



WARNER ROBINS MIDDLE



WARRIORS

2020-21 HANDBOOK



BEST PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL







# WARNER ROBINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

425 Mary Lane Warner Robins, GA 31088

Phone: 478-929-7832

<http://wrms.hcbe.net>

[www.facebook.com/WRWarriors](http://www.facebook.com/WRWarriors)

[www.twitter.com/WRMiddleSchool](http://www.twitter.com/WRMiddleSchool)

[www.instagram.com/WRMiddleSchool](http://www.instagram.com/WRMiddleSchool)

Colors: Orange, Black & White

Mascot: Warrior

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Brett Wallace, Principal

Brandy Farrell, Asst. Principal for Instruction

Cameron Andrews, Asst. Principal & Title IX Coord.

Dotheria Ford, Counselor & SST/504 Coord.

Tene' Everett, Counselor

Sheri Pfeuffer, Media Specialist

Michael Martin, Athletic Director

## **OFFICE STAFF**

Stephanie Montgomery, Secretary

Doris Larkin, Receptionist/Records Clerk

Wesley Coffee, Bookkeeper

Shinece Hampton, Health Tech

Maria Cook, Family Engagement Coordinator

Cedric Wynn, Clerk

Eric Farris, School Resource Officer

## **SUPPORT STAFF**

Gloria Reichman, Nutrition Manager

Shante Jackson, Lead Custodian



BEST PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

# WE WILL HAVE A GREAT DAY IN WARRIOR COUNTRY!

## **WELCOME**

This student handbook is published and issued to students each year to serve as a guide for information, requirements, and procedures to be followed at Warner Robins Middle School. This handbook is a supplement to the Student Handbook for Middle Schools published and distributed by the Houston County Board of Education. Both are available for your review at [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net). It is our hope that the information found in this handbook will meet with the approval of parents and students. However, disagreement with a policy or procedure will not be grounds for ignoring or failing to comply with this area of school life. We look forward to working in a spirit of cooperation with all students and parents to challenge you and develop you to your full potential. We are here for you. Our expectation is for all students to have the best school year possible. We encourage all students to make good decisions. Remember, this is your school – take pride in it! Since 1970, Warner Robins Middle School has built a tradition of excellence. Many students before you have traveled these same halls and classrooms preparing for success in all phases of life. Keep this tradition alive. We expect you have a GREAT year. Life is all about the decisions that YOU make. Think about our school creed:

### **YOU**

You are the one who has to decide  
Whether YOU do it or toss it aside.  
You are the one to make up your mind  
Whether YOU will lead or linger behind;  
Whether YOU strive for the good that's afar  
Or be content to stay where YOU are.  
Take it or leave it,  
There is something to do.  
Just think it over,  
It's all up to YOU.

Our **VISION** is to become a premier school of teaching and learning. Our **MISSION** is to produce high-achieving students. Our **BELIEFS** were established by a committee representing a cross section of our stakeholders and are as follows: We will provide a broad range of educational opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment. We will maintain high expectations by providing a rigorous academic and technological curriculum to a diverse population of students. We will provide teachers with professional learning opportunities in an effort to model growth and change. We will model good character through speaking the truth and treating both our colleagues and students with integrity and compassion. We will empower students to achieve excellence in all facets of life. We will use a variety of educational approaches to reach all students and enable them to demonstrate their achievements. We will partner with students, parents, the community and other stakeholders to advance the school's vision and mission. We will model humor by not taking ourselves too seriously and not forgetting to laugh because we have a job that we really enjoy! We desire to inspire!

One of our goals for this school year is to be known as a school committed to reading and literacy. It is the desire of the faculty and staff to inspire our students to experience the joy of reading with the goal of fostering a love of reading among our students. In addition to the required reading assignments for each class, students will be reading and writing more in all classes. However,

we must have the participation of our parents to accomplish this goal. Join us in raising a community of literate children by taking these steps at home. Make sure your child reads for pleasure, at home, for a minimum of twenty minutes each day. Discuss with your child what books they are reading. Help them complete a daily reading log issued by their teacher. Apply for a county library card if your child does not already have one.

## **ATTENDANCE**

To be eligible for promotion to the next grade, students in grades K – 8 are expected to achieve 95% attendance (absent no more than 9 days). Students who achieve 90 to 94% attendance (absent no more than 10 – 18 days) may be promoted at the discretion of the building principal. When you are absent, you should bring a dated written absence note (within three days) when you return to school from your parent or guardian that includes: the dates of absences, the reason, and their signature. You should place the note in any of the boxes located throughout the school. The absence is recorded as unexcused until a written note is submitted.

## **EARLY DISMISSALS**

If at all possible, parents should schedule appointments for after school hours. Students must be picked up in the office, and parents/guardians are required to show picture identification. Parents must also sign the early dismissal sheet for safety reasons. A student will not be called to the office until a parent/designee arrives to pick him or her up. If a student returns the same day, he or she must first come to the office to sign back in and get an admittance slip. Parents please note the following: The office makes afternoon announcements and calls students for messages at 2:40pm each day. If at all possible, allow this time frame to get a message to your child. If you are picking up your child from school who usually rides a bus, it needs to be done before 2:40pm. For safety reasons, we cannot allow students to be taken off the bus.

## **TARDIES TO SCHOOL**

Students are tardy if they are not in homeroom by 7:25am. If you arrive after 7:35am, report to the office. Acceptable reasons for excusing tardies include: personal illness, family illness, death in the family, or certain religious activities. Students should not arrive on campus before 7:00 am and should be picked up by 3:10pm unless participating in a school-sponsored activity approved by the principal.

## **ACCIDENTS**

When a student is seriously injured or ill, parents will be notified immediately. Please send the office updated phone numbers and addresses if they change at any time during the year.

## **MEDICATION**

All medications must be brought to the office upon arrival at school. All medications will be administered in the med tech office. Nonprescription medication must be in the original container. Students should never accept medicine from another student.

## **FLORAL, BALLOON & GIFT DELIVERIES**

The school will not accept these types of deliveries. They are a disruption in classes, in the halls, and on the buses.



### **CAFETERIA INFORMATION**

Warner Robins Middle has been selected to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program which provides an alternative approach for offering school meals instead of collecting individual applications for free and reduced price meals. What does this mean for you? Breakfast and lunch will be served at no cost to ALL students enrolled at Warner Robins Middle. No applications to turn in...no income criteria to meet...ALL Warrior students will be served breakfast and lunch every school day for FREE! If you eat lunch with your child, a designated table is provided for both of you. Students eating the hot breakfast option should report to the lunchroom upon arrival to school. Breakfast will not be served after 7:25am. All students should sit with their feet under the table. An adult will dismiss the class to return their trays. After returning the trays, the class will line up to return to class.

### **CAFETERIA PROCEDURES**

Drinks from the vending machines must be purchased BEFORE entering the lunchroom. Walk in line to lunch and break as directed by your teacher. Do not drag behind to wait on friends. You should make sure that you have silverware, napkins, and condiments before sitting at your table. After you receive your breakfast, lunch, or snack, you will sit at your assigned table and/or seat. No student should leave their seat/table without first raising their hand and receiving permission from an adult on duty. Do not save seats for others. You are to talk quietly to people around you. You will be asked to move if you become too loud. You are to maintain a clean eating area in the lunchroom. Cleanliness will be maintained when you: Make sure all waste is in your tray and spills cleaned up before you leave. Make sure the table is clean. Walk in an orderly manner to return your tray. If something falls off your tray enroute to the trash area, pick it up and throw it away. Put your tray and silverware away properly. Place all of your waste in the trash cans. You should line up to report back to class in an orderly manner. You will be subject to disciplinary action for not following the above procedures in maintaining a safe, orderly, and clean lunchroom at breakfast, lunch, and break time.

### **MEDIA CENTER**

The Media Center is open from 7:20am until 3:00pm. The general collection of books may be checked out for a period of two weeks. Reference books, magazines, and reserve books may be checked-out after 2:15pm and must be returned the following morning before homeroom. Students are charged fines for overdue library books. The fines for the general collection are \$.10 per day. Fines for reference books, magazines, and reserve books are \$.25 per day. Fines for overdue books do not exceed \$5. When a book is lost, the student must pay for the book. The replacement cost of the book is charged. When a book is found, the student will receive a refund of the cost, less \$2.50 (for any overdue fines and processing of lost book). Refunds are made during the school year in which the book is lost. Fines and overdue notices are given to students by homeroom teachers on a regular basis. The student and/or parent are responsible for settling these financial obligations. Student's that owes a fine that over \$1 may be excluded from activities.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

The administration and teaching staff encourage parents to become parent volunteers. Parent volunteers must complete a form authorizing a background check. This form is available on our school's website and from the front office staff.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Our school takes pride in letting the public know of student and staff successes on our social media accounts. We use Facebook and Twitter to communicate with our students and parents. Unless you object, your student's picture may be published, but we rarely match student names with pictures.

### **CONFERENCES**

If parents would like to meet with a teacher, they should call 929-7832 and enter the teacher's extension to arrange an appointment. Please do not call teachers at home or cell. Parents may also request a conference with an administrator by calling 929-7832.

### **VISITORS**

The staff welcomes parents to our school. We encourage you to learn about our school and what we teach so that you will realize the positive influence Warner Robins Middle School has on your children, the leaders of tomorrow. Since we wish to neither jeopardize the safety of any student nor to make you feel unwelcome at WRMS, we recommend that you follow these guidelines in observing class: To avoid confusion, please pre-arrange your visit to your child's classroom by calling 929-7832 and enter the teacher's extension to arrange a visit date and time. All visitors must report to the office upon entering the building to sign in and receive a visitor's badge. To minimize interruptions to the educational process, a staff member will escort visitors to their child's classroom at the beginning of a class period. Classroom observations cannot be viewed as times for discussing a student's progress. We encourage parents to arrange such conferences with teachers for another time.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

The lost and found is located on the stage in the cafeteria. Students can visit the lost and found during homeroom or at other times with teacher permission. If you find something, we expect you to give it to the teacher or turn it into the office. If you lose something, we encourage you to ask whether or not it has been turned in.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Students are expected to cooperate and use common sense while riding the bus. The bus driver is in charge at all times. Students are to follow the rules and listen to the instructions given to them. Please read the information on Bus Conduct in the HCBE handbook. You are expected to ride the bus to which you have been assigned and get off at your assigned bus stop. You will not be allowed to ride another bus home except in serious, family emergencies in which case, a note will be required that will be verified by the office with the parent. The note should be presented to office personnel before homeroom for approval, and it must include your name, the different bus number, parent



signature, and a phone number for parental contact. Notes will not be approved on the bus ramp.

### **PROCEDURES BEFORE HOMEROOM**

Go directly to the lunchroom (7<sup>th</sup> graders) or the Gym (6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders that will not eat hot breakfast) upon arriving at school. After 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders eat hot breakfast, they should leave the lunchroom to report directly to the gym. When you are dismissed from the lunchroom or gym, go to your locker and then your homeroom. If you arrive after gym/lunchroom dismissal, go to your locker and then your homeroom. After you get to school, you may not leave the campus. When you leave campus at the end of school, you should not return without reporting to the office. Bicycle riders should not linger at the bike rack. Lock your bike and enter the building. Loitering on street corners adjacent to campus before and after school is prohibited. You must have a written pass from the teacher you are to visit to be in the hallways before others are dismissed from the gym/lunchroom. Loitering around the gym before and after school is strictly prohibited.

### **HOMEROOM**

All students are required to attend homeroom, which begins at 7:30am. Homeroom is a study period. Students are to either study or sit quietly. Students will not be allowed to leave homeroom without a hall pass from their homeroom teacher.

### **CHANGING CLASSES**

Walk--don't run. Keep voices at a normal tone. Walk on right side of hall. Do not gather in groups to carry on a conversation. Use the water fountain or restroom nearest your class. Do not prop your feet on walls. Do not push or shove others. Do not linger outside a classroom, go in and take a seat. Students in P.E. classes will remain in P.E. until they are dismissed. Horseplay in classrooms and hallways will not be tolerated. Loitering in restrooms will not be allowed.

### **SCHOOL DISMISSAL**

School dismissal is not a time for socialization. The campus should be cleared as soon as possible. When you are dismissed, you need to go to your locker and then proceed quickly to your bus, ride for pick-up, or walk home. Bus riders will be released at the 2:45 bell, and walkers and car-riders will be released at the 2:55 bell. Those participating in any after school activity will be dismissed at the 2:55 bell. If a student is in the hallway without permission at the wrong time, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action. If you are participating in a school-sponsored after-school activity, you should go to your locker and then directly to that activity. All students involved in after school activities will be released at the 2:55 bell.

### **SCHOOL DRESS**

There is a positive relationship between a neat, appropriate appearance and a good learning environment. All students are encouraged to take pride in themselves and in their schoolwork. Warner Robins Middle School will adhere to the Houston County 6 – 12 grades dress code policy. Students may not dress in a color or style that associates them with an identified gang or group

that could intimidate or make other students uncomfortable. This includes dressing in all black, "gothic" dress, and colors known to be associated with gangs. Students can not wear pants tucked into their socks or shoes. Shoes with more than 1 inch heel height are not allowed. Outer garment or fabric that is form fitting shall not be permitted. Bandanas and scarves are not allowed to be worn on the head. Leggings may be permitted if the outer garment is knee-length. Clothing which allows exposure of waist, hips, midriff, buttocks, under garments, or chest is prohibited. Over-sized belt buckles will not be allowed. When the dress code is broken, parents may be contacted to bring a change of clothes. Students who cannot get a change of clothing may be assigned to In-School Suspension for the remainder of the school day. Disciplinary consequences including detention or suspension may be assigned for repeated violations of the dress code.

### **TEXTBOOK RESPONSIBILITY**

Textbooks are costly. You are financially responsible for your textbooks and textbook CD's whether lost, stolen, or damaged. Disciplinary consequences may be assigned for textbooks and textbook CD's left lying in the halls or around campus.

### **CHECK POLICY**

We are happy to accept checks for any school fees or fund raising items purchased. The check should be made out to WRMS. It is, however, the responsibility of each parent/guardian to ensure that sufficient funds are available to cover any checks written. All checks returned to us by the bank for "Insufficient Funds" are to be taken care of within one week after contact is made by the bookkeeper. If this is not done, an additional fee of \$25 may be charged. Only cash/money order will be accepted to clear this check. If an individual has two insufficient funds checks returned in the same year, only cash/money orders will be accepted on any purchases or fees for the remainder of the school year. This includes library fees, PE uniform fees, and fund raising purchases. Please contact our bookkeeper as soon as a problem arises to avoid future complications.

### **HELPFUL HINTS**

Poor study habits are often the cause of low grades in school. The counselor is available to help you with this problem. However, your subject teacher is the first person you must see in order that they may offer advice as to what you "are not doing" correctly. Here are a few hints to good study habits. Develop an interest in the course that you are taking. You should seek to learn and take pride in your work. You are the one that will profit. Set up a time and a place to study. Don't get too comfortable to study. Have adequate lighting and all the necessary materials on hand. Don't spend too much time on one subject. Budget your time into short periods of deep concentration. Don't wait until the last minute. Understand your assignment completely--ask teachers to help you. Take notes. Do your homework daily. Treat your brain and body with care. Review tests. Learn to study in groups as well as alone. Have your parents review material with you prior to exams. Your being a student is your daily job. You are expected to come to school and each class prepared with all necessary items each day.



## **HOMEWORK**

Learning is important and should continue after school hours. Homework will be assigned daily and should not be viewed as punishment but as a way of encouraging and extending learning. The following are several reasons for homework: To provide extra practice on learned skills, further learning in areas covered in the classroom, opportunity for students to learn good work habits, opportunity for growth in responsibility, and parents an opportunity to see what children are studying and how well they are doing. Students may be assigned Academic Opportunity during their scheduled lunch time to complete missing academic assignments.

## **TEST TAKING**

Relax and forget other people. Read the directions carefully and then follow them. Read the whole test first to see what is asked for and how to apportion your time. Read each question twice before answering. Think before you write. Answer questions fully with information asked for. Check your paper for spelling and grammar before turning it in. Cheating is never acceptable. Students may face disciplinary action for occurrences.

## **GRADE REPORTING & REPORT CARD DATES**

Report cards are issued every 18 weeks at the end of the semester (about 90 days), with progress reports issued at 6 and 12 weeks of each semester. It is the responsibility of the student to show parents all grading reports issued by the school and to return signed documents the next school day.

<u>Report Period</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>Issued</u>
Progress Report, Day 31	Sep 16	Sep 18
Progress Report, Day 60	Nov 4	Nov 6
End of 1st Semester, Day 86	Dec 18	Jan 5
Progress Report, Day 120	Feb 24	Feb 26
Progress report, Day 150	Apr 14	Apr 16
End of 2nd Semester, Day 180	May 26	May 28

## **GRADING WEIGHTS**

The grading weights for all Houston County middle school classes are:

Grade	6th	7th	8th	8th EOC
Major	40%	40%	40%	40%
Minor	30%	30%	30%	25%
Daily	25%	20%	15%	15%
Final	5%	10%	15%	20%

- 6th grade Final Exams: Fall Semester final exam will cover content from the last 9 weeks. Spring Semester final exam will cover content from all 18 weeks.
- 7th grade Final Exams: Both Fall & Spring Semester final exams will cover content from all 18 weeks.
- 8th grade Final Exams: Both Fall & Spring Semester final exams will cover content from all 18 weeks.
- 8th grade EOC Final Exams: Fall Semester final exam will cover content from all 18 weeks. Spring Semester final exam be the End of Course (EOC) exam.

## **SECOND CHANCES**

### **Redos / Retakes**

Opportunities to re-do assignments and assessments will be allowed at teacher's discretion. Opportunities to retake assessments may be limited to one retake with the completion of a learning contract. It is the student's responsibility to complete a learning contract to earn credit for incomplete or substandard work. Redos and Retakes must be completed within 5 days of the return of the assignment and/or assessment. No Redos or Retakes on Final Exams. There will be NO EXTRA CREDIT assignments.

## **ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITY**

For incomplete assignments, missing assignments and/or substandard work Academic Opportunity is defined as a working lunch in which students are seated at assigned tables to complete assignments.

## **SST/504 ADMINISTRATORS**

Counselors, Dotheria Ford and Jay Wood

## **AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

A number of after school activities will be planned for the enjoyment and social development of students. We believe that these activities constitute an integral part of the total development of young people. Some examples of these activities are listed below. All school rules apply to school activities after regular school hours. Guests from other schools must also abide by WRMS rules. Those participating in any after school activity will be dismissed at the 2:55 bell. Attendance at an after school activity should be for the enjoyment of the activity. Students attending events must remain in their seats unless visiting the restroom or concession stand. If the event has an admission fee and the student leaves, he or she will be required to pay in order to return to the event. Students will be required to leave without refund if their actions indicate a violation of school or county policies. In addition, all students must be picked up within 30 minutes of scheduled end time. Students not picked up will receive a warning for the first time. Any future violations may result in students being banned from after school events for the remainder of the school year.

## **SCHOOL DANCES**

Dances will be held from 6:00pm until 8:30pm or 3:00pm until 5:30pm. All school/county dress codes apply. All students who leave early must sign out before leaving. Only WRMS students are allowed. Students are not allowed to go outside or to roam the building. Parents are invited to stay and help monitor their students. Vulgar dancing and music are not allowed. Police supervision is provided to help ensure student safety. Please be prompt and prudent in picking up your children from extra-curricular activities. Since the administration will not leave your child unsupervised, your assistance in this matter will be appreciated. Students that are not picked up promptly and/or misbehave may not be allowed to attend the next extra-curricular activity.



## **SCHOOL ELECTIONS AND OFFICES**

To be eligible, a student must have passed all subjects previous semester-counselor approval. Also, student must have creditable behavior and attitude-principal approval. If, during the school year, an elected student fails to meet the above academic criteria, or is involved in any disciplinary misconduct resulting in suspension, the student will be removed from office and may not be permitted for consideration for any other student honor or privilege. Elected officers should attend all meetings.

## **BANQUETS AND AWARDS CEREMONY**

At the end of athletic seasons and in the last month of the school year, we set aside a time for awards and special recognition. Our school honors the students who have made outstanding achievement in scholarship, citizenship, merit and physical education. Appropriate dress, according to county policy, and behavior are required at these functions. If notified that you will receive an award, you are strongly encouraged to attend this very nice ceremony.

## **TITLE IX**

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities. Our school does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities. Any inquiries concerning Title IX may be referred to our school's Title IX Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Cameron Andrews at 929-7832.

## **STRIKE FREE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM**

The Warner Robins Middle School progressive discipline program serves to facilitate learning and promote a safe environment. We expect students to exhibit good citizenship, strive for academic excellence, and conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times. High expectations for teachers, administrators, and staff provide consistency, fairness, and encouragement. Staff will contact parents/guardians to inform them of the student's behavior and to seek assistance to facilitate improvement. Students are responsible for returning discipline forms signed by parents/guardians. There is no practical way to predetermine exact consequences for each discipline infraction that may occur during the school year. The following is a guide, but keep in mind that lists are provided only as examples.

### **Level 1 Offense Examples**

Dress code violations, tardiness to class, failure to follow classroom procedures, unprepared for class, not returning forms/notes after 2 days, no hall pass, hall/restroom infractions

### **Level 1 Consequence Examples**

Teachers may assign detention for Level 1 offenses as follows:

1st strike	1 day lunch detention
2nd strike	2 days lunch detention
3rd strike	3 days after-school detention
4th strike	4 days after-school detention

Repeated violations of the same offense may result in an immediate office referral (Level 2).

For each strike, students who miss detention will be required to provide a valid reason as soon as they return to school. Failure to stay will result in additional days and/or an increased consequence in accordance with the following guidelines:

1st miss	1 extra day of lunch/after-school detention
2nd miss	next strike assigned
3rd miss	office referral

### **Level 2 Offense Examples**

Fighting, profanity/vulgarity, threats, disrespect, defiance to adults, theft, severe class disruption, vandalism, infraction of Board of Education or WRMS policy or procedure

### **Level 2 Consequence**

Students will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action.

Student strike records (Level 1) will start over at the beginning of each semester; however, office discipline records (Level 2) are cumulative. Students must complete all detention assignments regardless of starting a new grading period.

Student accumulating 3 strikes or having been assigned ISS/OSS will not be eligible for rewards given to students for good behavior.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Students who misbehave on a field trip must have a parent/guardian accompany them on successive field trips for the remainder of the year if allowed to attend. If a student has struck out, he or she will not be eligible for field trips. Students must meet academic and behavior expectations to be eligible for field trips. The administration and faculty reserve the right to reprimand students when guidelines, rules, and procedures are not followed. Students are expected to ask about any questionable aspect of school interaction before becoming involved. Administrators are given wide latitude of discretion in the determination of whether behavior is acceptable or not.

## **WRMS STUDENT BEHAVIOR AT SHIRLEY HILLS ELEMENTARY**

Students are expected to behave appropriately while walking between their home and school. Inappropriate behavior will result in disciplinary action. If you pick up a student from Shirley Hills Elementary, you can do so as long as you behave appropriately at SHES and remain in the designated location. Your name and the name(s) of the elementary student(s) must be on the roster in both the offices at WRMS and SHES. If your name is not on the roster, this means that you should not be on the SHES campus. If a WRMS student misbehaves at SHES, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action which may result in banning from the SHES campus and a police report.

## **DETENTION PROCEDURES**

Students having habitual, unexcused tardiness to class or choose to misbehave may be assigned after-school detention. Detention obligations take priority over extracurricular activities and are not dependent on where students live or how they get to and from school (walk, ride a bus, or parent dependent). Students



and parents are asked to be aware of the following information: Detention will be held on Monday – Thursday from 3:00-3:30pm. Students should be picked up promptly at 3:30pm. The detention door will close promptly at 3:00pm. Students will not be allowed in after this. Teachers will strictly monitor detention, which will be a time to improve academic skills in completing a pre-determined activity. If students fail to bring writing utensils and paper, they will be asked to leave and will be considered to have missed detention. Students exhibiting inappropriate conduct will be asked to leave detention. Students assigned detention but asked to leave for any reason will be counted absent and penalized accordingly. It is the student's responsibility to report to detention. All students are given a 24-hour notice. Students absent or having early dismissals on their day of detention will be required to fulfill their obligations on the day they return. Students missing detention will be required to provide a valid reason (as soon as they return to school) with verbal confirmation by parents (i.e., a note giving reason and phone #). Failure to stay will result in additional days and/or assignment to In-school Suspension (ISS) in accordance with the following guidelines:

1st miss	1 extra day of lunch/after-school detention
2nd miss	next strike assigned
3rd miss	office referral

These guidelines apply to all students assigned to detention. It is important that students are held responsible for their actions.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROCEDURES**

For infractions of the rules, disruptions, disobedience, or failing to carry out previously assigned disciplinary consequences, students may be assigned to In-School Suspension. The following rules apply to all students assigned to In-School Suspension: Report immediately to the cafeteria upon arrival at school and check in with the ISS teacher. Leave school grounds immediately after being dismissed each day. Attend ISS the number of days assigned and finish assigned work completely and be dismissed by ISS teacher before being readmitted to the regular classroom. When absent or tardy, bring a note of explanation from a parent/guardian with a date and phone number. Prior to reporting to ISS, all required materials to complete teacher's assignments must be obtained. Remain in assigned seat in an upright position with both feet on the floor. Head and elbows must be kept off the desktop at all times. Stay awake at all times. Sleeping will result in extra days or being sent home. Refrain from talking or communicating in any way with other students, or leaving your desk except as specifically authorized by the ISS teacher. Refrain from chewing gum and eating. Students assigned ISS may not compete or engage in any extra-curricular activities as a spectator or participant. Abide by all school rules as explained in the handbook. Do not bring book bags or backpacks to ISS classroom. Books will be allowed to be carried home as needed-no ISS work is to be done at home. Do not engage in personal grooming in the ISS classroom. Abide by the dress code standards as outlined by the Board of Education policies. Students assigned ISS will have three restroom breaks per day: mid-morning, lunch and mid-afternoon. Extra days of ISS may be assigned if tardy or leaving school early for any unexcused reason. Students must walk in a disciplined manner in a single

file line without talking or communicating with anyone. Student will check prescription medication in with the office first thing each morning. When responding in the ISS classroom, you will speak in a respectful manner. Students will be fully responsible for their actions and understand that failure to comply in carrying out any of the above will result in extra days being added to the original ISS assignment, the possibility of being sent home, or the possibility of being referred to the alternative school.

### **IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER**

Bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances. You are to be respectful to others at all times. For any problem of this nature, you must tell a teacher, counselor or administrator immediately. Being a student is your daily job. You are expected to come to school and each class prepared with all necessary items each day. Leaving class to call home unnecessarily is a waste of valuable instructional time. Do not bring large amounts of money or any valuables to school. Non-essential electronic device are not allowed without prior administrative approval. Mark all your possessions with your name. When reporting a lost item, write down a description of the article, some clue as to where it was lost, and your name and homeroom number and take this information to the office. Never tell your locker combination to anyone and never leave your combination on the last number. You are accountable for everything in your locker. Keep your belongings, including books, in your locker when not using them. Keep your locker locked. Never carry items of value to the P.E. dressing rooms (examples include money, jewelry, calculators, etc.). Absolutely no graffiti or drawing will be allowed on book bags, notebooks or your body. It is recommended, however, that students put their name on their personal items. Graffiti is an act of vandalism and may be dealt with as a discipline matter and may involve police charges and restitution.

### **CLUBS**

#### **4-H**

Sponsor: Mrs. Aimee Bagwell

Mission & Purpose: To assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive members of society. This is accomplished through "hands on" learning experiences, focused on agricultural and environmental issues, agricultural awareness, leadership, conservation, nutrition, and citizenship.

Planned Activities: Faculty and staff members from the University of Georgia 4-H Extension Office will conduct monthly meetings

Membership Requirements: Open to any student

Dues: None

#### **Academic Team**

Sponsors: Ms. Lynn Shaver & Mrs. Brianna Walker

Mission & Purpose: Encourage students to use their knowledge in a competitive format.

Planned Activities: P.A.G.E. Bowl County Competition, Jimmy Carter Academic Competition

Membership Requirements: Tryouts

Dues: \$20



## **Art**

Sponsor: Mr. Isom Evans

Mission & Purpose: To pursue advanced perspectives in art and artistic expression.

Planned Activities: Projects include the exploration and experimentation of painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking and mixed media. Students will also compete in art competitions, art shows and field trips.

Membership Requirements: 7th and 8th grade drawing test and complete application.

Dues: \$15 for shirt and club expenses

## **Book Club**

Sponsor: Mrs. Sheri Pfeuffer

Mission & Purpose: To encourage a love for reading and help to promote a culture of reading school-wide

Activities: Club meets for book club discussions and activities on some required reading materials (GA Children's Book Award Nominees) and independently chosen materials as well. Club will also work to promote reading school-wide by creating book trailers, posters, and more. Students may be asked to volunteer in the media center and during book fairs as well.

Requirements: Limited to 15 students per grade level, must apply and be in good academic standing.

Dues: \$3

## **Chorus**

Sponsor: Ms. Brandi Dent

Mission & Purpose: To encourage, motivate, enlighten and tap into the abilities of students both vocally and creatively while also giving them an incentive to be their best both academically and socially.

Planned Activities: Weekly practices and a variety of performances at school and community functions.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student through tryouts

Dues: \$20 for uniforms plus cost for any extracurricular activities

## **Comanche**

Sponsor: Mr. Jamie Nash

Mission & Purpose: Promote positive behavior and academic success.

Planned Activities: 6th Grade Day, T-shirt fundraiser, various celebrations.

Membership Requirements: Must be in 6th grade.

Dues: None

## **Drama- Stage Warriors**

Sponsor: Ms. Wimberly Tyler & Mrs. Brianna Walker

Mission & Purpose: A theatre troupe dedicated to helping young actors grow and enhance their performance skills, self-confidence, values, and school spirit through stage productions.

Planned Activities: Weekly rehearsals leading up to a spring performance of a well-known play. Field trips to professionally and community produced productions. At least 2 fundraisers throughout the year.

Membership Requirements: Students wishing to join must audition for a role, obtain parent permission, and receive 2 teacher recommendations. All students who complete these

requirements will have a role in the show. Rehearsals and meetings are mandatory.

Dues: \$20 to cover the cost of the student's script which they will get to keep, various props/costumes, and headshots. Student may be asked to provide basic costume pieces. There will be an additional optional fee for a t-shirt.

## **Earth**

Sponsor: Mrs. Kerri Sterling

Mission & Purpose: To educate students on local and global environmental issues and give students a voice in how to help improve the quality of their environment.

Planned Activities: Earth Day, monthly gatherings, outside activities, etc.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student

Dues: \$3

## **FBLA- Future Business Leaders of America**

Sponsor: Mr. Ricky Jones

Mission & Purpose: Develop leadership skills and strengthen the confidence of students.

Planned Activities: Participate in field trips including the Georgia FBLA Fall Rally, Georgia FBLA Fall Leadership Conference, Georgia FBLA State Leadership Conference (Middle Level). Activities include planning and coordinating a Career Day/Reality Check activity for 8th grade students, co-host the Sweetheart Dance, work with March of Dimes and Relay for Life.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student

Dues: \$10

## **FCA- Fellowship of Christian Athletes**

Sponsors: Mr. Stephen Graf & Mr. Tyler Hudlin

Mission & Purpose: To develop positive, Christian attitudes and values.

Planned Activities: Weekly meeting, Star events, conferences, and Rally at National Fairgrounds.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student

Dues: None

## **FCCLA- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America**

Sponsor: Mrs. Amanda Hayes

Mission & Purpose: To promote personal growth and leadership development through family and consumer sciences education.

Focusing on the multiple roles of the family member, wage earner and community leader.

Planned Activities: Fall Leadership Conference, B.A.S.I.C. Training, National Cluster, Fall Rally, FCCLA Day at the Capital, State Leadership Conference, STAR Events, National Programs, Community Service Projects, National FCCLA Conference, Summer Camp and monthly meetings.

Planned Activities: Fall Leadership, State Leadership, B.A.S.I.C. Training, community service project, A Gala, & Day at the Capital

Membership Requirements: Open to any student

Dues: \$25 for membership dues and a chapter shirt

### **FFA- Future Farmers of America**

Sponsor: Mr. Tripp Tolleson

Mission & Purpose: Makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Planned Activities: Monthly meetings, competitive events, exhibiting livestock, community service projects, Summer Camp and the National Fair.

Membership Requirements: None

Dues: \$20

### **Fitness Warriors**

Sponsors: Ms. Candace Gibson & Mr. David Harbin

Mission & Purpose: Increase physical fitness level and awareness in efforts to promote healthy habits in middle school thus creating healthier adults.

Planned Activities: Nutrition, stretching, walking and jogging.

Students will complete couch to 5K plan and participate in a school-wide 5K race.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student.

Dues: None

### **International Club**

Sponsor: Mrs. Carrie Wurdeman

Mission & Purpose: To increase cultural awareness and foster intercultural friendships throughout our school and community.

Activities: Club meets once a month to discover new friends and cultures by meeting students who are interested in foreign countries and languages, trying new foods, and celebrating the holidays of other countries. Each meeting will introduce a new country, and students will place a stamp in their "passports."

Some meetings will be held in cooperation with the multi-cultural club.

Requirements: Be a student in good standing.

Dues: None (there will be a fee for optional t-shirts)

### **Intramural Sports**

Sponsors: Mr. Hal Rape & Mr. Steve Ruzic

Mission & Purpose: To provide an opportunity for sixth grade students to be introduced to competitive athletics.

Planned Activities: Practices and games

Membership Requirements: 6th grade students only

Dues: None

### **Jazz Band**

Sponsor: Mr. Evan Thomas

Mission & Purpose: To provide a musical outlet for students to learn and perform jazz, rock and Latin styles.

Planned Activities: Weekly meetings after school from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Performances in the community during the school year. (ex. Sacred Heart Fall Festival, Perry Dogwood Festival)

Membership Requirements: Members must have had at least one full year of instruction on their instrument. Piano and Bass Guitar instruments open to all students.

Dues: None

### **Junior Beta**

Sponsors: Mrs. Stacy Alligood & Mrs. Brianna Walker

Mission & Purpose: Service organization of high-achieving 7th and 8th grade students.

Planned Activities: Support Ronald McDonald House, support MDA, support Jay's Hope and compete at the State Convention.

Membership Requirements: 7th and 8th Grade Students: Honor Roll or Honorable Mention grades, must join National Beta organization

Dues: \$15

### **Kindness**

Sponsor: Mr. Steve Ruzic & Mrs. Carrie Wurdeman

Mission & Purpose: To teach students kindness, ways to have positive interactions, and make this school the better each day.

Planned Activities: Create smart lessons which address healthy relationships, good physical health, and the purpose of kindness with daily examples. Assist with Relay For Life. Create a positive experience and opportunities in school.

Membership: Open to any student.

Dues: \$15.00

### **Multicultural**

Sponsors: Mr. Jeff Martinez & Ms. Karen Hammock

Mission & Purpose: To explore the world's different cultures.

Planned Activities: Monthly gatherings, Cultural Activities, annual Camping-trip

Membership requirements: Good academic and behavioral standing

Dues: None

### **Omaha**

Sponsor: Ms. Nancy Cole

Mission & Purpose: Promote positive behavior and academic success.

Planned Activities: 7th Grade Day, T-shirt fundraiser, various celebrations.

Membership Requirements: Must be in 7th grade.

Dues: None

### **Partners**

Sponsors: Mrs. Kayla Sadler & Mrs. Shannon Churchwell

Mission & Purpose: Provide opportunities for disabled and non-disabled students to spend time together learning about each other's similarities and differences. A bond of friendship and respect is maintained throughout their high school years.

Planned Activities: Special Olympics, Coffee Drop Café, and field trips

### **Prayer**

Sponsors: Mr. Tony Floyd & Mrs. Kerri Sterling

Mission & Purpose: To foster a positive image, allowing freedom of speech and community involvement in a Christian and Non-Christian atmosphere.

Planned Activities: Weekly meeting, Prayer around the flag pole, Food Drive, Monthly eat and meet.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student

Dues: None



### **Robotics - First Lego League**

Sponsor: Mrs. Melissa Zeuner

Mission & Purpose: Successfully complete the FLL Annual Challenge through the development of an innovative solution to this year's problem, present that solution to a panel of judges while practicing Core Values. Additionally, the team will build and program an EV3 Lego Robot to complete related missions on the Robot Table.

Planned Activities: Twice weekly meetings, with some Saturday mornings as competition nears. Competitions are on Saturdays in Dec., Jan. and Feb. if the team continues to qualify.

Membership Requirements: Must be an active member of Starbase Robins 2.0, limited to 10 members

Dues: None

### **Starbase Robins 2.0 STEM**

Sponsor: Mrs. Melissa Zeuner

Mission & Purpose: Engage in activity-based STEM lessons to provide an exceptional educational and technological experience in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Provide opportunities for students to sharpen their soft skills, such as, clear communication and group cooperation in problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making.

Planned Activities: Weekly meetings

Membership Requirements: Open to a maximum of 30 students by application

Dues: None

### **Tomahawk**

Sponsor: Mrs. Shenequia Jones

Mission & Purpose: Promote positive behavior and academic success.

Planned Activities: 8th Grade Day, T-shirt fundraiser, various celebrations.

Membership Requirements: Must be in 8th grade.

Dues: None

### **Warrior Chorus Dancers**

Sponsor: Ms. Brandi Dent

Mission & Purpose: To entertain audiences alongside the Warrior Chorus and to create and execute within the art of dance.

Planned Activities: 3 day audition process, rehearsals (Tues & Thurs), 3-4 performances/school year, and end of the year celebration with chorus.

Membership Requirements: Open to any student through tryouts

Dues: \$20 for uniforms plus cost for any extracurricular activities

### **Yearbook**

Sponsor: Mrs. Kacy Jones

Mission & Purpose: To compile a print history of classes, clubs and sports throughout the school year by creating a student-focused yearbook. Assist in performing duties related to the design and production of the yearbook.

Planned Activities: Occasional after school meetings to plan, organize and create yearbook.

Membership Requirements: Students will be chosen by sponsor based on teacher recommendation. Selection of yearbook

assistants will be made based on evidence of strong work ethic and other club involvements. Parent permission is required.

Dues: The purchase of a yearbook is required (cost is determined on a year-by-year basis).



# **2020-2021 Middle School Handbook**

**Dr. Mark Scott**  
*Superintendent*

Houston County School District  
P.O. Box 1850, 1100 Main Street  
Perry, Georgia 31069  
(478) 988-6200  
[www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net)



# HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

## MISSION STATEMENT



*Our Mission  
is to produce  
high-achieving  
students.*

***Dr. Mark Scott  
Superintendent of Schools***

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## HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CALENDAR 2020-2021

August 4	Tuesday	First Day of School
September 7	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Labor Day
October 9	Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Student/Staff Work Day
October 12-16	Monday-Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Fall Break
November 11	Wednesday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Veterans Day
November 23-27	Monday-Friday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Thanksgiving
December 18	Friday	Last day before Holidays - ½ day for students
December 21-January 1		<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Christmas Holiday
January 4	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Students/Staff Work Day
January 5	Tuesday	First Day of Second Semester
January 18	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Martin Luther King, Jr
February 15	Monday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - President's Day
February 16	Tuesday	<b>HOLIDAY</b> - Students/Staff Work Day
March 29-April 2	Monday-Friday	SPRING BREAK
May 26	Wednesday	Last Day of School - ½ day for students

### Report Card Dates

<b>Semesters</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Date Reports Issued</b>
Progress Report, Day 31	September 16	September 18
Progress Report, Day 60	November 4	November 6
End 1st Semester, Day 86	December 18	January 5
Progress Report, Day 120	February 24	February 26
Progress Report, Day 150	April 14	April 16
End 2nd Semester, Day 180	May 26	May 28

## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Middle School students are undergoing many changes -- physical changes, social changes, emotional changes, and mental changes. The middle school recognizes these changes and provides a curriculum and a climate for students to move more easily from the elementary school to the high school. The subject's students learn are divided into two categories -- basic academic subjects and connections subjects.

The basic academic subjects are language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. These subjects are taught in an academic block of time by a team of teachers. Students are assigned to a team for the school year. The teachers know the students and their capabilities and provide learning activities to meet the needs of the students on the team.

Students also take two connection classes each semester. The exploratory connection classes give students an introduction to subjects they may wish to take in high school, help students begin looking at careers, or assist students in developing life and learning skills. Students will explore vocational education, fine arts, and personal learning skills. Physical education.

### ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Students should not arrive on campus more than 30 minutes before the first bell and should leave campus no later than 30 minutes after the last bell unless participating in a school-supervised activity approved by the principal or designee of the principal.

### ATTENDANCE

#### Compulsory Attendance

Houston County School authorities, in cooperation with other county agencies, shall enforce the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1, Mandatory Attendance, which requires that every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state having control of any school age child or children between the ages of 6 and 16 enroll and send such child or children to school. Further, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of Houston County prior to their SIXTH birthday shall become subject to all provisions of the law. All students missing more than 5 unexcused days in Georgia are declared as truant by law.

All Houston County students are affected by and fall under the provisions of our attendance protocol, which is stated as follows;

#### Level I

Three (3) unexcused absences

School staff will contact parents and document the contact. Contacts may consist of e-mail, phone call, or teacher notification form.

#### Level II

Five (5) unexcused absences

School staff will notify parents of the truancy and request a conference with the parents to sign an Attendance Contract.

#### Level III

Eight (8) unexcused absences

School staff notifies Social Services Department; Social Services provides data to the court for judicial proceedings to begin.

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia having control or charge of a child or children and violate GA Code Section O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combinations of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction.

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absence from school is classified as either excused or unexcused. Reasons established by the Georgia Board of Education as excused absences are set forth in this policy. Students may be temporarily excused from school and allowed to make up work when:

1. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement.
2. A serious illness or death occurs in their immediate family
3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including preinduction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, or by a court order;
4. Celebrating religious holidays observed by their faith;

**NOTE: An excused absence does not mean the student is given credit for being at school. It means that the student may make up work missed during the excused absence.**

Students should present a written excuse within five (5) days following an absence whether excused or unexcused. Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement.

1. The date the excuse is written
2. The date and day of the absence
3. Reason for the absence
4. Signature of parent or guardian

### Upon returning to school, students should make up work missed within five (5) school days.

It is expected that each student will attend school regularly and be on time each day to class. Students who are absent from school may not participate in any extracurricular activity the day or night of the absence.

At the discretion of the principal, a statement from a physician may be required to validate extended or excessive absences.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

For reporting daily attendance, a student must attend for at least one-half of the instructional day before the student can be counted as present. At the middle school level, attendance shall be counted on a class-by-class daily basis for granting credit in each class.

1. When a pupil is denied bus transportation due to misconduct, his absence from school is not excused. The parent or guardian shall be expected to provide transportation during the time the pupil is excluded from the bus.
2. No pupil shall be allowed to be absent from school during the regular session to take private music, drawing, dancing, or other lessons.
3. A pupil shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during school hours, other than for illness or other providential cause, without written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official, nor shall any student encourage, urge, or counsel other students to violate this rule.
4. According to law, students under 16 years of age must be admitted at any time, but with the understanding that credit is not automatic. Students residing in Houston County, but who fail to enroll during the first 15 days of a semester will not be admitted until the next semester begins if they are 16 years of age or older.

### Military Family Deployment - Absences for Special Consideration

The Houston County School District is supportive of our military families, especially during the difficult time of deployment. In an effort to ease the burden of our students who have parents deploying, Houston County Schools will allow up to a total of 10 days of excused absences each academic year to allow families time during the deployment cycle. Absences may be planned to best fit your individual family needs. Excused absences will be allowed for the following situations:



- Pre-deployment, the day before deployment - one day;
- Day of departure - one day;
- Reunion, post-deployment - one day;
- R&R breakup to three days; or
- Travel to visit an injured parent - up to five days.

Other special circumstances will be considered; however, 10 days is the maximum that will be allowed per school year. Students will be responsible for their homework and will need to make up any missed tests or class reports upon return to the classroom. Parents are asked to collaborate with the classroom teacher and their children to ensure their students stay up-to-date on class material.

The form for special consideration for absences for military deployment can be obtained from the school's office. The form must be given to the principal for approval. The principal will send the form to Human Resources for approval. The parents will receive a confirmation letter in the mail.

### Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Instruction begins promptly at 7:30 a.m., therefore a student is considered tardy after that time. A student who is tardy must report to the office to check in. A parent is expected to accompany the student and to sign him/her in. If a school bus arrives after 7:30 a.m., students will not be considered tardy; and, no tardy permit is necessary.

Many people do not realize that missed instructional minutes add up quickly. For example, if your child arrives a mere 10 minutes late each day, they miss 50 minutes of instructional time every week. During a 36 week school year, they could miss nearly 30 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION! If they're 20 minutes late, it would be 60 hours, and so on. These instructional minutes are especially important to the achievement of our students and the success of our schools. An excessive number of lost instructional minutes could prevent your child from being promoted to the next grade level. For the benefit of ALL students, we may implement the following procedures with relation to unexcused tardies and unexcused early dismissals:

- 5 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Parent Contact
- 10 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Excessive Tardy/Early Dismissal Notification Letter
- 15 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Attendance Contract Meeting Scheduled with parents and administration
- 20 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Referral to the HCBSE Social Service Department, discussion of retention of child in the current grade, and assignment to Mandatory Make up Time
- 25 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Parent Meeting scheduled with the Attendance Panel at the Central Office in Perry, GA

### ATTENDANCE ZONES

The Houston County Board of Education has approved student attendance zones. If the natural parent lives in Houston County, the student must attend the school in which the residence of the natural parent is located regardless of whether the student lives with the parent. If the parents are divorced/separated, the child shall be required to attend the school in the attendance zone in which the **primary custodial parent resides**. **A complete list of enrollment restrictions and enrollment determinations is included in policies JBC and JBCCA.**

If the school personnel determine that a parent or guardian has changed addresses without informing the school or used false information to enroll a child in a school other than the school zone in which the parent/guardian resides, the child shall be withdrawn not later than the last grading period. School administrators may request proof of residence at any time that it may be necessary to verify that a parent resides in the school zone. If it is determined that a student must enroll in another Houston County school, the parent will be directed to report to Central Registration to complete a change of address packet to transfer to the new school. Students must reside within the county in order to be enrolled in a Houston County school. Students are not allowed to attend Houston County schools if they reside in another county.

### Unsafe School Choice Option

If a student is a victim of a Violent Criminal Offense (as stated in OCGA 160-4-8-16/JBCCA Policy) on campus or at a school sponsored activity, he/she may request a transfer to a school which has not been identified as being on a school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring plan. This request must be made within ten (10) school days of the commission of the Violent Criminal Offense.

### BALLOONS/GIFTS AT SCHOOL

Students will not be allowed to accept flowers, balloons, or other gifts sent to the school during the school day.

### BEGINNING AND ENDING SCHOOL TIMES

School begins at **7:30 a.m.**

School ends at **2:45 p.m.**

Any student arriving after 7:30 a.m. will be considered tardy to school. Leaving school before 2:45 p.m. will be considered an early dismissal.

### BICYCLES

Students who ride bicycles to school should park and lock them in the designated area immediately upon arrival. Students should not secure more than one bike with one lock. (Do not lock two bikes together). The school is at no time responsible for damage or loss of a bicycle. Students who ride bicycles to school should obey state laws for their safety.

### BOOK BAGS

A student's book bag may be placed in the locker upon arrival at school. It must be small enough to fit in the locker.

### BRIDGE BILL

**BUILDING RESOURCEFUL INDIVIDUALS TO DEVELOP GEORGIA'S ECONOMY** Georgia General Assembly HB 400: May 20, 2010. The purpose of the BRIDGE Bill is to provide a process for the development of an individual graduation plan for each student in Georgia. It allows students and parents to work together to plan for the future.

"Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades shall be provided counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest inventories, and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career interests. Before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade, students shall develop an individual graduation plan in consultation with their parents, guardians, or individuals appointed by the parents or guardians to serve as their designee. High school students shall be provided guidance, advisement, and counseling annually that will enable them to successfully complete their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to postsecondary study, further training, or employment." Advisement is a major part of education and career planning for ALL students. The BRIDGE Bill mandates advisement in grades 6 through 12. Effective advisement is measured by the utilization of the selected Career Information System (CIS) in all middle and high schools. In Houston County, Georgia Student Finance Commission's GACollege411 has been utilized. Their new site, GAfutures.org, is being launched for the 2015-2016 school year.

### GA Futures

[www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org)

The above site provides tools that will assist students with educational and career planning. Students and parents can gather educational and career-related information upon which they can make better and more informed decisions about their futures.

### BUS CONDUCT

The parents or guardians of students have the responsibility of supervision until such time as the student boards the bus in the morning and after the student leaves the bus at the end of the day. The school has the authority to

discipline a student for any misconduct occurring on the way to or from school. Once the student boards the bus, the student is expected to conduct him/herself on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for classroom behavior.

Students who do not conduct themselves appropriately on a bus shall be brought to the attention of the administration by the bus driver. A student who cannot conduct himself/herself properly on a bus may have their riding privileges suspended. In such a case, the parent or guardian of the student involved shall be responsible for transporting the student to and from school. In cases of bus vandalism, the student and parent/guardian shall be held responsible.

Students are prohibited from any and all acts of physical violence, bullying, physical assault of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and any other unruly behavior.

Students are prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Students are also prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. (See Policy JCD - Student)

#### Minor Offenses

1. Failure to remain seated
2. Refusing to obey driver/monitor
3. Throwing objects on the bus
4. Improper/dangerous conduct boarding or exiting the bus
5. Inappropriate physical contact (Minor)
6. Excessive noise
7. Unsafe items
8. Eating/drinking on the bus
9. Discarding trash
10. Extending objects outside window
11. Other disruptive behavior

#### Major Offenses

Although there may be no other bus report, consequences for major offenses begin at the third report level and proceed as reports occur.

1. Disrespect of driver/monitor/administrator
2. Fighting
3. Severe vandalism - restitution required
4. Possession of tobacco
5. Inappropriate physical contact (Major)
6. Throwing objects off the bus

The student will be suspended from the bus for the remainder of the year for behaviors such as possession of weapons or drugs or severe disrespect of the driver. When a student is denied bus transportation due to misconduct, his/her absence from school is not excused. The parent/guardian shall be expected to provide transportation during the time the student is excluded from the bus.

#### Consequences for Infractions of Bus Conduct

Transportation by bus to and from school each day that is provided by the Houston County school district is a privilege. Students who choose to behave in an unruly manner and refuse to follow the rules sacrifice the safety of other students and the driver. Discipline for student misbehavior while riding the bus is progressive and ranges from



parent/driver conferences to having the privilege of transportation provided by a Houston County school district taken away completely. Ultimately, all discipline procedures are at the discretion of the principal and depends on the severity of the offense.

**First Sign of Student Misbehavior:** The bus driver will attempt to make contact with the parent to ask for help with the student. The driver will document the specific elements of the incident and document the conversation with the parent.

**First Bus Report:** A conference may be held with the school official, parent, and driver. A contract may be executed between student, parents, and school.

**Second Bus Report:** One (1) day off bus.

**Third Bus Report:** Three (3) days off bus.

**Fourth Bus Report:** Five (5) days off bus.

**Fifth Bus Report:** Seven (7) days off bus.

**Sixth Bus Report:** Ten (10) days off bus.

**Seventh Bus Report:** Off bus the remainder of the year.

\* This is a suggested progressive discipline system that comes with principal discretion.

Please be aware that a student may be suspended from the bus for 1-10 days on the first report if the principal determines the incident warrants suspension.

### **B.Y.O.D. (Bring Your Own Device) Procedures**

As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, they also provide many new and positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. During the 2013-2014 school year, Bring Your Own Device, (BYOD) was piloted at all Houston County Elementary, Middle and High Schools. Each school will notify parents of the program parameters at their schools. Students who do not have their own device to bring to school will not be penalized. Please do not feel obligated to purchase a device for your child. In cases where all students do not have a device students will be encouraged to work collaboratively while allowing the owner of the device to be the one to manipulate and handle the device.

#### **Definition of "Device"**

For purposes of B.Y.O.D. (Bring Your Own Device), "device" means a privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic hand held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices, hand held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

#### **Internet**

Only the internet gateway (HCBE\_BYOD) provided by the school should be accessed while on campus. Personal internet connective devices such as but not limited to cell phones/cell network adapters should not be used to access outside internet sources at any time.

#### **Security and Damages**

Responsibility to keep the device secure rests with the individual owner. **The Houston County School District, its staff and its employees, are not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus.** If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal artifacts that are impacted in

similar situations. It is recommended that covers (decals) and other custom touches are used to physically identify your device from others. Additionally, protective cases for technology are encouraged.

### B.Y.O.D. Student Agreement

Students and parents/guardians participating in B.Y.O.D. must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as all Board policies, particularly the Internet Acceptable Use (Policy IFBG) and Internet Safety (Policy IFBGE).

**Students and parents acknowledge that the school district has the right to collect and examine any device that is suspected of violating school rules and/or procedures.**

### CENTRAL REGISTRATION

Parents of any student(s) new to Houston County Schools must complete the enrollment process at the Central Registration site located at 410 Bear Country Boulevard, Warner Robins, Georgia. Enrollment process at Central Registration is done by appointment. To schedule an appointment visit the Houston County website [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net).

- Select the Parents tab
- Scroll to Central Registration

### Change of Address

Any parent that moves (changes address) within Houston County during the school year must go to Central Registration. The parent must show two proofs of address for the new residence (**one must be a mortgage statement or lease agreement**). A service disconnection notice from the previous address is also required.

### COMMUNICATION SYSTEM/SCHOOL MESSENGER

The Houston County School District has an automated, emergency calling system, School Messenger. It may be used in the event of emergencies such as school closings, evacuations, natural disasters, off-campus events, school lock-downs, or other major incidents. It also provides schools an opportunity to notify parents of school events, items of importance and upcoming important dates. School Messenger delivers a recorded message to parents by telephone. This calling system enables the delivery of a fast, accurate message and is a valuable addition to our school safety program. **Please ensure that your child's school has accurate telephone numbers on file.**

Interpretation services are provided as practicable for languages other than English at no charge to parents.

### CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

Any student-athlete that exhibits symptoms of a concussion should be removed from the game/activity or practice immediately. No student-athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the student-athlete should continue for several hours.

The Return to Play Act of 2013 code 20-2-2-324.1 became effective on January 1, 2014. The Houston County Board of Education addresses this in policy JGFGB. Students who will participate in extracurricular athletic activities will receive information concerning this policy. Parents and students will be required to provide documentation that they have read and understand this policy in order to participate. You may obtain this information from your school's athletic director.

### DISCIPLINE

The school system reserves the right to punish behavior, which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools, even though such behavior is not specified in the Student Code of Conduct or in the Student Handbook.

### Commission of a Crime

1. Any student who commits a crime on school grounds or during a school activity whether on campus or not shall be subject to discipline including expulsion. Any student who commits a crime away from the school grounds and not during a school activity may be subject to discipline including expulsion if it is determined by the school system that the student's presence at school could endanger the lives or property of others or if the student's presence at school would be disruptive to the orderly conduct of school. (Policy JCD)
2. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-1184, administrators are required to report students committing certain prohibited acts to the Superintendent of Schools or designee, police authority, and the district attorney.

### Other Suspension/Expulsion Information

1. Students under suspension (home or long-term) or expulsion are not allowed to make up any academic work at home or at school unless they are in attendance at the WIN Academy.
2. Students under short term home suspension will be allowed to make up work upon returning to school. It is the responsibility of the student to coordinate with each teacher within five (5) days of returning to school regarding makeup work.
3. School administrators may not delay suspension or expulsion so students may participate in extracurricular activities.
4. School administrators and/or designated representatives **possess the authority to conduct a reasonable search of students, their possessions, their lockers, and their automobiles when on school property or on property being used by the school.**
5. In some instances, students who have been suspended who are enrolled at the alternative school may return to the home school at the end of a semester upon recommendation by the alternative school principal and approval by the home school principal.

### Definitions of Disciplinary Actions

1. **Expulsion:** Suspension of a student beyond the current school semester, up to and including permanent removal from the school system.
2. **Suspension (Short-Term):** A temporary termination of attendance, not to exceed ten days.
3. **Suspension (Long-Term):** A temporary termination of attendance that exceeds ten school days.
4. **Probation:** A conditional attendance during a trial period.
5. **Student Review Committee (SRC):** A committee appointed by the Board of Education to hear cases of recommended long-term suspension or expulsion.
6. **Detention:** A requirement that the student remain after school for a disciplinary offense. All students must be given an advance notice of one day.
7. **Alternative School:** An alternative educational environment for suspended students, affording the student the opportunity to continue his/her regular class work. Students must apply for admission.
8. **In-School Suspension (ISS):** An alternative education environment located in the school but isolated from other normal school activities and supervised by a teacher. A student may be assigned to in-school suspension for up to 10 days by the principal or designee.
9. **Bullying:** See Student Code of Conduct on page 42

### Due Process for Students

Due process will include appropriate hearings and reviews; and, in all cases, the rights of individual students will be ensured and protected.

### Suspension

1. Parents are given oral notice and opportunity to discuss the matter with the principal.
2. Parents are given written notice stating the reasons for the suspension.

### Expulsion or Long-Term Suspension

1. Parents are given oral notice and opportunity to discuss the matter with the principal.
2. Parents are given written notice stating the reasons for the recommendation for expulsion/long-term suspension.
3. Parents are given written notice of a right to a hearing before Student Review Committee.



4. Parents have a right to a hearing within ten (10) school days by the Houston County Board of Education Tribunal.
5. Students with disabilities will be reviewed by the Special Education Educational Management/Placement Committee hearing.

#### *In-School Suspension (ISS): General Regulations*

1. Students assigned to in-school suspension must be isolated in the designated room from the time they report to school until school dismissal time. At that time they will either leave school or move to the bus loading area.
2. Suspended students' parents or guardians must receive written notification of the suspension. In addition, every effort should be made to contact the parents by telephone before the student is placed in in-school suspension.
3. Teachers should prepare realistic assignments for each student assigned to ISS. These assignments should be specific to each day of the student's suspension and should relate directly to the curriculum.
4. The ISS supervisor should return each assignment for each day to the corresponding teacher at the end of each school day. The teacher should then examine the student's assignment and give feedback to the ISS supervisor the next morning. If problems are detected, the teacher should work with the ISS supervisor and the student to correct misunderstandings or problems. No contact with the teacher indicates that no problems exist.
5. No student may be assigned to ISS for more than ten (10) consecutive days. Care should be taken to avoid excessive accumulated assignments to ISS for any student.
6. Middle school students must devote at least 45 minutes per subject in ISS.
7. Students in ISS are to have no contact with other students during the school day, especially at lunch and bathroom breaks.
8. Students in ISS are to be provided with regular counseling services.
9. ISS must be used in lieu of suspending students from school except in cases of clear and present threat to the safety of other students or in case of other extenuating circumstances.
10. A maximum of eighteen (18) students may be served in ISS at any one time.
11. Limited use may be made of ISS as a "time out" room. However, if a student is assigned for the same class period from two or more consecutive days, the assignment must be considered a suspension and the proper procedures, including parent notification, should be followed.
12. Each school should develop clearly defined expectations, rules, and procedures for ISS and distribute them to parents, students, and teachers.

#### *Student Rules for In-School Suspension*

The following will apply to all students assigned to ISS.

I understand that I must:

1. Go immediately to ISS upon arrival at school.
2. Remain in ISS until dismissed.
3. Attend ISS for the number of days assigned before being admitted to regular class.
4. Bring an excuse from my parent/guardian explaining reasons for any absence.
5. Complete to the best of my ability all assigned work.
6. Furnish or bring to class all required materials to complete the assignments.
7. Refrain from talking except as specifically authorized.
8. Remain in the assigned seat while in class.
9. Refrain from chewing gum, eating, bringing book bags in class.
10. Refrain from all communications with other students.
11. Not participate in any extra-curricular activities while assigned to ISS.
12. Abide by all school rules as explained in this handbook.

#### *Encouraging Parents To Inform Their Children Of The Circumstances Of Certain Conduct*

The General Assembly of Georgia requires the code of conduct include language encouraging parents and guardians to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

## DRESS CODE

Good personal appearance, appropriate dress, proper behavior, and cleanliness are vital to each member of the school community. Developing good tastes in attire, good grooming habits, and good behavior are a part of the educational program.

Students of the Houston County School District are expected to dress in a manner that is supportive of a positive learning environment that is free of distractions and disruptions. There is a direct correlation between student dress and student behavior. Students will be expected to observe modes of dress, styles of hair, and personal grooming which support the learning environment. The purpose of this dress code is to assure that consistency and interpretation is implemented county-wide, thus providing equitable treatment for all students.

In making a judgment concerning the appropriateness of a student's dress or grooming, the principal should adhere to the guidelines set forth in the procedures that accompany this policy.

### Dress Code Enforcement

The principal of the school is charged with the enforcement of the student dress code. The principal is given wide latitude of discretion in the determination of proper or improper dress and behavior of students. Students who are found to be in violation of the dress code are subject to disciplinary action. The principal's actions may include:

Counseling the student,  
Warning the student,  
Calling parents to bring a change of clothes,  
After school detention,  
Placing the student in in-school suspension for the remainder of the day,  
Suspending the student short-term, or  
Recommending long-term suspension (for flagrant or repeated violations).

### Dress Code Specifics

#### General Rules

- Outer clothing which resembles loungewear, pajamas, or underwear is prohibited.
- Fads and styles in dress, which differ extremely from conventionally accepted standards are prohibited.
- Any clothing that is viewed as distracting because of extremes in style, fit, color, pattern, fabric, etc., shall not be permitted. Undergarments may not be exposed at any time.

#### Specific Rules

- Blouses/shirts should be constructed so that the top of the shoulder is covered and is fitted under the arms (no alter tops, tank tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, or bare-shouldered tops of any type will be allowed). Blouses/shirts which expose any portion of the waist, hips, or midriff are not allowed. Blouses/shirts which are not appropriate for school include those which are low-cut, see-through, backless, or tube tops.
- Holes in clothing that are excessive in size or amount, are a distraction to the learning environment, or allow skin to show are prohibited.
- In accordance with board policy governing student conduct with regard to bullying, weapons, gangs, and drugs: clothing shall be free of inflammatory, suggestive, racial, or other inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork. This includes offensive words and designs, violence (blood, death, weapons), sex, playboy symbols, hate groups, tobacco products, drugs, and alcohol.
- No clothing or other article may be worn or displayed which may indicate membership in a gang at school or any school function.
- Pants, skirts, shorts, and dresses must be knee-length or longer. Sagging pants are not allowed and pants must be worn at the waist.
- Excessively long shirts must be tucked in.
- When leggings are worn, a dress, shirt, or skirt must be worn over the leggings. The dress, shirt, or skirt must be mid-thigh length or longer.

#### Accessories

- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times. Cleated shoes are prohibited inside the building. House/bedroom slippers are not acceptable.
- Students may not wear ornaments (jewelry) which pierce the skin such as the nose, lips, tongue, eyelid, etc.

- Students may not wear hats, caps, bandanas, sunglasses, combs, picks, etc., inside the building.

### Hair & Grooming

- Hair must be well groomed. Only conventional hair coloring will be permitted. Extreme hairstyles and fads that would interfere with the learning process, cause a disruption of the educational environment, or be a health or safety hazard are prohibited.
- Facial hair should be neat, clean, closely trimmed and not be a distraction to the learning environment.

### Coats

- Due to variances in physical design of schools, principal's discretion will apply to wearing of outer garments, coats, and jackets. Students may wear coats/winter garments to school, but may be asked to store them in their lockers during the school day. Students are encouraged to bring lightweight jackets to wear in the building as changes in weather dictate.

**NOTE: The Principal's discretion applies to all of the above.**

### **DRILLS: FIRE/TORNADO/EMERGENCY/BUS EVACUATION DRILLS**

Students, teachers, and other school district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. The following safety drills are practiced:

**\*Fire Drills** - These are held ten (10) times a year. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or marshals quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

**\*Tornado/Severe Weather** - Tornado drills are held once a year. Schools do practice walk thrus in order to ensure students know where to go and what to do.

A tornado watch: conditions are favorable for a tornado or severe weather.

A tornado warning: tornado has been sighted.

**If a tornado warning is issued, bus dismissal may be delayed.** If students are in-route to or from school and a tornado warning is issued, buses are required to stop at the nearest school and students/driver takes shelter there until the warning has passed.

**\*Bomb Threat** - Procedures are based on recommendations from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA).

**\*Lockdowns** - Code Yellow and Code Red Drills - (Please note that these will take place two (2) times each year.)

When schools have been placed on a true Code Red lockdown, you will be notified through our School Messenger Phone System before the end of the school day.

**\*Bus Evacuation** - Safe Bus evacuation is practiced twice a year during physical education classes with all students.

The safety plans of our schools are routinely assessed to ensure that the best practices are in place to protect our children. Teachers and students are taught what to do in the event of fire, severe weather and school lockdowns. We practice so that our students, faculty and staff have the knowledge to protect themselves and so they know what to do if a situation arises. Our communication system is capable of calling every parent in a matter of minutes to help keep you fully informed.

Throughout the school year, our teachers will be sharing and practicing our safety plans with the students. It will be handled in a low key way, but in a way that ensures that everyone understands what to do in an emergency situation.

In the event of an emergency, the students and staff in our system are our first priority. These procedures and practices are designed for their protection.



## **DRUG FREE SCHOOLS**

*Possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol by a student at school or on property owned by the school district at any time; Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events; On school buses and at school bus stops is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.*

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students who must leave school early should bring a note signed by parents or guardians stating the time and reason for the early dismissal. Students who leave before 11:00 AM (and do not return) will be counted absent for that day. If an individual other than the person who enrolled the student in school is authorized to take the student from school on a regular basis (grandparent or other relative, childcare provider, etc.), the person who enrolled the student in school must notify the school of such in writing. **A picture identification must be presented before the student will be released.**

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students are permitted to possess cell phones and other electronic devices while on school property and during school functions. These devices may be utilized as part of the instructional process as directed staff members. Recreational use of these devices will be in accordance with procedures established by the building principal. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Houston County schools will not be responsible for lost or stolen personal communication or personal electronic devices.**

Students may not use tape recorders, video cameras, cell phones, or other electronic devices to record classroom instruction/activities. Exceptions to this rule may be granted, for valid reason(s), at the discretion of the teacher with written approval by the building principal. Care must be taken to protect the privacy rights of students.

## **ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)**

The English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program goals are to help students obtain English language proficiency and to meet age and grade appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation. The program aids students to succeed in all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) both socially and academically. The ESOL program is federally mandated and was established to ensure equal access to the school system's instructional program for those students who have limited English proficiency.

### **Grade Placement for English Language Learners (ELLs)**

For elementary and middle schools, placement will be made based on completed formal years of schooling and age appropriateness. Age appropriateness for elementary students is defined as not more than one year below the same-aged native English-speaking peers.

## **ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Parents of any student(s) new to Houston County Schools must complete the enrollment process at the Central Registration site located at 410 Bear Boulevard, Warner Robins, Georgia. The parent will need to schedule an appointment for Central Registration. To schedule an appointment visit the Houston County website [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net).

- Select Parents tab
- Scroll down and click on Central Registration

When a student initially enrolls in the Houston County School District, parents are responsible for providing the following documents:

Parent/Guardian Photo ID (driver's license, work ID, passport)

At Enrollment

Certified Birth Certificate or Passport	At Enrollment
Georgia Form 3231 (Out of State) Immunization Certificate	At Enrollment
Georgia Form 3231 (In State) Immunization Certificate	30 days
Georgia Form 3300- Ear, Eye, Dental, Nutrition Screening	30 days
Guardianship/Custody Orders (if applicable)	At Enrollment
Withdrawal Form/Latest Report Card (final report card if school is over)	30 days
Two Proofs of Residency	At Enrollment
Stop Services at Prior Address (In State)	At Enrollment
Social Security Card or Waiver or an Application for Social Security Number	At Enrollment
Medical Information which will impact instruction	At Enrollment

Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school be immunized according to the rules and regulations established by the Department of Public Health. A Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) must be on file. A Georgia physician or health clinic must complete the certificate. **Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school. A child enrolling in a Georgia school for the first time at ANY GRADE LEVEL must be age-appropriately immunized with all required vaccines.** In addition, those students entering a Georgia public school for the first time must provide a **Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examination (Form 3300)** at enrollment.

NOTE: If immunizations are not appropriate for your child, you may complete the Affidavit of Religious Objection to Immunization form at the school or a Georgia Form 3231 with each medical exemption verified by your child's Physician.

Effective July 1, 2014 children born on or after January 1, 2002 who are attending a Georgia public school grades 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> must have received a dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Student Extracurricular Activities Notification**

Each school principal shall implement procedures to annually notify all parents or guardians of all school-sponsored extracurricular activities, organizations and clubs in which students may participate and of the right of the parent or guardian to prohibit their child's participation.

Notification to parents and guardians shall be provided annually via the student handbook and shall include the name of each extracurricular activity, student organization or club; information regarding the purpose, activities or national affiliation of the extracurricular activity, organization or club. Any membership or financial requirements for a student to join or become a member of the activity, organization or club shall be included in the information provided.

No student shall be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity, organization or club if the student's parent or legal guardian has indicated in writing that the parent will not allow the student to participate and has provided a copy of such written notice to the school principal.

For school clubs formed after publication of the student handbook, parents or guardians must approve their student's participation via email, fax or written permission to the school principal.

School extracurricular activities, organizations, or clubs for purposes of this policy are those that are supervised or sponsored by a school system employee designated by the principal, and that meet in school facilities.

### **Conduct**

Students participating in or attending any school sponsored activities whether on or off school grounds or on the grounds of another school are under the authority of the system discipline policies. Students are expected to practice proper decorum and sportsmanship at all school events.

### **Student Pick-Up**

Students should be picked up promptly following extracurricular activities. Activities must conclude by 7 p.m. on nights preceding a school day. Appropriate authorities may be called if students are left at a school-sponsored event more than thirty minutes after the conclusion of the event. Efforts to contact a parent or guardian will be made prior to contacting authorities.

#### Eligibility

6<sup>th</sup> grade students are ineligible to participate in sports.

7<sup>th</sup> grade All students entering the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for interscholastic extracurricular activities for the fall semester. If a seventh grade student will reach his/her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, the student must participate on the eighth grade teams.

All students who participate in competitive extracurricular and co-curricular activities must pass five (5) subjects of 6 each semester immediately preceding participation. These subjects shall carry credit toward grade promotion. Summer school is an extension of spring semester. All students must be on track toward promotion to participate. For determining student eligibility, the grading period shall be a semester.

Students must pass five of six subjects the previous semester and be enrolled in six subjects the current semester to be eligible for competitive extracurricular activities. Playing on sports teams or cheerleading in the seventh or eighth grade requires a physical examination and there are age limits. Proof of insurance is also required for participation in sports activities.

Students suspended for disciplinary reasons may not participate in extracurricular activities during the time of suspension.

#### Suspension from Participation

Any Houston County student who places himself/herself in a situation that results in the student's being arrested or charged with any felony offense by any law enforcement agency will lose all privileges of participation in competitive and non-competitive extracurricular or athletic activities sponsored by the school.

The length of suspension from participation in these activities will be until all charges are dismissed by official court order or one (1) calendar year. Conviction shall include any plea or court disposition under the applicable first offender's statute. If the arrest or charges result in either a guilty plea/admission or conviction/adjudication, the student will lose all privileges of participation in extracurricular or athletic activities for a minimum of at least one calendar year following the guilty plea/admission or conviction/adjudication. After one calendar year, the student may apply to the building principal for the suspension to be lifted. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the building principal, the student may appeal the matter to the Houston County Board of Education using the tribunal process as set forth in Policy JCD.

Any Houston County student who places himself/herself in a situation that results in the student's being arrested and charged with any criminal misdemeanor offense by any law enforcement agency, will lose all privileges or participation in competitive and non-competitive extracurricular or athletic activities sponsored by the school in the same manner spelled out in Paragraph 1 above. However, the length of suspension from participation in these activities will remain in effect until the suspension is lifted by a joint decision of the building principal and the Executive Director of Secondary Operations. In the event that said criminal misdemeanor arrests or charges result in either a guilty plea/admission or conviction/adjudication or if the original arrests or charges were reduced from felony offenses to criminal misdemeanor offenses by official court action, the suspension shall be lifted by the joint decision of the building principal and Executive Director of Secondary Operations. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the building principal and the Executive Director of Secondary Operations, the student may appeal the matter to the Houston County Board of Education using the tribunal process as set forth in Policy JCD. In no event shall the period of suspension in Paragraph 2 exceed one (1) calendar year.

This policy is in addition to any other discipline or other action which the Board of Education may take as to the student.

#### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

It is the policy of the Houston County Board of Education that the school district shall comply with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act of Georgia. For the purposes of this policy, a "parent" is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual

acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. An “eligible student” is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

The Superintendent shall implement procedures whereby every principal is directed to develop a means to notify on an annual basis, parents and eligible students, including parents or eligible students who are disabled or who have a primary or home language other than English, of their rights under the FERPA and are reasonably likely to inform them of their rights. Generally, a parent or eligible student will be permitted to obtain a copy of the student’s education records upon reasonable notice and payment of reasonable copying costs.

Confidentiality of student records shall be preserved while access is provided to parents, eligible students and school officials with legitimate educational interests, as described in the annual parent notice.

With the exception of directory information as defined below, personally identifiable information will not be released by the school district from an educational record without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student, except to the extent authorized by the FERPA and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. 99.31.

The Houston County Board of Education designates certain information from student education records as “directory information.” Unless a parent/guardian or eligible student makes a request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated as directory information for the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request. A parent/guardian or eligible student may opt out of disclosure of directory information by notifying the school principal in writing within 10 days of the school year’s beginning or enrollment.

**Directory Information is as follows:**

1. Student’s name
2. Student’s month and day of birth
3. School at which a student is enrolled
4. Student’s participation in official school activities and sports
5. Weight and height of athletic team members used in information for the public
6. Dates of attendance at schools within the Houston County School District
7. Awards or honors received during the time the student is enrolled in the Houston County School District
8. Photograph used to publicize awards, honors, extracurricular activities, sports or school promotions
9. Grade

Student records will be forwarded without further notice to parents/guardians or eligible students to any school within or outside the Houston County School system, upon request of the school where a student is enrolling.

Local units of administration shall not withhold any student record because of nonpayment of fees. However, schools may withhold report cards, diplomas, or certificates of progress until fees are paid.

**FEE COLLECTION**

No fees may be required from students or parents to purchase basic learning materials necessary to accomplish the objectives of the curriculum (such as textbooks). Students may be required to furnish personal items such as paper, pencils, notebooks, etc. Parents will receive a letter whenever voluntary contributions are requested.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are provided in order to enhance educational objectives. Students must provide written parental permission to teachers in order to participate in a field trip activity.

**GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS**

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that *Houston County Board of Education* does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. The sports equity coordinator for this school system is:

***Dr. Chris Brown, Executive Director of School Operations***



## **GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The middle school gifted education program is a state program designed to meet the educational needs of students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual ability, talent, and/or creativity. Teaching and learning focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference skills and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping using principles of differentiation. Gifted-identified sixth, seventh and eighth grade students are served daily in Gifted Language Arts, Gifted Science and Gifted Social Studies with the option of a fourth class, Accelerated Content (AC) Math.

Gifted eligibility criteria are set by the state of Georgia. Students obtain eligibility through three of the four established criteria in the areas of achievement, mental ability, creativity, and motivation. The referral and placement process is coordinated by the school's Gifted Eligibility Team and county testing diagnosticians for consideration for formal evaluation. Parent permission will be obtained before any formal evaluation is begun, and parents will be notified in writing regarding their child's eligibility for the gifted education program.

### **Definitions**

**Gifted Student** - In Georgia, a gifted education student is defined as one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields and needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her ability(ies).

**Differentiated Curriculum**- Gifted students need the opportunity to work through the curriculum at a faster pace and need less time on basics and revision. The curriculum is differentiated in complexity and acceleration which offers a variety of options for students who differ in abilities, knowledge and skills. In a differentiated classroom, teachers differentiate content, process, product and assessments according to a student's readiness, interest and learning profile.

- **Content** - curriculum standards the student is expected to master and related support materials
- **Process** - instructional strategies designed to ensure that students acquire a deep understanding of the curriculum standards
- **Products** - vehicles through which students demonstrate and extend what they have learned
- **Assessment** - formative and summative on and off-grade-level monitoring to document student mastery of curriculum standards and learning levels
- **Readiness** - a student's entry point relative to a particular understanding or skill
- **Learning Profile** - how an individual student learns

### **Referral**

Students currently enrolled in Houston County schools may be referred for testing at any time during the school year. All referrals will be reviewed by the schools' eligibility teams for consideration for formal evaluation. Parent permission will be obtained before any formal evaluation is begun, and parents will be notified in writing regarding their child's eligibility for the gifted program. Teachers and parents may make referrals by completing a basic Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors (TABS) form for review by the school eligibility team.

### **Eligibility**

1. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either (a) score at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria approved by the state of Georgia in Achievement, or (b) qualify through a multiple- criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation.
2. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet the criterion score on a norm-related test. Information is collected in each of the four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation.

3. Any test score used to establish eligibility must be current within two-calendar years.
4. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility may not be used in any other data category.

#### Multiple-Criteria Assessment Process

A student must meet the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation.

**Mental Ability**- Students score at or above the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile on a composite or full-scale score or appropriate component score on an approved nationally age normed mental ability test.

**Achievement**- Students score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a norm-referenced achievement test.

**Creativity**- Students score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on the total battery score of a norm-referenced test of creative thinking.

**Motivation**- Students receive a score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale or for grades 6-12 students have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale where 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, or a numeric grade point average (NGA) of 90 percent on a 100-point scale where 100 = A and an 89 = B.

#### Continued Participation

As per the Georgia Department of Education, students must perform at or above a certain level to continue to receive gifted education services. The continuation policy includes a probationary period in which a student who fails to maintain satisfactory performance in gifted education classes shall continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status.

The continuation policy provides for a final review prior to discontinuing gifted education services for students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in gifted education classes during the probationary period and criteria for resuming gifted education services for such students.

#### Reciprocity

Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria for gifted education services in one Local Educational Agency (LEA) is considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any LEA within the state of Georgia. The receiving school or district should carefully review the student's gifted education records. If gifted education records are not available, the transferring district should be contacted to obtain the student's gifted education records before placing the student into the gifted education program. The receiving school or district should honor the continuation policy of the transferring school.

There is no mandated reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of military personnel. Therefore, a student who is eligible for services in one state is not automatically eligible in Georgia. The receiving school should complete an eligibility evaluation on out-of-state transfer students. To aid in the process of determining Georgia gifted eligibility, the following documents should be presented to the student's new school: a current eligibility report, recent standardized test scores and work samples. Recommendations from teachers are also helpful.

The Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation relating to the education of children of military families that impact the gifted education reciprocity of students whose households include an active member of the United States uniformed services, member or veteran of the United States uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged or a member of the United States uniformed services that died on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty. The goal of the legislation is to maximize a student's educational continuity despite the frequent movement across states and school districts.

Nothing in this code section precludes/prevents the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.

## Curriculum

Houston County implements the Advanced Content delivery model based on Georgia's Programming Standards for Meeting the Needs of Gifted & High-Ability Learners and state guidelines. Classes in gifted education are courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students. Houston County employs rigorous and relevant curricula K-12 to accommodate the range of academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners. State-adopted standards are articulated and applied in differentiated curricula that match the identified academic needs, abilities, readiness, interests and learning profiles of K-12 gifted learners in both the regular classroom and gifted education delivery systems. The curriculum enriches, extends and enhances learning in gifted learners' areas of strength. The gifted language arts courses are designed to prepare students for the rigor of high school Honors and AP English courses as well as, gifted science courses providing a foundation for an advanced science curriculum in the high school program.

Curricula for gifted students focuses on developing both cognitive and metacognitive skills through strengthening intellectual learning and research and reference skills at each grade level. The main goal of the program is to provide a stimulating and challenging course of study with emphasis on independent learning and critical thinking. The curriculum is supplemented with independent research, projects and required outside readings. Sixth grade students are required to complete a social studies project. Seventh grade students are required to complete a science project which they enter in an annual county-wide science fair. Eighth grade students are required to complete either a science project or social studies project. Winners of the science project advance to the State Science and Engineering Fair, Junior Division.

For further information, contact the Gifted Lead Teacher, a counselor at your child's school, or the Director of Gifted Education for Houston County.

## GRADES

All grades will be reported using the following numerical system:

90 - 100	=	A
80 - 89	=	B
70 - 79	=	C
Below 70	=	F (no credit)

Conduct will be graded using S-satisfactory, N-needs improvement, U-unsatisfactory. Conduct grades do not reflect progress in a subject area, but are a status report concerning a student's behavior.

## GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The guidance office is open to any student at any time. It is best to stop by in the morning to make an appointment. Through guidance, a student can achieve greater awareness of who he/she is, what he/she is capable of, and what he/she can become. The guidance counselor collects information about each student in order to help the student understand himself/herself. Tests, autobiographies, and interviews are some of the ways counselors collect information. Counselors treat information about individual students with confidentiality. The counselor is available to help students with any problems. The problems listed below are only a few of the types of problems one may experience in middle school.

1. Why are all my friends mad at me?
2. What good are those standardized tests we take?
3. My parents don't seem to understand me.
4. I don't know how to study. Can you help?
5. Why is homework necessary?
6. Is it necessary to follow the crowd?

## HEALTH RELATED SERVICES - Accidents and Illness

If a child is injured at school, office personnel will render first aid. Parents will then be contacted in those cases which the school deems are serious enough to warrant communication. If the school is unable to reach the parent,

the emergency telephone contact person(s) will be called in an effort to find someone to come for the child. Please assist the school by leaving current emergency telephone numbers to be used in the event that you are not available. When a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be notified just as in the case of an accident. Parents will also be contacted in cases of children soiling their clothes at school through accidents such as vomiting, urinating, or defecation. If a child shows signs of illness, he/she should not be sent to school.

**Parental assistance is urgently needed in providing pertinent medical information upon the enrollment of the child in school. Please assist the school by notifying the office of any change in student data (medical or otherwise) that will ensure your child's success for a safe and healthy school year.**

### *When to Keep Your Child Home*

Preventive and emergency school-based health services are provided to public school children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth. The Health Related Services department uses "Best Practice" standards that strive to eliminate barriers, increase attendance, and identify health related concerns that influence learning.

**Please refer to the following guidelines when considering returning a sick/recovering child to school:**

1. **A child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning.**
2. **A child must be diarrhea or nausea/vomiting free for 24 hours without medication (anti-diarrheal or anti-nausea/anti-emetic) before returning.**
3. A child with strep throat must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.
4. A child with possible conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be seen by a doctor and may only return to school with a doctor's note.
5. A child with chicken pox may only return to school when all lesions have crusted over. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
6. All open, draining, or contagious skin areas (i.e. Staph, ringworm, Molluscum Contagiosum) must be able to be contained by a bandage/covering. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
7. A child with scabies will be allowed to return to school the following day after the first treatment.
8. A child must not require narcotics to control pain during school hours post procedure or injury.

**KEEP A CHILD HOME, if she/he:**

1. **Has had a fever\* of 100 degrees or higher in the past 24 hours**
2. Is nauseous and/or vomiting and/or has diarrhea
3. Has been exposed to a contagious disease and is exhibiting signs/symptoms of the disease
4. Have undiagnosed skin rashes, or contagious conditions such as scabies or chicken pox. Students will be excluded from school until the rash is gone or when cleared by a physician for any contagious illness. Your doctor can help determine the exact cause and ensure you receive proper treatment.
5. Live lice on the scalp. A child will be allowed to attend if only nits are seen.

***Children who have been at home because of illness, should not be brought to school for parties and/or special events.***

\*A fever refers to a temperature of 100 degrees or more without the use of Tylenol or Advil or other fever reducing medications. Do **NOT** give your child aspirin or any aspirin product. A high occurrence of Reyes syndrome has been associated with viral infections and the use of aspirin.

Please send a parent or physician note to the homeroom teacher within three days of the absence; otherwise, the absence is unexcused and subject to the truancy regulations.

**The information provided is not intended to replace physician advice. When your child is ill, please contact your health care provider.**

### *Medication Administration*

Prescription medicines (no narcotics) will be given to students by school personnel only when prescribed and ordered by a physician and when the following guidelines are followed:

1. All medication must be presented to the Med Tech by a parent in a prescription labeled bottle, which will include student's name, date, instructions for administering, name of drug, and name of issuing physician.



2. A Medication Administration form, HRS 29 is required to be filled out by the physician and parent in cases of long-term medication (more than two weeks).

Non-prescription medicine or over the counter medicine, such as Tylenol, should be turned into the Med-Tech to be administered. Over the counter medicines, will be given only for a short-term duration (i.e. two consecutive weeks or for a total of 10 times a year) without a physician's order. Medication must be in the original container, age appropriate and accompanied by written parental request with directions for administering. A Short Term Medication form HRS 29C, may be requested by the Health Technician.

HERBAL Medications will not be given without an order from the student's physician.

**Expired medication will not be given. Please check for expiration date before bringing medications to school.**

Students requiring an inhaler, injectable epinephrine (Epi-Pen), or Glucagon are allowed to have them at all times. It is critical that you discuss your child's medical condition(s) with the principal, teacher, and school nurse. Students must not share these medications with other students. Disciplinary consequences will apply for students misusing these medications. **Parents must pick up all medication at the end of the school year.**

### Head Lice

**Head lice can infect anyone, not just children. Head lice are spread through head-to-head contact and sharing of brushes, combs, head bands, hats, jackets or etc.** It is not our practice to check the entire class for head lice or send letters home to an entire class.

Lice are more common among preschool and elementary school-aged children and their families. Head lice cannot live on pets or animals, only on humans. No diseases are spread by head lice.

**If a student is found to have active head lice, the parent will be called to pick him/her up. The school Health Technician will provide educational material to assist the parent in eliminating lice from the student and environment. The student will not be allowed back into school with live lice. The school Health Technician will inspect the student's scalp for active lice upon initial re-entry after first treatment and every 7 days up to 21 days or until clear of lice and nits.**

Please help the school prevent lice outbreaks by encouraging your child not to share clothing items or other personal items such as combs, brushes and towels with friends. The school nurse is available for consultation with difficult cases.

### Hospital Homebound

Hospital/Homebound refers to those students who are medically prevented from normal school attendance based upon certification of need by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is treating the student for the diagnosis. For more detailed information, please see your child's principal and counselor.

### **Sex Education** (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-143 and GA DOE Rule 160-4-2-.12)

The Houston County School District implements the Choosing The Best (CTB) sex education program in grades 6-12. The program content is designed for each grade level as appropriate. CTB promotes Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA) practices based on researched-based and medically accurate information. CTB is not anti-contraception, but provides factual information about risks correlated to various methods with an emphasis that abstinence is the only 100% safe method. There are no demonstrations of contraceptive products (condoms or otherwise). The program does not legislate morality and religious and/or political views are not a part of the curriculum. The program teaches that risky behaviors and healthy choices apply to everyone regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. Parents have the right to review all materials used and/or to exclude their child from participation in the program. Forms to opt-out of this instructional content can be found in the Parent Signature Pages sent home at the beginning of the school year. More information can be found at <https://houstoncountys.schoolinsites.com/healthandpe> Parents should contact the school counselor with questions.

## **Houston County WIN Academy (HCWA)**

Students suspended from their home schools for discipline reasons may be assigned to the *Houston County WIN Academy*.

Any students entering the Houston County School System from YDC, residential treatment facilities or other appropriate facilities must contact the Executive Director of Secondary Operations for admission.

### **Admission Procedures**

To register, a student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and complete an application for admission. An interview with an administrator will also be required when application is made. At the time of registration, students must bring the following to the HCWA Center:

1. A copy of previous school records;
2. A complete withdrawal packet from the last school attended;
3. Health certificates: immunization record, (Georgia 3231), and EED (ear/eye/dental screening record - Georgia 3300);
4. Copy of Social Security card.

**Registration is held on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 am or 1:00pm. No new student registrations on Friday.**

The HCWA will not admit: (a) any student who does not sign the contract and agree to abide by all policies and rules or (b) anyone who owes fees/fines to their regular school.

### **Houston County WIN Academy Mandatory Uniform Dress Code**

Any student attending HCWA will be adhering to an alternate dress code which will be discussed during and intake meeting prior to enrolling that must be scheduled with HCWA administration.

### **Houston County WIN Academy Behavior and Attendance Requirements**

Students may be assigned an additional semester at HCWA if their behavior or attendance is deemed unsuccessful by the HCWA and home school principals.

## **HONOR ROLL**

Two honor rolls will be published each semester.

1. All "A" (90 - 100)
2. "A/B" honor roll - All "A's" and one "B"

Conduct grades will not be considered when determining honor roll. Grades earned in middle school for high school credit shall not be included when computing averages for academic honors.

## **INSURANCE**

At the beginning of the school year an independent insurance company offers student accident insurance coverage to students. Two plans are available: School-day coverage or twenty-four (24) hour coverage. Information sheets will be made available. Checks should be made payable to the insurance company. **You are encouraged to carefully look at this affordable insurance as it definitely covers any accidents occurring at school.** The Houston County Board of Education insurance does not cover your child if they have an accident at school.

Insurance is mandatory for each student participating in athletics, certain trade and industry courses, and work-study courses. A certification from parent or guardian of private insurance coverage for the student will be acceptable.

## **INTERNET PROCEDURES - Houston County School District Policy IFBG**

The Houston County Board of Education recognizes the importance of making advanced technology and increased access to learning opportunities available to students and staff. The Houston County Board of Education believes that a “technology rich” classroom significantly enhances both the teaching and learning process. As resources permit, informational technology services shall be made available in schools.

Houston County School District personnel shall take all available precautions to restrict access to controversial materials, while recognizing that it is impossible to control all material which might inadvertently be discovered by users on a global network.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of informational technology is to facilitate communications in support of research and education by providing access to multiple resources. Use by any student or staff member must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the Houston County School District. The State of Georgia has passed laws which govern the use of computers and related technology. The Georgia Computer Systems Protection Act specifically forbids computer misuse and abuse. The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) enacted by Congress in 2000 also provides guidance and regulations concerning students’ computer use and access to content over the internet.

### **Authorized User**

An authorized user for the purpose of this policy will be defined as any employee, student, or guest of the Houston County School District who has been issued and assigned a log-in account. By using the computing resources of the Houston County Public Schools, the user agrees to abide by the guidelines and rules governing this.

### **Terms and Conditions**

An individual’s use of the computing resources of the Houston County Schools is not an absolute personal right; rather, it is a privilege, conditional on the individual’s compliance with state and federal laws, the Houston County Schools’ policies and regulations, school regulations, and satisfactory behavior involving technology. Inappropriate use, including any violation of these conditions and policies, may result in cancellation of the privilege. The Houston County School District has the authority to determine appropriate use and may discipline, deny, revoke, or suspend any user’s access at any time based upon the determination of inappropriate use.

It is the intent of Houston County School District to adhere to the provisions of copyright laws as they relate to informational technology. Transmission of any material in violation of United States Law or state regulations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by patent.

Users are not allowed to purchase, download or load software without written permission from the HCBOE Technology Services Center or Director of Technology Services.

Use for commercial activities, product advertisement, or political lobbying is prohibited.

The use of all school and central office networks shall be for the exchange of information in order to promote and support educational excellence in the school system.

### **Encounter of Controversial Material**

The Houston County School District has a right and will make every effort to control the content of data accessed through the Internet by the use of firewalls and filtering software and teacher monitoring.

Users may encounter material which is controversial. It is the user’s responsibility not to initiate access to controversial material purposely. If such material is accessed accidentally, the student/teacher shall notify an adult teacher/supervisor immediately.

### **Vandalism and Harassment**

1. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, modify, or destroy data of a system or another user.
2. Harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user or the interference in another user’s work.

3. Vandalism and harassment will result in cancellation of user privileges.

#### Network Guidelines

1. Users will not post, publish, send or intentionally receive offensive messages or pictures from any source, including but not limited to any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, sexist or illegal material. Access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 shall be restricted.
2. Users will not transmit or download information or software in violation of copyright laws. Only resources for which the author has given expressed consent for on-line distribution can be used. All users should consider the source of any information they obtain as well as the validity of that information.
3. Posting messages and attributing them to another user is prohibited.
4. Downloading of non-instructional materials from the Internet is unacceptable.
5. Disclaimer: The Houston County Board of Education makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for services through the Internet. It denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet services. The school system shall not be responsible for any damages a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruption. Use of information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk.

#### E-Mail Guidelines

1. All users are expected to abide by accepted rules of user etiquette. These rules include but are not limited to the following: Be polite, never send or encourage others to send abusive messages, and use appropriate language. E-mails are not guaranteed to be private.
2. Mass distribution e-mails must be approved by a school administrator.
3. Opening and forwarding any e-mail attachments from unknown sources and/or that may contain viruses is prohibited.
4. No internet e-mail is allowed except for that provided by the Houston County BOE.

#### Social Networking

For the purpose of this policy, social networking shall be defined as any web-based program where students and faculty may engage in conversational exchange of information. These facilities shall include, but are not limited to, messaging, blogs, and wikis.

Social networking shall only be permitted to be accessed from within the Houston County Educational Network with the supervision/monitoring by a teacher or school administrator.

Authorized users may access the network via their personal user ID and not that of someone else. Users should not share their personal user IDs with any other person.

#### School Responsibilities

Schools shall ensure that all faculty, staff and students are aware of the rights and responsibilities of acceptable informational technology use contained in Houston County BOE policies

#### Student Responsibilities

1. Students will observe the standard of courtesy and behavior consistent with the practices and policies of the Houston County Board of Education when sending or publishing messages or transmitting data or other information on the Internet.
2. Students will access the network using their personal ID and not that of someone else. Students will not share their user IDs, passwords, user log-on accounts with others and must make all efforts to safeguard any information from unauthorized users.
3. Students may not attempt to access information for which they are not authorized.
4. Students will use informational technology for instructional purposes only as it relates to classroom and co-curricular assignments and activities. Students will not use the system for any purpose if in violation of the law.
5. Student must receive permission from a teacher or designated personnel prior to accessing the Internet or any other specific file or application.



6. Any student who identifies a security problem must notify an adult teacher/supervisor or administrator immediately.
7. Students may not have access to an employee's workstation under an employee ID and will be subject to disciplinary action if such attempt is made.
8. Students are violating network security if they enter the system under a user ID other than one that is assigned to them and will be subject to disciplinary action.
9. Students disconnecting network components are guilty of harming network integrity and/or security, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
10. Students are violating network security if they alter programs or data on any network file server or any system's hard disk, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
11. Students are violating network security and software copyright laws if they knowingly use illegal copies of software on any school computer, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
12. Students purposely infecting any HCSOE computer with a malicious code will be subject to disciplinary action.

### *Penalties for Improper Internet Use*

Any violations of the internet procedures should be immediately reported to a supervising staff member.

Any user violating these rules or any other state or federal laws or classroom or school system policies is subject to lose network and/or computer use privileges. Furthermore, school disciplinary action, including in-school suspension and/or suspension or expulsion may be imposed.

If the actions of a user cause or contribute to the loss of service, applications, and/or data, school disciplinary action commensurate with the magnitude of the infraction shall be administered. In the event that such action causes the need for technical assistance to restore the service, application or data, restitution may be charged.

Any unauthorized access or breach of state or federal law is subject to criminal prosecution.

### **LEAVING CAMPUS**

After arrival at school - whether by walking, by car, or by bus, students may not leave the campus for any reason in the morning or during the school day without the permission of the principal or designee.

### **LOCKERS**

Lockers may be issued to students on an availability basis. Students may not share lockers with other students. Lockers are the property of the school and may be checked or searched at any time without notice to the student.

### **LUNCH/BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

Lunch and breakfast are served daily at each school. All students will be given information regarding free or reduced meals during the first days of school with the exception of students who are enrolled in CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) schools. To apply for free or reduced meals, parents should complete an application immediately after receiving the application. A new application must be completed at the beginning of each school year. The fastest and most efficient way to see if your family qualifies for free or reduced priced meals is to apply online at [www.school lunchapp.com](http://www.school lunchapp.com).

Meal charging is not encouraged. Meal charging procedures may vary for each school. For middle and high schools, the charge limit is \$5.00. Schools will notify parents before the child reaches the charge limit by phone calls and/or charge notices that are sent home with the child. After the charge limit has been reached, the child will be served a complimentary meal of a deli sandwich, fruit, vegetable, and milk. After the fifth consecutive complimentary meal, the principal will communicate to the school's social worker who will then make a home visit. The complimentary meal will be served until the debt is resolved. In addition, after May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, no charging is allowed.

Parents are encouraged to pay for student meals by the week or month. A monthly payment schedule may be found at [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net) under the School Nutrition tab. Money can be collected in the lunchroom by the lunchroom staff. All checks should be made payable to *Houston County School Nutrition or HCSNP*. Please write your child's assigned lunch number on the check or write it on the envelope if cash is sent. You can also pay online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com).

The cost of a middle or high school breakfast is \$1.75, and lunch is \$2.75. Reduced cost for breakfast is \$.30 and lunch is \$.40.

As much time as possible is provided for your lunch period. Students should be aware of the line and not "break" in front of other students. With the number of students passing through the lunchroom each period, loud boisterous talking and laughing are not permitted. An adequate number of lines are provided, each with a well-balanced meal for students. Each student is expected to assume responsibility for keeping the lunchroom clean and orderly. Each student is responsible for depositing plates and utensils in the proper place immediately after lunch. During the lunch period, students should not use corridors where classes are in session. **Students are not allowed to receive food items from commercial vendors at school.**

## **MEDIA CENTER**

The school provides material for recreational reading and research. The media center staff is anxious to help students, and we urge students to request assistance when needed. During the school hours, admittance is by written permit only unless the student comes with a class and a teacher. A permit is obtained from the subject teacher and stamped by a library assistant when the student returns to class. Students coming to the library from class must have a purpose relative to the subject and require the use of library materials.

All books and materials taken from the media center will be checked out at the circulation desk. Reference books and magazines may have different circulation rules than books from the regular collection. Students should ask the media specialist about their school's policy for checking out these materials.

A reasonable fine per day per item is charged when overdue items are late. While in the media center, students are expected to follow all of the rules in their school handbook regarding food, snacks, drinks, and book bags. Food and drinks are never allowed in the shelves or at library computer stations.

### **Challenged Materials**

Criticisms of instructional and library materials that are in the Houston County Schools shall be submitted in writing to the individual school principal on the form available in the school office. It is suggested that the critic file the complaint which will be submitted to the school Media Committee appointed by the principal. If a parent or guardian objects to a reading assignment made by a classroom teacher, the parent may request in writing that the student be given a comparable alternative assignment without penalty. In so doing, the parent should state the reason for the request.

## **PARENT PERMISSION TO DROP OUT**

When a sixteen or seventeen year-old student desires to withdraw from school, he/she must have the written permission of his/her parent or guardian prior to withdrawing. Prior to accepting such permission, a school administrator will have a conference with the student and parent/legal guardian within two school days of receiving notice of the intent of the student to withdraw. The purpose of the conference is to share with the student and parent/guardian educational options available and the consequences of not earning a high school diploma.

## **PERFECT ATTENDANCE**

To receive an award for PERFECT ATTENDANCE, a student may **not** be absent, tardy, or be dismissed before the end of the instructional day.

## **PROMOTION and RETENTION**

Promotions are made on the basis of the ability of the pupil to do the work at the next level of instruction. Retention or promotion decisions will be the responsibility of the certificated staff. Parents, teachers, the student involved and other concerned persons must be included in the discussions leading to a decision. If any decision to retain or to plan for a longer-than-average time in a particular series of grades occurs, the school will notify the parents prior to the year's terminal report card. Any desire to change grade placement for the betterment of the child must be discussed with parents. The welfare of the student is the primary consideration.

In order to help assure appropriate achievement as students progress through their school experience, the Houston County Board of Education establishes the following basic promotion and retention criteria for use in the school system.

Promotion of students in grade 8 shall follow requirements set forth in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2.11.

### **Grade 8**

No eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not achieve the minimum performance level for promotion on the English / Language Arts and mathematics state mandated assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.

The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the state mandated assessment but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education.

### **Middle School Promotion and Retention Standards**

Promotion of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 shall follow the requirements set forth in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11 and the local Board of Education.

Each student must take six subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and two courses during the exploratory block and will receive six grade averages at the end of a school year.

In order to be promoted, a student must pass a minimum of five subjects each year. Further, a student must pass all four core academic subjects (language arts, mathematics, science and social studies) in order to qualify for promotion to the next grade. Within specified guidelines, schools shall have the authority to "place" a student who does not meet promotion requirements based on the best educational interest of the child.

Attendance regulations set forth in Houston County Board of Education Policy JBD shall be enforced.

### **RELEASE OF STUDENTS**

The school may not release a student to any person other than the person who enrolled the student in school. If an individual other than the person who enrolled the student in school is authorized to take the student from school on a regular basis (e.g., a grandparent or other relative, childcare provider, etc.), the person who enrolled the student in school must notify the school of such in writing, and this notification should be placed in the student's record. **A PICTURE ID MAY BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE STUDENT WILL BE RELEASED.** If someone other than the person who enrolled the student in school (or an individual authorized in writing by this person) attempts to take custody of the child or to remove the child from the school, the school will immediately contact the person who enrolled the student in school. If a person who attempts to take custody of the child without consent of the person who enrolled the student in school refuses to leave the school or causes a problem the school should contact the appropriate law enforcement agency. (This provision shall apply with respect to State or local law enforcement officers.)

### **SCHOOL DAY**

For daily reporting purposes, students must be present at least one-half of the instructional day to be considered present (students must be present by 11:00 a.m./or dismissed after 11:00 a.m.). To receive **Perfect Attendance**, a student may **not be absent, tardy, or dismissed** before the end of the school day at 2:45 p.m.

### **SECTION 504 - NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
P.O. Box 1850

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

## **SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

1. Overview: Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.
2. Hearing Request: The Request for the Hearing must include the following:
  - a. The name of the student.
  - b. The address of the residence of the student.
  - c. The name of the school the student is attending.



- d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
- e. The requested reasons for review.
- f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
- g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the grievant of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

3. Mediation: The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.
4. Hearing Procedures:
  - a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
  - b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
  - c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
  - d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
  - e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
  - f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
  - g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
  - h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
  - i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
  - j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
  - k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
  - l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
  - m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. Decision: The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
6. Review: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or

regulations.

## **SECTION 504 PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Although the below steps are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level, the parent/student has the right to by-pass these steps at any time and request an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you at your own expense. The impartial Hearing Officer will be selected by the district. Hearing requests must be made to the System 504 Coordinator identified in Step II below.

### **Step I**

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. Any witness or other evidence should be provided at this time. The administrator will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

### **Step II**

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the System Section 504 Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the System Section 504 Coordinator. This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the school principal. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
P.O. Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069  
(478) 988-6200 ext. 10213  
zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net

Upon receipt of the written statement, the Section 504 Coordinator will schedule a meeting to attempt resolution of the concerns. The System Section 504 Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

### **Step III**

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the System Section 504 Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Mark Scott  
Office of the Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069-1850 (478)988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the System Section 504 Coordinator. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next regularly scheduled BOE meeting, not less than seven (7) days thereafter.

## **SELLING AT SCHOOL**

Students are prohibited from selling items to other students at school.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Houston County Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form by any person.

It is the policy of the Houston County Board of Education to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any person to harass a student, an employee, or any other person

through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

1. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of employment or an individual's education;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for promotion or academic decisions affecting that individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic or work environment.

Any person who has knowledge of or suspects that sexual harassment is occurring within the system shall immediately make a report to a school administrator or the school's Title IX Coordinator.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment shall be immediately reported to the school's Title IX Coordinator or a school administrator, be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated by the Principal, the System Title IX Coordinator or the Superintendent or his/her designee. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge.

For additional information, also see "Title IX Non-Discrimination" in student handbook.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Houston County School District operates in strict adherence to policies and procedures set forth in IDEA and the State Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Special Education. The state rules, as well as parental rights may be referred to online at the following address:

<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Special-Education-Rules.aspx>

### **What is Child Find?**

The purpose of Child Find is to identify, locate, and evaluate children and youth, birth to age 21, who are suspected of, or have a disability or developmental delay. Houston County Schools serve children ages 3 through 21 with identified special education needs.

### **How can children be referred?**

A referral may be made by anyone who has a concern about a child's development. All referrals are considered confidential. The parent retains the right to refuse services. Children may be referred by any of the following:

- Parents/legal guardians/foster parents
- Other family members
- Physicians/health care providers
- Preschool programs
- School system personnel
- Community agencies
- Private school personnel
- Others who are concerned about a child's development

### **When should a child be referred to Child Find?**

A child should be referred when:

- A health or medical disorder interferes with development or learning.
- A child seems to have difficulty seeing or hearing.
- A child appears to have social, emotional or behavioral difficulties that affect his/her ability to learn.
- A child has a diagnosed progressive or degenerative condition that will eventually impair or impede the child's ability to learn.
- A child seems to have difficulty understanding directions like others that are his/her age.

- A child's speech is not understandable to family or friends.
- A child has difficulty with reading, math, or other school subjects.

### **Where can I find out more about Child Find?**

For a preschool aged child, with a chronological age of 3 through 5, who has or may have a developmental disability, please contact Student Services at 478-988-6200 Ext. 27803.

Parents of students, kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, who suspect their child may have a disability, should contact the teacher, principal or the chairperson of the school's Student Support Team.

### **What is Special Education and who is eligible for services?**

Special Education is instruction designed to meet the unique learning strengths and needs of individual students with disabilities from birth through age 21. A child must be evaluated and identified as having a disability to be eligible for Special Education and/or related services. Programs are provided for students in all disability areas recognized by the State of Georgia. Disability categories are: Autism spectrum disorder, Deaf/blind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Significant Developmental Delay, Specific Learning Disability, Speech/language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment. Once identified as eligible for special education services, a student will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) put into place.

### **The Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

The IEP is a legal document written for students determined to need special education services. This document addresses the unique abilities and needs and how the student will access the general education curriculum. This includes the special education and related services needed to participate in the educational environment. The IEP is developed by the IEP team. The IEP team is a group of individuals that is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a child with a disability. The IEP team includes the following participants: the parents or guardian of the child, the LEA, not less than one regular education teacher, and related services providers when appropriate.

A *Quick Guide to the IEP* can be found at the following address:

[http://archives.gadoe.org/\\_documents/ci\\_exceptional/New%20Sp%20Ed%20Sample%20Forms/Quick\\_Guide\\_to\\_IEP.pdf](http://archives.gadoe.org/_documents/ci_exceptional/New%20Sp%20Ed%20Sample%20Forms/Quick_Guide_to_IEP.pdf)

If you would like a further explanation of any of this information, you may contact, Dr. Jenny Millward, Director at the Houston County School System, at (478) 988-6216, or by email at [jenny.millward@hcbe.net](mailto:jenny.millward@hcbe.net).

Or you may ask for assistance from the Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Supports and Services, Suite 1870, Twin Towers East, Atlanta, Georgia 30334-5010, (404) 656-3963 or 1-800-311-3627 or [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org). Regional assistance can be found by contacting the Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) by phone (1-800-282-7552), or through their website at [www.glrs.org](http://www.glrs.org).

## **STUDENT OR PARENT GRIEVANCE**

### **Level I**

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the principal within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. Any witness or other evidence should be provided at this time. The administrator will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

### **Level II**

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the principal may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools by filing a written request to meet with the Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee. The complaint should be mailed to:

***Dr. Richard Rogers, Assistant Superintendent of School Operations  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069-1850***

This request must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the principal.

The Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

### **Level III**

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the System Section 504 Coordinator. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next regularly scheduled BOE meeting, not less than seven (7) days thereafter.

## **TEST SCHEDULE**

The Houston County Student Assessment Program for high school students consists of tests required by the State Department of Education as mandated by the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE), Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), and tests required by the Houston County Board of Education.

[Information about assessments and the calendar for the 2020-21 school year can be found on the Houston County website at https://www.hcbe.net/assessmentaccountability.](https://www.hcbe.net/assessmentaccountability)

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Every student enrolled in a course which requires a textbook must be issued a text. Students are responsible for the textbooks which they are issued. Students must pay for textbooks which are lost or damaged (beyond normal wear) according to the schedule below.

1. All books will be bar-coded. Books returned will not be accepted with the bar-code removed or damaged. Students will be charged 100% of the purchase price if the bar-code is damaged in any way.
2. The student must pay 100% of the purchase price if the book is lost during the first year the book is used.
3. Students will pay replacement cost for any lost/damaged books.
4. Charges for damaged books are assessed by the principal according to the condition of the book when issued and the extent of the damages.
5. A student's failure to pay for lost or damaged books/media materials will result in the withholding of report cards, progress reports, etc.

Replacement textbooks will not be issued until payment has been made for the lost or damaged book. A textbook price list is available in the school office. Book bags and other personal belongings should not be left unattended.

## **TITLE I/TITLE II PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Although the below steps are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level, the parent/student has the right to by-pass these steps at any time and request an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you at your own expense. The impartial Hearing Officer will be selected by the district. Hearing requests must be made to the Title Coordinator identified in Step II below.

### **Step I**

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. Any witness or other evidence should be provided at this time. The administrator will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

### **Step II**

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the System Title I/Title II Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the System Title I/Title II Coordinator. This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the school principal. The complaint should be mailed to:

***Ms. Dana Morris, Director of Federal Programs***



*Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069-1850  
Phone: (478)988-6200  
Fax: (478)-988- 6220 [dana.h.morris@hcbe.net](mailto:dana.h.morris@hcbe.net)*

Upon receipt of the written statement, the Title I/Title II Coordinator will schedule a meeting to attempt resolution of the concerns. The System Title I/Title II Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

### Step III

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the System Title I/Title II Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

*Dr. Mark Scott  
Office of the Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, GA 31069-1850 (478)988-6200*

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the System Title I/Title II Coordinator. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next regularly scheduled BOE meeting, not less than seven (7) days thereafter.

## TITLE IX NON-DISCRIMINATION

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972); or in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Students and parents are hereby notified that the Houston County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities. For questions or concerns about Title IX, a student or parent should contact the school's Title IX Coordinator or contact the system's Title IX Coordinator at: Assistant Superintendent for School Operations, P.O. Box 1850, Perry Georgia, 31069 or by phone at 478-988-6200.

## TITLE IX PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The Houston County Board of Education desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the Board prohibits unlawful discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If a student or a student's parents/guardians has a complaint/grievance alleging any action prohibited by Title IX i.e., discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment carried out by employees, other students, or third parties, he/she should discuss the matter with the principal of the school which the student attends in an attempt to resolve the grievance. If the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, he/she should discuss the matter with the Title IX Coordinator. See below for contact information.

The principal may make an attempt to resolve the grievance informally if the complainant expresses a willingness to participate in this informal process. Parties have the right to end the informal process and begin a formal process at any time. At his/her discretion, the principal may confer with persons having knowledge of the incident that precipitated the grievance. The school and the School System will take all necessary steps to prevent any recurrence of sexual harassment and will do what is necessary to correct its discriminatory effects on those affected by it. If the complainant does not want to participate in the informal process or the informal process does not result in a satisfactory solution, the student or parent/guardian bringing the complaint may seek relief using the formal procedures outlined below. The student alleged to have carried out the harassment may also seek relief by following the procedures outlined below. These procedures apply to complaints of discrimination/harassment prohibited by Title IX. The steps below are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level for any form of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, on

the basis of sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual violence is defined as infliction of physical force by a student, employee or third party, with the intent to cause injury or harm to the student.

### **Step I**

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal, or the Title IX Coordinator if the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. If the harassment is so severe that the complainant is unable to make a complaint within the ten (10) calendar day time frame, the number of days within which to make the complaint may be waived to provide the student/parent making the complaint sufficient time to notify the principal or Title IX Coordinator of the complaint. Any witness or evidence should be provided at the time of the complaint. All parties involved shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The principal or designee will conduct an investigation. The parties involved will be informed of the outcome and the principal will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

Retaliation against an individual who reports alleged harassment or who assists in the investigation of harassment is prohibited. The District will take appropriate action against individuals who are in violation of this part of the policy.

### **Step II**

If the Step I investigation was conducted by the Title IX Coordinator, skip Step II and proceed to Step III. A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the Houston County School District's Title IX Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Richard Rogers, Assistant Superintendent of School Operations,  
Title IX Coordinator  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069-1850  
Phone: (478) 988-6200  
Fax: (478) 218-7517

This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the parties, complainant and alleged harasser, receives the decision from the school principal. The appeal shall include all reports and comments from Step I and a letter of appeal. The System Title IX Coordinator will initiate an investigation of the grievance and schedule a meeting with the complainant or alleged harasser to attempt resolution of the concerns. The Houston County School District's Title IX Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting. The case is closed if the complainant is satisfied with the decision or does not wish to take further steps.

### **Step III**

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the Houston County School District's Title IX Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request for a hearing to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Mark Scott, Office of the Superintendent  
Houston County Board of Education  
Post Office Box 1850  
Perry, Georgia 31069-1850  
Phone: (478) 988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Houston County School District's Title IX Coordinator. The request for a hearing shall state specifically the nature of the grievance, the relief sought, and the reasons why the Board should grant a hearing. If a hearing is granted, the Board of Education will hear the grievance at the next regularly scheduled BOE meeting not less than seven (7) days thereafter and render a final decision within 10 days of the hearing. If a hearing is not granted, the parties will be notified that the decision of the Title IX Coordinator is affirmed.

## **VOLUNTEERS AT SCHOOL**

The Houston County School District welcomes the involvement of parents and other members of the community as volunteer helpers in the school. Because student welfare and safety are primary concerns, volunteers who provide direct services to students and staff are required to obtain security clearance. Additional information about this process may be obtained from school personnel.

## **VISITORS AT SCHOOL**

**Beginning the 2020-2021 school year, visitors are limited to the office area of the school only. Visitors are not permitted to go beyond the office unless an emergency exists requiring a parent or guardian to assist their child. Students are not allowed to receive deliveries of food, balloons, or flowers at school.**

A visitor is defined as any person who is not a student at such school, an employee of the school or school system, a school board member, an approved volunteer following established guidelines of the school, or a person who has been invited to or otherwise authorized to be at the school by a principal, teacher, counselor, or other authorized employee of the school.

Any person who shall not have any legitimate cause or need to be present upon the premises or within the school safety zone of any school and who willfully fails to remove himself or herself from such premises after the principal or designee of such school requests him or her to do so, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

All visitors are reminded of the following Georgia law:

Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at a public school who has been advised that minor children are present who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a student while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so, such persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.

Each principal or designee of each school shall have the authority to exercise such control over the buildings and grounds upon which a school is located so as to prohibit any person who does not have a legitimate need or cause to be present thereon from loitering on such premises.

Any person who is not a member of the school staff or student body who loiters on or about any school building or grounds without written permission or who causes disturbances may be prosecuted according to law.

## **WEATHER**

In the event of school cancellation, parents may be notified by telephone through School Messenger, our automated notification system. This system has the capability to call all 15,000+ parents within a matter of minutes, delivering a fast and accurate message. The message will also be posted to our school system's Website, [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net) and HCBCE Facebook page. A Public Service Announcement request will also be sent to the local media, to include 13WMAZ TV, FOX24 TV, WMGT41 TV, WRWR TV-38, and all local radio stations.

**If a tornado warning is issued, bus dismissal may be delayed.** If students are in-route to or from school and a tornado warning is issued, buses are required to stop at the nearest school and students/driver takes shelter there until the warning has passed.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

Parents should notify the school if for any reason it becomes necessary for their child to be withdrawn from school. Students should secure a withdrawal slip from a counselor. The form must be signed by each teacher, the media specialist, lunchroom manager, attendance clerk and returned to the counselor. Fees owed for lost or damaged books, library fines, lunch fees, etc. must be paid before the withdrawal process is complete. Parents should take a copy of the withdrawal form with them to the new school.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

It is the purpose of the Houston County Board of Education to operate each school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend the schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, the Board of Education has adopted a policy, which requires all schools to adopt codes of conduct. Students are required to follow the Code of Conduct at all times in order to facilitate a positive learning environment for themselves and other students. These standards for behavior require students to respect each other and school district employees, to obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within the district.

A school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct.

The student Code of Conduct shall be distributed to each student and the student's parents or guardians during the first week of school and upon enrollment of each new student. Parents shall be requested to sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of the Code of Conduct and return promptly the acknowledgment to the school. The student Code of Conduct shall be available in each school office and each classroom.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on property owned by the school district at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On school buses and at school bus stops.

Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus, which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board Rule 160-4-8-.16, UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

### **AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in the Code of Conduct, the principal may undertake corrective measures, which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

### **AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER**

The Superintendent fully supports the authority of principals and teachers in the school district to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to provisions of state law.

Each teacher shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737, which requires the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the

teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn. Such report shall be filed with the principal or designee on the school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or designee.

The principal or designee shall notify in writing the teacher and the student's parents or guardian of the discipline or student support services, which has occurred as a result of the teacher's report within one school day from the imposition of discipline or the utilization of the support services. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that the student's parents or guardian has received the written notification, including information as to how the parents or guardian may contact the principal or designee.

### **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process as appropriate considering the student's discipline history and conduct.

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program.

The following disciplinary actions, or any of them, may be imposed for any violation of this Code of Conduct:

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator, Counselor, or Teacher:
- Loss of Privileges
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Detention
- In-school Suspension
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Home Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal as outlined in the Board of Education policies.

Disciplinary hearings shall be held no later than ten school days after the beginning of the student's suspension unless the school district and parents or guardians mutually agree to an extension.

Any teacher who is called as a witness by any person shall be given notice no later than three days prior to the hearing.

In the event a student or his/her parent/guardian does not wish to contest the charge(s) of violation(s) of the discipline rules of the school's Code of Conduct for which a tribunal has been requested, the student and parent may voluntarily accept the consequences recommended by the school by signing a Tribunal Waiver Agreement form. Such waiver shall specify an agreement to waive the opportunity to participate in a tribunal hearing, present evidence, cross examine witnesses, and be represented by an attorney. The decision to waive the tribunal shall be final and

cannot be appealed by the school or family. The waiver must be signed by a parent/guardian and a school administrator.

Before a student is suspended for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. If the student is suspended, the student's parents will be notified if possible. School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence surrounding a student's conduct necessitates police involvement or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported.

School officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Students' vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities, which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

#### **BEHAVIOR WHICH WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

The degree of discipline imposed will be in accordance with the progressive discipline process unless otherwise stated.

- **Possession, purchase, transfer, sale, use in any amount, distribution, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant, to include prescription, over the counter drugs, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) oil, cannabidiol (CBD) oil, and substances represented as drugs or alcohol** may be subject to suspension up to two full semesters.
- **Possession of a firearm, dangerous instrument, hazardous object, or weapon** shall require expulsion for a period of not less than one calendar year; provided, however, that a hearing officer, tribunal panel, administrator, superintendent, or local board of education shall have the authority to modify such expulsion requirement on a case by case basis. **For definitions, refer to Policy JCDAE.**
- **Verbal assault, written assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** Immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed a verbal or physical assault upon a teacher or other school personnel; possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.
- **Physical assault or battery, including sexual battery, of other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.
- **Fighting:** any student engaged in fighting (mutual combat or assault/battery) may be subject to discipline up to and including long-term suspension at the discretion of the student's building administrator. Penalties recommended for fighting shall not be reduced or limited by, but shall be in addition to, any penalties imposed by any court of competent jurisdiction.
- **Terroristic Threats and Acts:** any student who commits a terroristic threat or act shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion.
- **Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel:** Immediate suspension and automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher or other school personnel. Possible punishments include short term suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion. Appropriate law enforcement personnel will be notified as necessary.
- **Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel, which caused physical harm:** A student found by a disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence, which caused harm against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee shall be expelled from the public school district. The expulsion shall be for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150. Appropriate law enforcement personnel will be notified as necessary.
- **Disrespectful conduct, including use of vulgar or profane language, toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.**



- Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, up to and including sexual harassment as used in connection with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
- Possession or use of tobacco in any form or any product, paraphernalia, or substance that is represented as tobacco or any smoking/vaping oil to include all forms of electronic cigarettes, vapor pens and any instrument used to inhale vapor.
- Unauthorized use of school computers or computer network for anything other than instructional purposes. This includes, but is not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view or send inappropriate material, hacking, and violation of school computer use policy.
- Damaging or defacing personal property, including the property of another student or any person legitimately at the school, or school property (vandalism or graffiti) during school hours or off-school hours.
- **Theft:** taking of personal property of another person or the school.
- **Burglary of school property.**
- **Extortion or attempted extortion.**
- **Possession and/or use of fireworks or any explosive.**
- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat shall at a minimum result in suspension for one full semester.**
- **Disruption of school.**
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives.**
- **Disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff or refusal to talk with an administrator.**
- **Classroom and school disturbances.**
- **Violation of school dress code.**
- **Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words or indecent exposure.**
- **Use of cell phone or electronic communication device during the school day except as approved by a staff member.**
- **Inappropriate public displays of affection.**
- **Gambling or possession of gambling devices.**
- **Moving and non-moving motor vehicle violations upon school property and at school events.**
- **Giving false information to school officials.**
- **Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student or other students.**
- **Cheating on school assignments.**
- **Unexcused absence, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission, failure to comply with compulsory attendance law.**
- **Bullying:** Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. However, Georgia law mandates that upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.
- **Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts.**
- **Willful and persistent violation of the student Code of Conduct.**
- **Criminal law violations/Off-campus misconduct:** A student whose conduct off campus could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process may be subject to disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, short-term suspension and referral to a disciplinary tribunal.
- **Gang Related Activity:** Any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, and/or attire which engage in activity that violates O.C.G.A. § 16-15-3 and/or is conduct subversive to the good order and discipline of the school and/or a violation of the student code of conduct.
- **Physical contact of a sexual nature on school property.**

- **Any Other Conduct:** A student shall not engage in any other conduct not listed above subversive to the good order and discipline of his/her school **and/or school district.**

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Aggravated Battery:** Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another or intentionally making physical contact with any object, which causes physical harm to another.

**Assault:** Any threat or attempt to physically harm another person or any act, which reasonably places another person in fear of physical harm. (Example: threatening language or swinging at someone in an attempt to strike.)

**Battery:** Intentionally making physical contact with another person in an insulting, offensive, or provoking manner.

**Behavior Contract:** A written agreement between a student and the school to address chronic misbehavior or return from an alternative school placement. Any student on a behavior contract who continues to violate school rules shall be subject to discipline consequences ranging from in school suspension to an alternative school placement at the discretion of the building principal.

**Bullying:** In accordance with Georgia law, Bullying is defined as actions which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is: (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or (3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass or intimidate, that: (a) Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1 (b) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; (c) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or (d) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. Bullying also involves acts which occur through the use of electronic communication, "whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose."

**Burglary of school property:** breaking and entering into school district property.

**Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student:** A student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur.

**Detention:** A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after school. Students are given one days' warning so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.

**Disciplinary Tribunal:** School officials appointed by the Board of Education to sit as fact finder and judge with respect to student disciplinary matters.

**Dress Code:** The current dress code is explained in the student handbook.

**Drug:** A legal substance used as medicine with or without a prescription or an illegal substance scheduled in the Georgia Controlled Substance Act. All legal substances shall only be possessed or dispensed according to Board Policy. Use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician and taken in accordance with the guidelines in the student handbook and the Health Services Manual shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

**Expulsion:** Suspension of a student from a public school beyond the current school quarter or semester. Such action may be taken only by a disciplinary tribunal.

**Extortion:** Obtaining another person's consent to any act, money, personal property, or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

**Fighting:** Fighting is defined as *"a physical struggle or a physical struggle and confrontation wherein blows of the fist, arms, legs or feet are intended to hit or do in fact hit any other student or any other person while a student is going to or from school, during the school day, at any school related activity and/or on school property."*

**Fireworks:** The term "fireworks" means any combustible or explosive composition or any substance or combination of substances or article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation, as well as articles containing any explosive or flammable compound and tablets and other devices containing an explosive substance.

**Gambling:** Engaging in a game or contest in which the outcome is dependent upon chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value.

**In-School Suspension:** Removal of a student from class(es) or regular school program and assignment of that student to an alternative program isolated from peers.

**Suspension:** Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed 10 days (short-term) or for a period greater than 10 days (long-term, which may be imposed only by a disciplinary tribunal). During the period of suspension, the student is excluded from all school-sponsored activities including practices, as well as competitive events, and/or activities sponsored by the school or its employees.

**Theft:** The offense of taking or misappropriating any property, of another with the intention of depriving that person of the property, regardless of the manner in which the property is taken or appropriated.

**Terroristic Threats and Acts:** Any student who commits a terroristic threat or act shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion. A student commits the offense of a terroristic threat when he threatens:

- To commit any crime of violence, or
- To burn or damage property for the purpose of terrorizing another, or
- By causing the evacuation of a school building, place of assembly for school-related events or school bus transportation, or
- Causing serious school inconvenience in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience, or
- A student shall not knowingly furnish or disseminate through a computer or computer network any picture, photograph, or drawing or similar visual representation or verbal description of any information designed to encourage, solicit, or otherwise promote terroristic acts as herein defined.

**Waiver:** A waiver is an agreement not to contest whether a student has committed an infraction of the Code of Conduct and the acceptance of consequences in lieu of a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal.

**Weapons:** For the purpose of this policy, the term weapon includes any object, which is or may be used to inflict bodily injury or to place another in fear for personal safety or well-being. (Refer to Policy JCDAE).

**Any Other Conduct:** A student shall not engage in any other conduct not listed above subversive to the good order and discipline of his/her school.

### **BUS MISBEHAVIOR**

The following specific provisions shall govern student conduct and safety on all school buses:

(1) All provisions of the Student Code of Conduct apply to behavior on the school bus, including but not limited to, acts of physical violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, bullying as defined by subsection (a) of the Code Section 20-2-751.4, and board policy, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of

other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior;

(2) A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district officials must be held to form a school bus behavior contract whenever:

- A student is found to have engaged in bullying; or
- A student is found to have engaged in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

The school bus behavior contract shall provide for age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Provisions may include, but are not limited to, assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

These provisions regarding use of a bus behavior contract are not to be construed to limit the instances when other code of conduct violations may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

(3) Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus; and

(4) Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

#### **STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESSES**

The Board of Education provides a variety of resources that are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems.

#### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communications through personal contacts are extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as on-going opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

Parents and students should contact the principal of the school if specific questions arise related to the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct specifies within its standards of behavior various violations of the Code which may result in a school staff member's request that a parent or guardian come to the school for a conference. Parents are encouraged to visit the schools regularly and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and behavior.

Georgia law mandates that any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by mail the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite the parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

Georgia law also states that before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return to school from a suspension or expulsion, the school shall request by telephone call and by mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

The law allows a local school district to petition the juvenile court to require a parent to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend the conference requested by the principal pursuant to the laws cited above, the court may order the parent or guardian

to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

This Conduct Code shall be strictly construed subject only to exceptions required by a State or Federal law applicable hereto, and exceptions made by a disciplinary tribunal on a case-by-case basis.

#### **STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES NOTIFICATION**

Each school principal shall implement procedures to annually notify all parents or guardians of all school-sponsored extracurricular activities, organizations and clubs in which students may participate and of the right of the parent or guardian to prohibit their child's participation. Notification to parents and guardians shall be provided annually via the student handbook and shall include the name of the extracurricular activity, student organization or club; and information regarding the purpose, activities or national affiliation of the extracurricular activity, organization or club. Any membership or financial requirements for a student to join or become a member of the activity, organization or club shall be included in the information provided.

No student shall be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity, organization or club if the student's parent or legal guardian has indicated in writing that the parent will not allow the student to participate and has provided a copy of such written notice to the school principal.

For school clubs formed after publication of the student handbook, parents or guardians must approve their student's participation via e-mail, fax or written permission to the school principal.

School extracurricular activities, organizations, or clubs for purposes of this policy are those that are supervised or sponsored by a school district employee designated by the principal, and that meet in school facilities.



**DR. MARK SCOTT**  
**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
**FRED WILSON, CHAIRMAN**

**HELEN HUGHES, VICE CHAIRMAN**

**DR. RICK UNRUH**  
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**RIGHT TO KNOW PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Dear Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s),

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Houston County School System would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student's teacher—
  - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact your child's school or you may contact Dana Morris, Director of Federal Programs, at the Houston County Board of Education at (478) 988-6200 ext. 10392 or email at [dana.h.morris@hcbe.net](mailto:dana.h.morris@hcbe.net).

Thank you for your interest and involvement in your child's education.

Sincerely,  
Dana Morris  
Director of Federal Programs

**P.O. Box 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069**  
**(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259**  
**WWW.HCBE.NET**





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### FITNESSGRAM ASSESSMENT in Physical Education (P.E.)

August 4, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a part of the Georgia Student Health and Physical Education (GA SHAPE) initiative, all Houston County Public Schools (Grades 1-12) will participate in the required annual fitness assessment, the FITNESSGRAM. The FITNESSGRAM is a comprehensive fitness assessment for youth designed to assess cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. The FITNESSGRAM is considered a quality fitness assessment for the following reasons:

1. FITNESSGRAM assessments use criterion-referenced standards. This means that a student can compare his/her scores with standards that have been identified for good health. This type of system prevents students from being compared to other students participating in the assessment.
2. FITNESSGRAM assesses the **current fitness level** of students and promotes individual goal setting to allow students to take ownership of their health.
3. FITNESSGRAM does not assess skill or athletic ability.

All students in grades 1-12 that are enrolled in a P.E. class, regardless of age, gender, or ability, will participate in the FITNESSGRAM assessment. Students are encouraged to be self-aware of their health related fitness and to take responsibility by setting personal fitness goals. When students focus on continually improving their fitness level, a positive lifelong impact can be achieved.

Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed on fitness assessment days (comfortable pants or shorts, socks, and tennis shoes). Please encourage your child to participate with his/her best effort and to the best of his/her ability in each of the assessment components. Students in grades 1-3 will participate in Height and Weight measures and will begin learning the language and techniques of the other components. Students in grades 4-12 should be prepared to participate in the following components: 1. PACER or One-Mile Run, 2) Curl-Ups, 3) Push-Ups, 4) Back-Saver Sit and Reach, and 5) Height/Weight measures. *An additional assessment item, the Trunk Lift, may be offered to students seeking the Governor's Fitness Award. Students must score in the Healthy Fitness Zones on a total of 5 items for this award.*

A confidential FITNESSGRAM report that will include your child's scores as well as Healthy Fitness Zone information will be provided via email for each student at the end of the year or at the end of his/her first P.E. course during that year. The Healthy Fitness Zones represent the levels of fitness identified by research for good health. The information on this private report will not be displayed or made public. (Parents may request a hard copy of their child's report from the P.E. teacher.)

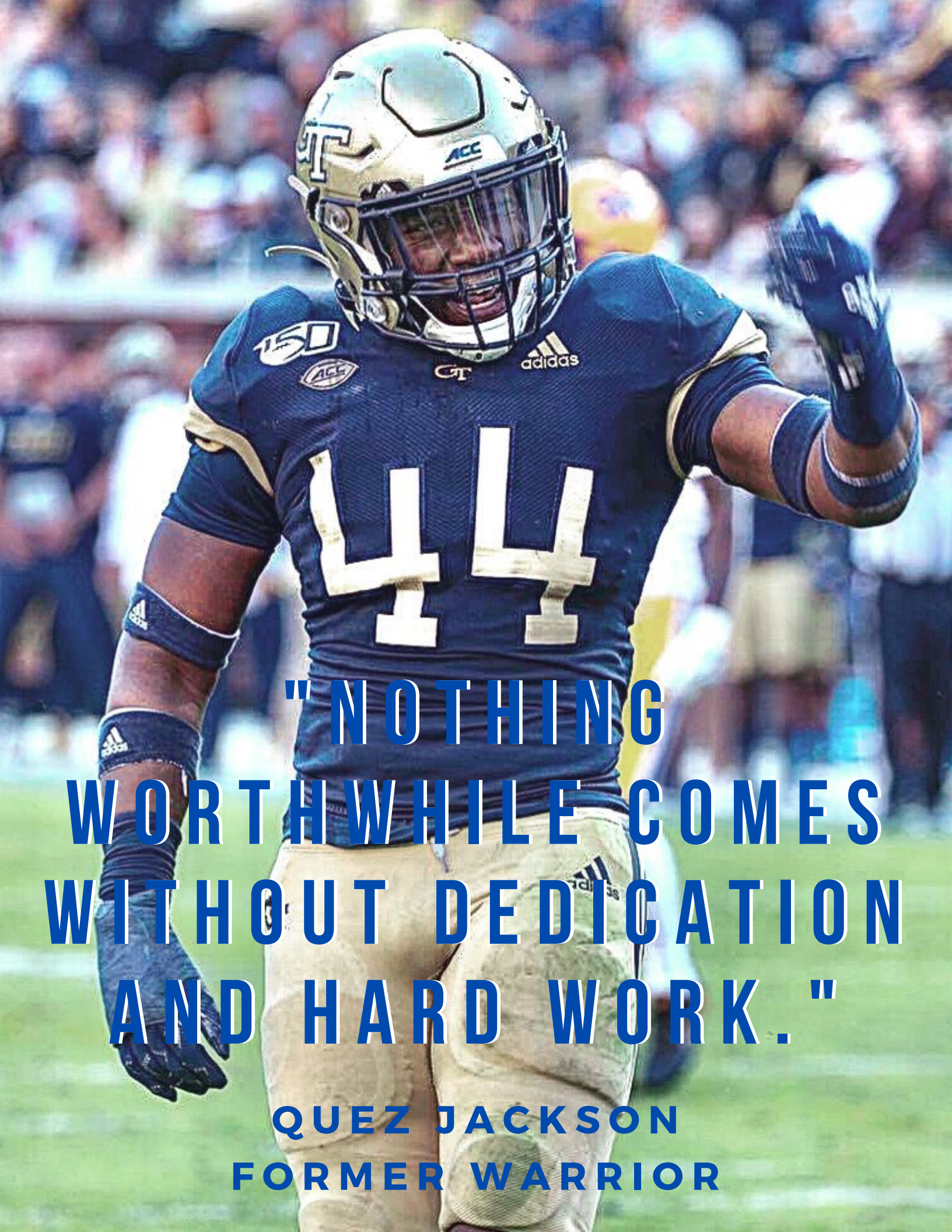
For more information regarding the FITNESS assessment, please refer to the HCSD Health and P.E. webpage at

<https://houstoncountys.schoolinsites.com/healthandpe>. If you have any other questions, please contact your school's physical education teacher.

Sincerely,  
Blanche Lamb  
Coordinator, Special Programs  
[blanche.lamb@hcbe.net](mailto:blanche.lamb@hcbe.net)  
478-988-6200 ext. 10193

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**"NOTHING  
WORTHWHILE COMES  
WITHOUT DEDICATION  
AND HARD WORK."**

**QUEZ JACKSON  
FORMER WARRIOR**