference.

**Inappropriate Items/Weapons:** Participants may not use or possess alcohol or other unauthorized drugs or substances, including tobacco and tobacco-related products (such as e-cigarettes and vaping), and/or any paraphernalia associated with the use of illegal drugs while participating in SDLC. Possession or use of a firearm, a pellet gun, a knife, or any other weapon is also prohibited. Toy guns and weapons are also prohibited.

**Recording:** Participants are prohibited from (a) recording any part of any SDLC program; recording any participants or other individuals participating in any SDLC program; and sharing, broadcasting, and/or making public any materials created or recorded by NAIS or its employees, SDLC faculty, or anyone else in relation to SDLC.

**Personal Care/Medication:** Students are expected to prepare for the day's activities in advance, procuring and making a plan for all necessary personal items and medications. With rare exceptions, students will not be permitted to leave the conference to attend to such matters. And if such an exception is made, NAIS may require chaperone attendance.

**Health and Safety:** Students are expected to refrain from conduct that could, in any way, endanger their health or safety or that of other participants. If a student sees or otherwise learns of an unsafe condition on the property or unsafe conduct among participants, they are expected to report the condition or conduct to their chaperone immediately. Additionally, NAIS or the SDLC venue may implement health-related policies, to reduce the spread of communicable illnesses. However, the SDLC community is built on trust and care for ourselves and each other. All participating individuals are expected to be mindful of how they feel and refrain from attending in-person events when they feel sick.

### CONSEQUENCES FOR MISCONDUCT

Should NAIS determine that any participant has violated the SDLC Student Handbook, acted inconsistently with its spirit or purpose, or otherwise negatively interfered with the SDLC program or its mission, that individual may be precluded from further participation in all SDLC sessions and activities. They may be subject to other consequences, as determined appropriate by NAIS, including but not limited to being barred from entering the SDLC or People of Color Conference venue. If a student is asked to leave the conference, their chaperone(s) and School will be contacted and will be responsible for making arrangements to escort the student home.

### STUDENT MEDICATIONS

While the SDLC experience may include access to onsite medical staff, the medical personnel's ability to administer medicine to participants may change year to year. Therefore, Schools and Participating Students should plan to procure, bring, provide, store, and/or administer medicine to students, in accordance with their own school policy as they would with their other school trips. This includes preparing for and providing for the administration of over-the-counter medications, such as pain relievers, as needed.

### DISCLOSURE TO SCHOOLS

NAIS may communicate with any participant's School about any misconduct or other inappropriate behavior involving that individual.