

Conscientious Speech and Expression

Deerfield is first and foremost a place of learning, one that values openness of discussion, robust inquiry, and honesty of debate. As we write in our Vision Statement for Inclusion, “diverse perspectives fuel creative and innovative thinking.” Promoting these values prepares students for life-long learning and civic engagement, cultivating student-citizens willing and able to consider views different from their own, even those that may be unpopular or that they may find offensive.

We know that our mission is best achieved by an atmosphere of intellectual diversity, respect for heterodox ideas, and the lively exchange of viewpoints, and research tells us that the most effective way to combat bias—to free ourselves from the limits of our own experiences and assumptions about the world—is to live and learn in a diverse community. This remains one of the great gifts that Deerfield offers each of us.

Each member of the Deerfield community has an obligation to create a climate that supports this kind of civility and constructive engagement, learning, and growth—for all. To that end, we seek to practice the dispositions of thoughtfulness and respect, including: the openness to engage generously and listen deeply to others with different opinions and views of the world; the courage to embrace complexity and uncertainty; the humility to recognize the limits of our own knowledge and experience; and conscientiousness of speech.