



**Hugh Mercer and Lafayette  
Elementary Schools**

**K – 5**

**Parent/Student Handbook**

**2021 - 2022**

# Fredericksburg City Public Schools

2021-2022

## K-5 Parent/Student Handbook

### FCPS Mission

*Fredericksburg City Public Schools will provide a quality education that assures opportunity and equity for each student. Our motto "Excellence in Education" embodies a commitment to empower students to develop personal responsibility for meeting high academic standards and to become productive citizens in a global society.*

### MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATORS

---

On behalf of the administration, faculty, and staff, we would like to welcome each of you to another exciting year at Hugh Mercer and Lafayette Elementary School. We are proud of all our accomplishments with our teachers, staff and students and we have been planning as a team for continued success this school year. We are eager to begin another year of learning. We hope it is a year filled with positive memories.

It is our goal to provide each child with the best educational experiences possible, and we realize this goal cannot be achieved without the involvement of parents and/or guardians. Our successes thus far have been attributed to a collective effort of the faculty, staff, scholars, parents and the entire school community. We hope that everyone can play a role in making this school year great and making learning fun. At any time during this school year, if you have questions, concerns and/or wish to get more involved, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

We look forward to a school year filled with many opportunities and possibilities. Thank you in advance for your support.

#### **HUGH MERCER ELEMENTARY**

<https://hmes.fxbgschools.us/>

2100 Cowan Boulevard  
Telephone: (540) 372-1115  
Fax: (540) 372-6753

Dr. Kimberly K. Doucette, Principal  
Ms. Keesha M. Keels, Assistant Principal  
Mr. William A. Wishard, Assistant Principal

#### **LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY**

<https://lues.fxbgschools.us/>

3 Learning Lane  
Telephone: (540) 310-0029  
Fax: (540) 310-0671

Mrs. Courtney L. Wheeler, Principal  
Mrs. Pamela M. Diggs, Assistant Principal  
Mr. Stephen J. Ventura, Assistant Principal

### **K-5 School Day (Hugh Mercer Elementary and Lafayette Elementary)**

<b>SCHOOL HOURS</b>	Doors Open @ 8 AM, Tardy Bell @ 8:30 AM, Dismissal @ 3:15 PM
<b>EARLY DISMISSAL</b>	Doors Open @ 8 AM, Tardy Bell @ 8:30 AM, Dismissal @ 12:45 PM
<b>2-HOUR DELAY</b>	Doors Open at 10 AM, Tardy Bell @ 10:30 AM, Dismissal @ 3:15 PM
<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>	8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

## **K-5 ATTENDANCE ZONES**

---

Please use this hyperlink to identify your school district (zone) and determine if your student will attend Hugh Mercer Elementary or Lafayette Elementary or visit our website:

[https://resources.finalsite.net/images/f\\_auto,q\\_auto,t\\_image\\_size\\_6/v1623195450/cityschoolscom/zsxaibhmqhc7sbh3qq/FCPSmapwSCH.png](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/f_auto,q_auto,t_image_size_6/v1623195450/cityschoolscom/zsxaibhmqhc7sbh3qq/FCPSmapwSCH.png)

Students must attend the school in the zone in which they reside. If an enrolled student's family moves out of this zone at any time during the first three quarters of the school year, the student must then attend the school in the zone in which the family now resides. If a family moves during the fourth quarter of the school year, the student will be allowed to finish out the school year.

## **NOTIFICATION OF INFORMATION CHANGES**

---

It is very important to notify the counseling department if you have a change of address and/or telephone number. Also, notify them of any changes in emergency contact information.

## **REGISTRATION PROCESS**

---

### **REGISTRATION FOR NEW STUDENTS**

All students are registered by the FCPS Registrar at 210 Ferdinand Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Hours for registration are 8:30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Students must have the following information in order to be registered:

Birth certificate – original, not photocopy (hospital certificates not accepted) or Passport (if not U.S. citizen)

Immunization Record/School Entrance Exam (dated within 1 year of entering

school). These documents must be signed by a physician and recorded on a State Health Form, which may be obtained from your physician, Health Department, or registrars' office.

Outlined below are FCPS School Admission-Residency rules:

All students attending Fredericksburg City Public Schools must either live in Fredericksburg or be accepted and pay tuition. When a student is registering, the following items must be presented to confirm residency:

- A current utility bill with the parents' name and Fredericksburg address listed.
- A current lease or mortgage identifying the family as the lessee. Please note- Driver's licenses cannot be accepted.

## **SCHOOL ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

---

**KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE AGE:** 5 years old on/before September 30 of the current school year

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ Birth Certificate - Original, not photocopy (hospital certificates not accepted) or Passport (if not U.S. citizen) \*\* Driver's license not accepted \*\*
- ✓ Proof of City Residency - A current utility bill with the parent's name and Fredericksburg address listed and a current lease or mortgage identifying the family as the lessee

If the student's family is living with another family within the city limits, the requirements above must be presented from the resident. In addition, form JEC-R-1 must be completed and notarized stating the family/student who

is registering is living with them within the Fredericksburg City boundaries. If the family of the student who is registering is homeless, the McKinney-Vento legislation and the Fredericksburg City Public Schools policies related to them will go into effect.

- ✓ Tuition Form (if out of city resident)
- ✓ Emergency Contact Information

Note: If your name does not appear on the lease/mortgage agreement of the residence in which you reside, you must provide a verification letter from the tenant/owner indicating that you reside with him/her. In addition, you must provide proof of the tenant's/owner's city residency (mortgage/lease agreement, utility bill,)

- ✓ Immunization Record/Physical Exam (dated within 1 year of entering school for the first time)

Prior to any child entering a public school within the state of Virginia, a comprehensive physical examination (administered by a physician) is required within one year of the child's first day of enrollment. Immunizations and documentation of a physical examination must be recorded on a State Health Form (available from your physician, the Health Department, or in the school office) with physician's signature and date.

According to Virginia State law, the following immunizations are required prior to any child entering a public school within the state of Virginia for the first time:

- 3 doses DPT (one after 4th birthday) or 6 doses before 4th birthday
- 3 doses Polio (one after 4th birthday) or 4 doses before 4th birthday
- 2 doses Measles (rubeola received after 12 months of age)

- 2 doses Measles, 1 dose Mumps, 1 dose Rubella, or 2 doses MMR
- 3 doses Hep B
- 1 dose Varicella Vaccine

#### **REQUIRED SCREENINGS:**

- Anemia (Hemoglobin or Hematocrit), Urinalysis
- Vision
- Hearing
- Lead Level
- TB

### **COMMUNICATION**

---

FCPS is committed to providing parents with news and information at both the Division level and at the school level. FCPS provides information in many ways, such as:

- FCPS website
- HMES Website
- LES Website
- Cable station channels: Verizon 41, Comcast 18, and Cox 83
- Parent Newsletter
- Weekly Parent Communication Folder
- Facebook page
- Twitter handle
- Instagram
- City Alerts – sign up on the city website

### **VISITORS**

---

**VISITOR POLICY:** Visitors must enter through the front doors at the main entrance of the school. The front doors will be locked and visitors will be required to use an outside intercom button and state their name and the purpose of their visit prior to gaining entry into the school.

Due to safety and COVID protocols, visitors will remain in the office complex and will not travel the building.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

---

In order to be considered for volunteering, a Volunteer Application must be signed and submitted. You will be assigned to a teacher who will make a schedule for you. Volunteers must not have been convicted of any crimes, especially against minors, and must pass a background check.

## **HOMEWORK REGULATIONS**

---

### **Fredericksburg City Public Schools**

FCPS believes that homework helps to effectively communicate with families about what their children are learning and what is happening in the classrooms. Parents are encouraged to support and to show an interest in their child's work.

Before leaving school, a student needs to make sure he/she understands what is expected for homework and have a system to record daily assignments. The student is responsible to take home all necessary materials in order to successfully complete the work and turn it in on time.

Please contact your child's teacher for support with homework.

## **GRADING REPORTING GRADES/HONOR ROLL**

---

The school year is divided into four nine-week grading periods. All students are issued interim progress reports mid-way through each nine-week grading period. Grades reported at this time serve as formal communication of a student's progress. Parents are asked to sign the interim report and return it to school. A copy will then be provided for parents to keep. Report cards are issued after the close of each nine-week grading period. Report cards become an official part of a student's school record. Parents

are asked to sign the report card envelope, keep the report card and return the signed envelope. Parents are also encouraged to communicate with their child's teachers relative to academic progress whenever the need arises. Conferences may be arranged by checking the appropriate box on the report card envelope with a note to the teacher, contacting the student's teacher(s) directly and/or calling the guidance office.

Grading periods are as follows:

October 12	End of Q1
December 17	End of Q2
March 10	End of Q3
May 26	End of Q4

Interim Reports and Report Cards will be distributed as follows:

<u>Interims</u>	<u>Report Cards</u>
September 13	October 22
November 17	January 11
February 4	March 29
April 22	June 3

## **HONOR ROLL**

---

Students who earn A's in all course subjects will be recognized for the All A Principal's Honor Roll. Students who earn A's and B's or all B's in all course subjects will be recognized for earning the A/B Honor Roll.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

---

Parent/teacher conferences are an important aspect for a child's success during his/her academic career. Conferences are designed to discuss a student's academic and social progress at school.

A conference may be scheduled by either a parent/guardian or teacher. We ask that you contact the teacher by phone or written note to set a time and date for the

conference. We do want to meet with you and will make every arrangement to meet your schedule. Conferences can be in-person or virtually. Let us know what works best for your family.

Teachers may not be available to conference during the school day unless it has been pre-arranged. For your convenience, we have scheduled several conference sessions throughout the school year.

## **DRESS CODE**

---

Student dress codes should not be a barrier to students accessing their education. This gender-neutral dress code is intended to support equitable access to education while maintaining a safe learning environment for all students and staff.

Our core values are:

- Reinforcement of marginalization or oppression will not be tolerated in our schools.
- All students and staff are responsible for managing their clothing and will be allowed to represent their identity without facing discrimination based on culture, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, and socio-economic status.
- All students should be able to come to school comfortably dressed.
- Students should not fear harassment, body shaming, or unnecessary discipline based on their dress.
- Clothing that displays offensive images or language including hate speech, profanity and pornography is strictly prohibited.
- Clothing that displays images or language associated with alcohol, drugs, or violence is strictly prohibited.

Students and parents or guardians are responsible for students' dress. Our schools are responsible for ensuring that student dress does not impact student safety and that it does not impact the school environment in a negative manner such as creating a hostile atmosphere.

### **DRESS CODE**

Basic Principle – Student clothing must be worn in a way such that nipples, buttocks, and genitals are covered by opaque material.

Footwear: Activity-specific requirements are allowed (for example: toe covered footwear may be required for safety in classes such as chemistry and culinary arts)

### **STUDENTS CANNOT WEAR**

- a. Images or language depicting any illegal item or activity. This includes alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- b. Images or language depicting violence
- c. Images or language that include hate speech, profanity, and pornography
- d. Images or language that creates a hostile environment for marginalized groups (for example: confederate flags, swastikas, and other hate symbols)
- e. Images or language depicting gang affiliation
- f. Head or facial coverings that prevent the student from being identifiable with the exception of items worn for religious or medical reasons
- g. Footwear that damages the flooring, such as cleats
- h. Swimsuits

**TATTOOS AND BODY MARKINGS THAT DO NOT MEET THE ABOVE STANDARDS MUST BE COVERED AT ALL TIMES.**

## DRESS CODE ENFORCEMENT

- School administration is responsible for ensuring that all staff and students understand the guidelines in this policy.
- Students should be clearly informed of the dress code in manners other than solely outlining it in the student handbook.
- Dress code enforcement should be consistent.
- Enforcement of the dress code must be handled with sensitivity and in a manner that is as discrete as reasonably possible so that it does not result in “shaming.” “Shaming” includes but is not limited to measuring skirt length and directing a student to correct a violation during instructional time.
- Staff should use reasonable efforts to avoid enforcing the dress code in front of other students.
- Students will only be removed from classrooms, hallways, or other spaces for a dress code violation if the violation causes a substantial disruption to the learning environment or if it causes a safety issue. Images or language that depicts hate speech or that create a hostile environment for marginalized groups will require immediate removal from class.
- Staff should not discipline or address a student for wearing dress code appropriate attire that does not conform to the staff member’s perception of gender-based stereotypes.
- No student should be disproportionately affected by dress code enforcement based on body maturity, body size, gender, or race.

### **Cross References:**

*JFC Student Conduct*  
*JFCE-R Gang Activity or Association*  
*JFCA Teacher Removal of Students from Class*  
*JFCA-E Student Removal Form*

### **Legal References**

*22.1-279.6 Section I. Any School Board may include in its Code of Student Conduct a dress or grooming code. Any dress or grooming code included in a School Board’s Code of Student Conduct or otherwise adopted by a School Board shall (i) permit any student to wear any religiously and ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle, including hijabs, yarmulkes, headwraps, braids, locs, and cornrows; (ii) maintain gender neutrality by subjecting any student to the same set of rules and standards regardless of gender; (iii) not have a disparate impact on students of a particular gender, (iv) be clear, specific, and objective in defining terms, if used; (v) prohibit any School Board employee from enforcing the dress or grooming code by direct physical contact with a student or a student’s attire; and (vi) prohibit any School Board employee from requiring a student to undress in front of any other individual, including the enforcing School Board employee, to comply with the dress or grooming code.*

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

---

**Student Attendance Policy -** Student attendance is a cooperative effort, and the School Board involves parents and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for such child’s regular and punctual attendance at school as required under provisions of the law.

Parents of students who are absent inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than upon the student’s return to school. Absences are excused for the following reasons: Funeral, Illness (including mental health and substance abuse illness), Injury, Legal obligations, Medical procedures, Religious observances, Military obligation.

The superintendent, by regulation, establishes procedures for appropriate interventions when a student engages in a pattern of absences for less than a full day,

the explanation of which, if it were a full-day absence, would not be an excused absence.

The superintendent's regulations include procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations ensure that a student is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which the student missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner.

Students shall attend school for a full day unless excused by the principal or principal's designee.

High school students may spend a maximum of 16 school days each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in Partnership programs are not counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The superintendent's regulations include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a High School to Work Partnership.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the division superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

FCPS School Board File: JED

### **Compulsory Attendance Procedures -**

Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information has been received by school personnel that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance

officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent by phone, email or other electronic means to obtain an explanation. School staff records the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused". Early intervention with the student and parent or parents takes place for repeated unexcused absences.

### **A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support**

If (1) a pupil fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year, and (2) there is no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the absence; and (3) reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the absences have failed, then the principal or principal's designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of other communication devices to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or principal's designee, the pupil, and the pupil's parent shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the pupil's nonattendance. Such a plan shall include documentation of the reasons for the pupil's nonattendance.

### **B. Upon Additional Absences Without Parental Awareness and Support**

If the pupil is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent and school personnel have received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the school principal or principal's designee shall schedule a conference with the pupil, the pupil's parent and school personnel. Such conferences may include the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. The conference shall be held no later than 10



school days after the tenth absence of the pupil, regardless of whether his parent approves of the conference. The conference team shall monitor the pupil's attendance and may meet again as necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In circumstances in which the parent is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the pupil is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the pupil and pupil's parent within 10 school days and may (i) file a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations district court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228 or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent pursuant to Va. Code § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this policy. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va. Code § 20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known addresses of the parents.

**Attendance Reporting** - Student attendance is monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At the end of each school year, each public school principal reports to the superintendent the number of pupils by grade level for whom a conference was scheduled pursuant to Part II (B) above. The superintendent compiles this information and provides it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Dismissal Precautions** - Principals do not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the student's parent/guardian to assume responsibility for the pupil. Students are released only on request and authorization of parent or guardian. The superintendent

establishes procedures for release of pupils who are not residing with or under the supervision of a parent/guardian. The burden of proof on the authority of the person to receive the student is on the requesting party. A formal check-out system is maintained in each school.

*Adopted: September 14, 1992 Amended: August 7, 1995 Amended: November 4, 1996 Amended: August 3, 1998 Amended: August 2, 1999 Amended: August 6, 2001 Amended: August 2, 2004 Amended: August 3, 2009 Amended: August 2, 2010 Amended: August 5, 2013 Amended: August 7, 2017 Amended: August 6, 2018*

## **STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/ DISMISSALS**

---

**Attendance** - School attendance is critical for academic achievement and the preparation of students for the world of work and personal success. State law requires each parent or guardian whose child is within the compulsory attendance age be responsible for the child's regular and punctual attendance at school. For students age 18 or over, the requirements will apply to the student directly. Every teacher shall keep an accurate, daily class record of attendance of all assigned students during face-to-face learning. During distance learning, student attendance is tracked by meaningful interactions with a teacher. The Superintendent shall provide a copy of the compulsory school attendance law and this attendance policy within the first calendar month of each school year.

### **A. Expectations**

A student is expected to participate in a full instructional day in accordance with the school calendar. The length of the instructional day is impacted by school and instructional delivery model. Student athletes must comply with the VHSL attendance requirements for eligibility.

James Monroe High School students in grades 9-11 shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work study program or college program (Gladys P. Todd Academy). Seniors may request administrative approval for a shortened schedule based on their progress towards graduation requirements. The high school principal must approve exceptions to a full day schedule on an individual basis. Any student who is approved to participate in a school-sponsored field trip or other activity shall be counted as present.

### **B. Absences**

There are times when a student is unable to attend school. Each parent or legal guardian shall inform the school each time his or her child is absent for all or part of any day. Schools will make a reasonable effort to notify a parent or legal guardian of each student's absence. Parents can access attendance records through the student information system for the school.

Absences may be considered excused require receipt of a note from the parent or guardian.

### **C. Distance/Hybrid Learning**

During times that FCPS offers distance and/or hybrid learning, students may be asked to provide proof of daily attendance in different ways. Such examples include:

- Participation in an approved online instructional platform
- Emailing the homeroom teacher using the school provided email address
- Messaging the teacher using an approved online platform
- Checking in on a virtual platform

A student who is participating in hybrid learning may be considered present if the student receives face-to-face instruction as scheduled. A student participating in hybrid

learning who does not attend face-to-face as scheduled will be marked absent unless the parent/guardian provides a note indicating the child participated in distance learning that day. In these cases, the absence code will be changed from "absent" to "distance learning present."

### **ATTENDANCE CODES**

DLP = Distance Learning Present  
DLA = Distance Learning Absent  
Blank = Present  
A = Absent  
AE = Absence Excused  
AU = Absence Unexcused  
AEX = Absence, Admin Excused  
NEX = Nurse Sent Home  
UAT = Truancy  
TE = Tardy Excused  
TU = Tardy Unexcused  
FT = Field Trip  
ISS = In-School Suspension  
OSS = Out-of-School Suspension  
HB = Homebound  
AET = Testing  
T30 = Tardy 30  
EPU = Early Pick-Up  
DSI = Display Symptoms of Illness  
QUR = Self or Mandatory Quarantined  
INF = Confirmed Positive  
EO = Early Dismissal

### **D. Excessive Absences**

Excessive absences may lead to actions that could include a conference with the parent or guardian, participation in an Attendance Recovery Program, or referral to the court system.

Once a student fails to report for a total of 5 days for the year and no excuse has been received from home, the principal or his designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent or guardian, either in person, or through telephone conversation to obtain an explanation of the absences and try to develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance. (A 5-absence letter may be sent after all reasonable

efforts have been attempted.) Upon the sixth unexcused absence, the principal or his designee shall schedule a conference, which must take place no later than fifteen days after the sixth absence, to resolve the issue. Following the seventh unexcused absence, the principal or his designee shall enforce the compulsory rules as noted in Policy JED. A 7-absence letter should also be sent. In addition to the policy, if a student is under 18 years of age and has more than 10 unexcused absences on consecutive days, the principal may notify the court, which may take action to suspend the student's driver's license.

**K-5 (Hugh Mercer Elementary and Lafayette Elementary)** – Students with twenty-five (25) absences (excused or unexcused) may be retained. This decision may be appealed as described in Section G.

**Walker-Grant Middle School** – Students with sixteen (16) absences (excused or unexcused) may be retained. This decision may be appealed as described in Section G. Students may be directed to make up missed days by attending a Attendance Recovery Program, participating in Summer School for the entire session, or completing an approved online/correspondence course with commensurate hours.

**James Monroe High School and any high school credit course in which a Walker-Grant student participates** - Any student whose absences exceed 8 days in a course may not receive credit for the course unless the student completes an Attendance Recovery Program as prescribed by the principal or designee. The principal may waive this requirement upon consideration of extenuating circumstances. This consequence complies with the state Standards for Accrediting Public Schools that define the standard for awarding course credit for graduation. A student may be an "attendance failure" until the student makes up the absences as described in Section F.

## **E. Make-up Work**

It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the teacher on the day he or she returns to class to schedule the make-up of missed work. All missed work that is not made up within the specified time limit will receive a grade of no less than 50. The principal or designee may consider extenuating circumstances in extending the time limit.

**K-5 (Hugh Mercer Elementary and Lafayette Elementary)** students will be permitted to make up work. The parent/guardian must request assignments through the teacher. The parent/guardian must request assignments through the school counseling office.

**Walker-Grant Middle School** students will be permitted to make up work. In the event that a student will be absent from school (for two or more days), work may be requested from the counseling department.

**James Monroe High School** students will be permitted to make up work missed for any absence. A student who is absent without being excused in excess of 8 class periods must make up work as described in Section F. Work may be requested from the counseling department.

## **F. Release of Students**

Principals shall not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the parent or legal guardian. The burden of proof that the release is authorized is on the person receiving the student.

Students with their own transportation shall be released only on the written request and authorization of the parent or legal guardian. All schools will maintain a formal checkout system to ensure this requirement is met.

## **G. Attendance Recovery Program**

Students who are excessively absent from school may be required to participate in an Attendance Recovery Program as prescribed by the principal or designee. The principal may waive this requirement upon consideration of extenuating circumstances.

## H. Appeals

Parents may appeal, in writing, an attendance failure within ten school days. The Principal, or designee, will present the written appeal to the Attendance Committee. The Attendance Committee will include a school administrator, a teacher from the school, and a school counselor. Parents will be notified, in writing, of the decision of the Attendance Committee within five school days. The decision of the Committee may be appealed to the Superintendent or their designee.

*Issued: September 14, 1992*

*Amended: March 2008, June 7, 2010, July 2011, May 2012, August 2012, October 2017, October 2020*

## TRUANCY

---

Truancy is an intentional absence from school and a violation of the Virginia compulsory attendance law. Any student guilty of truancy (skipping classes or staying out of school without permission) is subject to disciplinary action. Any student found to be consistently absent may be referred to the school truancy officer and/or social worker and the courts for violation of school attendance laws. Virginia State law requires schools to refer students to the court system after seven unexcused absences. (See Annual Notices sent home)

## PROCEDURES FOR EXCESSIVE TARDINESS

---

The academic day will begin at 8:30 AM. and each student should be in class and

ready to begin work. If a student is late to school, the student must report to the main office and receive a tardy pass to be admitted into the classroom. The attendance secretary will keep records of student absences/tardies throughout the school year. Tardiness to school will be considered excused for the same reasons listed for absences in Section B of the School Board Policy JED-R.

**EARLY RELEASE FROM SCHOOL** The academic day ends at 3:15 p.m. A student who is picked up early may miss assignments and may not receive important information. **If a student needs to be dismissed early from school for a doctor/dental appointment, etc., a note should be brought to the office before school requesting dismissal.** Included in this note should be the student's name, date, time, reason for dismissal, and the parent's signature. Parents need to come to the office to sign out students. Your child will be called to the office for dismissal when you arrive at school to pick them up. No child may be released during hours to anyone who is not the legal guardian or parent of the child with whom the child is living, and/or whose name does not appear on the student information sheet, without written consent of the legal guardian. I.D. will be requested. Students who are dismissed early for any reasons other than those listed for absences in Section B of the School Board Policy JED may be credited with an unexcused early dismissal.

Excessive tardies and early dismissals that are due to a student illness will require a doctor's note if they exceed **five tardies or early dismissals per nine-week period.** Following the fifth documented illness, a doctor's note is required or the tardy is considered unexcused.

**PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES** All parents who make plans to take their children from school for a period of time should contact the school principal before making

arrangements for an absence. Student performance in class and current attendance record will be considered in reaching a decision.

Attendance is an important requisite for successful school work. Any pupil absent from school without the knowledge of his parent or guardian is considered truant. Every teacher should discuss with his/her class the importance of good school attendance. Any student leaving early must have a parent note and prior to the early dismissal, the student must be signed out in the office.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR/CONDUCT**

### **Code of Conduct Statement**

---

**CODE OF CONDUCT** - A copy of the Fredericksburg City Public Schools' Code of Student Conduct is a separate document, which is issued to all students. It contains specific information concerning expectations for students. This information will be reviewed during the opening weeks of school each year. Parents and students are asked to read this information together and sign the signature page provided.

Students are expected to exhibit appropriate school behavior and to practice these basic responsibilities each day:

Attend school, arrive on time, and be prepared with needed materials.

- Work to his/her potential and complete ALL assignments including homework.
- Follow school and class rules and regulations.
- Refrain from unnecessary talking and disruptive behavior at school and on the buses.
- Show respect for self, other students, teachers, administrators, and other adults in the building.

## **(Standards of Conduct) - RULES AND CONSEQUENCES**

Fredericksburg City Public Schools believes that the individual behavior of one student should not disrupt the entire learning environment. Each year, the FCPS community receives the division code of conduct that details the potential areas of discipline that will be a focus for school administrators for the upcoming year. The Code of Conduct also includes a discipline matrix that serves as a guide for the frequency of disciplinary infractions throughout the school year. School administrators will thoroughly investigate each discipline infraction and determine consequences based on the severity of the infraction, previous disciplinary incidents, etc. Additional information regarding student discipline can be found in Policy JFC-Student Conduct.

If a student is unable to monitor his/her own behavior and is in non-compliance with school rules, he/she will be addressed by a teacher or an administrator. Teachers will make every effort to communicate and work with parents/guardians to assist in correcting a student's negative behavior. When a student fails to respond to teacher efforts to address and correct behavior, he/she may be referred to a school administrator for disciplinary action.

Possible disciplinary actions may be as follows:

- **Warning and Counseling** This is used where appropriate to assist a student in understanding that his/her conduct interfered with the educational process, threatens the rights of others, or is contrary to school policy and needs to be corrected.
- **Kids' Zone** A "time-out" location for administrator-directed time-out.
- **Detention** Administrators may assign a student detention after

school or during lunch for breaking a school or classroom rule. Students may take the activity bus home unless they have lost that privilege.

- **In-School Suspension** In-School Suspension may be given to students who have received a consequence for breaking a school or classroom rule by administration. During ISS time, the student is assigned to a classroom for the day and given class work and/or other assignments to do under the direction of a staff member who serves as the ISS coordinator. Students are required to complete all assignments and to comply with all rules while serving an ISS consequence. Failure to complete their assignments may result in additional consequences. Failure to observe ISS rules will result in suspension out of school. On the day which ISS is assigned a student may not participate in any after school activities at Hugh Mercer Elementary School or Lafayette Elementary School. The student will still be required to attend remediation if it has been assigned for the same day. Students with individualized education plans will be afforded their accommodations to complete assignments whenever possible while in ISS.
- **Out-of-School Suspension** A student may be assigned out-of-school suspension (OSS) for up to ten (10) days at a time for violation of a school or classroom rule. A student may not go to any events sponsored by any FCPS during this suspension. Also, the student may not be on FCPS grounds

during this time. If a student is on school grounds during a time in which they are assigned OSS, they may be charged with trespassing.

- **Disciplinary Hearing** A student who commits a serious violation of the Code of Student Conduct or who accumulates an excessive number of referrals may be suspended by the building administration. A disciplinary hearing may then be called. Disciplinary hearings are serious meetings where the infractions are discussed and consideration is given to a student's actual consequence and/or placement regarding what might be the best learning environment for him/her.

Students are specifically advised that the following infractions will not be tolerated and may result in detention, ISS or OSS and/or a recommendation for expulsion:

- Fighting; instigating a fight; pushing; shoving; wrestling; horseplay; play fighting; and other types of aggressive or potentially dangerous behavior
- Bullying by exhibiting repeated negative behavior targeting a specific victim. Bullying behavior may include, but is not limited to, threats, verbal and written abuse, physical abuse, or harassment in the form of ethnic or gender slurs.
- Causing or attempting to damage school or personal property
- Conduct that endangers self or others
- Cursing/vulgar language and/or verbally abusing any person
- Disobedience or defiance of any staff members
- Disruption of the school's program or activities

- Possession of any weapon at school, on a school bus or at a school bus stop
- Dishonesty, forgery, and theft
- Selling or trading items without school permission. All items being sold will be confiscated until claimed by a parent
- Consuming food/beverages outside of the cafeteria (unless given specific permission by an adult)
- Physical display of affection
- Verbal or written threats made directly or indirectly to a person or against the school

In addition, the following are considered either dangerous or illegal to possess in FCPS and will be confiscated: spiked rings, any type of gun (real, look alike, or toy), pistol, shot gun, laser, revolver, rifle, bb gun, air rifle, dirk, knife, razor, slingshot, spring sticks, blackjacks, brass knuckles, flailing instruments, i.e. nun chucks, chains, any disc of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blade, and which is designed to be thrown known as a throwing star or oriental dart, fire crackers or fireworks, poppers, "stink" bombs, etc. Failure to comply with these restrictions may result in one of the disciplinary actions listed above.

**Students may be restricted from school-wide activities upon:**

- Excessive trips to Kids' Zone in one quarter
- Excessive ISS or any OSS during that quarter.

## **BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY**

---

The deliberate and persistent intention to irritate, annoy, embarrass, bully, or intimidate another person by any means is considered harassment. Harassment is anything from excessive teasing to

physically pushing someone around and trying to frighten him/her. Harassment, including sexual harassment, is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Harassment complaints will be handled sternly, quickly and confidentially. Any concern about harassment should be reported to the teacher, guidance counselor, and/or an administrator as soon as possible. For reference purposes, all reported incidents of bullying and harassment are documented.

October is recognized as National Bullying Prevention Month, and there will be an increased focus on standing against all forms of bullying with opportunities to stand for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. In addition to the classroom teachers, counselors, and administrators will take an active role in these conflict resolution processes.

## **BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROCEDURES**

---

A grab and go breakfast is made available for all students with the exception of delayed openings. Students will eat breakfast in the classrooms. Lunch is served daily including early dismissal days. Seating locations are assigned by class in each grade. Lunch may be eaten in the cafeteria or in classrooms supporting distancing (a rotating schedule of eating in the cafeteria and in the classroom is assigned to each teacher). All lunch orders will be processed through the classroom ordering system.

### **LUNCH/BREAKFAST PROCEDURES -**

Breakfast is available to all students each morning with the exception of delayed openings. Lunch is served each day including early dismissal days. Seating locations are assigned by class in each grade. Students are expected to behave and follow directions.

Hugh Mercer and Lafayette Elementary School will continue participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) which makes all students eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch. There is no paperwork required for students to receive these services for the 2021-2022 school year. Any student will simply go the serving line to receive a free nutritious meal. Smart Snacks may be offered periodically at an additional charge.

**PARTIES** – According to state guidelines, no parties, where food is served in the classroom, may occur between the hours of 7:00 AM and 1:00 PM. School food service employees will work with classroom teachers and accommodate party needs if ample time is given to plan for the ordering of food. Please contact Sandra Saucedo, cafeteria manager at Hugh Mercer Elementary School, and Erika Camacho, cafeteria manager at Lafayette Elementary School.

## **FOOD FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES**

---

No food deliveries for students from outside sources are permitted from 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Students may have a bag lunch from home, but **no commercial fast food sources are permitted during breakfast and lunch serving times.** No soft drink bottles or cans are allowed in the cafeteria

Lunchtime should be a happy, relaxed, and pleasant period of the day. The lunch period was designed to afford students time to eat and enjoy their lunch. In order for everyone to enjoy their lunch, proper table manners must be used at all times.

The following list of cafeteria rules is provided to help make lunch a pleasant period of the day:

1. Enter the cafeteria in an orderly manner.

2. Walk at all times and please avoid running, pushing, and/or horseplay.
3. Maintain an orderly and single file lunch line with no “cutting”.
4. Keep your lunch area clean for others. No throwing trash, food, or other items.
5. Students are responsible for taking back their own trays and trash to the provided area.
6. Students should not leave the cafeteria for any reason, unless they have a pass/permission.
7. Please sit in your seat with both feet on the floor under the table.
8. Talk in quiet voices.
9. No sharing food.
10. Students are expected to remain seated (except for emptying their trays) until dismissed.
11. At the end of the lunch period, students should leave the cafeteria in an orderly manner.
12. Students should not leave the cafeteria with food items.
13. No glass bottles/containers allowed.

## **SNACKS/NUTRITION**

---

Parents are requested to provide a nutritional snack for their child each day.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

---

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

It is a **privilege** to be transported to and from school in a school-owned vehicle. Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct and comply with safety directions that may be given by the school bus driver. If a student is removed from a bus for disciplinary concerns, **it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport the child to and from school.**



### **Required behavior while waiting for a bus**

- Students will wait on the sidewalk or designated area for their buses to arrive.
- Students will not engage in any activity (horseplay, running, fighting, using illegal substances) that is prohibited during the regular school day.
- Students will not run alongside a moving bus. The students will wait until the bus has made a complete stop before walking to the door for loading.

### **Required behavior while boarding the bus**

Students will board the bus in an orderly manner. Students will not rush the entrance door, push, or shove other students while loading the bus.

- Once aboard the bus, students will proceed quickly to an available seat.
- The bus will not depart from the loading area until all students are seated.

### **Required behavior while riding a school bus**

- Adhere to any CDC/health/safety guidelines for public transportation.
- At no time, while the bus is in motion, will a student extend any part of their body outside the bus window.
- Aisles must be kept clear of feet, arms, book bags, and other objects that can crowd passengers loading or unloading the bus or while a bus is in motion.
- Once seated on the bus, a student **may not:**
  - Change seats
  - Throw objects
  - Eat or drink

- Smoke or use any incendiary device
- Open the emergency door unless directed by the bus driver to do otherwise
- Students **will** be required to:
  - Provide their name to the driver when requested
  - Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop
  - Speak in moderate voices and keep the noise level to a minimum
  - Respect the bus driver and follow any directions that may be given

The following procedures will be considered in the event of bus discipline referrals:

- A conference is held with the student and communication is made with the student's parent/guardian.
- A conference is held with the student, the parent/guardian will be contacted, and the student will be assigned disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by administration.
- A conference is held with the student, the parent/guardian will be contacted, and the student will be suspended of bus privileges.
- A conference is held with the student, the parent/guardian will be contacted, and the student will be removed from the bus for the remainder of the school year.

All students must board the bus at the stop closest to their home. Students must then ride the bus to the stop which they have been assigned. A student may obtain permission to ride another bus by providing a note from a parent/guardian which includes the name of the child, the date of bus change, the bus stop address, parent/guardian, and a phone number to contact the parent/guardian. If this is a permanent change you must indicate

this. You may email (use the transportation link on your student's school website to email office personnel) or fax this change to your student's school office:

HMES fax (540) 372-6753  
LES fax (540) 310-0671

If you fax or email the change, it is **REQUIRED** that you call the school office to confirm your request was received. **No changes will be accepted via the telephone.**

## **CAR RIDER/ DAYCARE VAN RIDERS**

---

Car riders, walkers, and daycare van riders must enter the building through the gym doors. The gym doors are located at the loop to the right of the main doors. Students should be driven to the loop and let off in front of the gym doors. Students should not walk down the sidewalk without adult supervision. Car riders will be allowed to enter school at 8:00 AM. Students **will not** be permitted to enter the building prior to this due to supervision and safety concerns. A bell will ring at 8:00 A.M. to release all students to their respective homeroom classes. **Students who are driven to school are not allowed to walk across the parking lot unless accompanied to the gym doors by an adult.**

Car riders will be dismissed after announcements in the afternoon by the sound of a bell at 3:15 P.M. Parents/guardians who pick up their students from school will be required to provide I.D. Parents/guardians are not allowed to pick up their students in the parking lot. Students must be signed out in the main office or the parent/guardian **must** line up in the car rider loop. **Please do not park in the yellow areas!** Please wait in your vehicle and an adult will escort your child to your car. This process assists school personnel in trying to ensure safety

for all students. **Please refrain from coming in daily before car riders are dismissed to pick up your child to avoid sitting in the car rider line. Excessive early dismissals will be treated the same as excessive tardies to school.**

It is important that you notify the school office if your child's afternoon procedure is going to change. Please submit a transportation change by using your student's website, by sending a note with your child or via fax. The note or fax must include the name of the student, the change, the dates affected, parent/guardian signature, and telephone number where the parent/guardian can be reached. If you fax or email the change, it is **REQUIRED** that you call the school office to confirm your request was received. **No changes will be accepted via the telephone. All changes must be made by 2:30 PM.**

## **WALKERS (TO AND FROM SCHOOL)**

---

Parents who allow their children to walk to and/or from school must send a note to school granting the child permission. The note must include the student's name, dates, parent/guardian signature, and a number for contact. Walkers will be dismissed with car riders and should leave the school grounds promptly upon dismissal. They will be expected to responsibly walk to their approved destination.

## **CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS**

---

Classroom celebrations will be scheduled after all lunch waves have been completed (after 1:00 P.M.). Healthy snacks are encouraged. Classroom celebrations are a special time for our students and siblings are not allowed to attend classroom celebrations. We have other events throughout the year that will include the entire family.

## CLINIC

---

A full-time nurse is available to provide health screening and first aid for school related illness and injury. In emergencies, students too sick to remain in class or needing temporary first aid may be sent to the clinic with a pass from the supervising teacher. Students must have a pass from a teacher to report to the clinic. Students will not be kept in the clinic unless serious illness is detected by the nurse. In such cases, parents will be contacted immediately. **All medications must be kept in the clinic and must be administered by the school nurse. Students may not have any medications in their possession or bring them to school. Epi pens may be permitted for student-self-carry. Contact the nurse before sending either to school** Please inquire in the clinic at the beginning of the year for guidance on this subject. Dental services are available in some cases. You may contact your child's school for more details.

## PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

---

FCPS personnel may give prescription medication to students only pursuant to the written order of a physician or nurse practitioner and with written permission from the student's parent or guardian. Such medicine must be in the original container and delivered to the principal, school nurse, or school division designee by the parent/guardian of the student. Students that need an EpiPen and/or inhalers for asthma are allowed to possess these prescriptions with a note from the doctor. A copy must be given to the school nurse.

## NONPRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

---

FCPS personnel may give nonprescription medication to students only with the written permission of the parent or guardian. Such permission shall include the name of the medication, the required dosage of the medication, and the time medicine is to be given. Such medicine must be in the original container and delivered to the principal, school nurse, or school division designee by the parent/guardian of the student. (See Annual Notices for Policy Update File: JHCD)

If a student is found at school with medicine, he/she must be sent to the nurse's clinic immediately. The student's parents will be contacted.

## DRUG/ALCOHOL USE

---

Students shall not use, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages while going to and from school, while on school premises or at any school-sponsored function. School personnel are required to report immediately to the administration any suspected violation. Offenders will be suspended out of school pending a disciplinary hearing and may also be subject to arrest. In addition, offenders will be required to participate in a substance abuse and awareness program. By law, all drug related cases must be referred to the police immediately. Some violations may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

## COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

---

Computers are an important part of the education of each student. All students are required to have a signed "Acceptable Use Form" on file with the school before using school computers. Hugh Mercer and

Lafayette Elementary Schools participate in a one-to-one laptop program. Student participation in this program is a privilege. Students are responsible for the device assigned to them and if the device is damaged due to a deliberate act or neglect, the student will be charged the actual cost of the repairs. For more information on this agreement, please see the Fredericksburg City School's Department of Technology website, <http://www.cityschools.com/technology>.

The following guidelines apply to all computer workstations and labs:

- Students will use computers and access information only with permission and under the direction of a teacher or other school employee.
- Students will not make any changes to computer programs or applications unless directed to do so by a teacher or other school employee.
- Students will only use consumable supplies as approved by school personnel.
- Students will only use computer software, files, or information which has been authorized in a prescribed and legal manner.
- Students are responsible for the care and proper use of equipment. No food or drink may be consumed near computer equipment.
- Students must have an Acceptable Use Agreement signed by both the student and parent before they may use the computer.
- Permission to use computer equipment may be denied for violation of the above rules and other infractions of the Code of Student Conduct.

## **COUNSELING OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES**

---

FCPS provides a comprehensive school counseling program in each of our schools. FCPS counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other school and community members to foster, to promote, and to improve student success and achievement. They conduct individual and small group counseling and developmental group guidance sessions for students in the areas of academic development, career development, and personal/social development. As personal/social counselors, they assist students to develop an understanding of themselves and the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflict, and to define individual goals reflecting their interests, abilities, and aptitudes.

## **ELECTRONICS POLICY – CELL PHONE**

---

Students may not use their cell phones during class times without the permission of their teacher(s). Permission will only be granted in the case of an emergency or if it is for instructional purposes. Students will not be dismissed from class to accept telephone calls unless there is an emergency. Cell phones will continue to be permitted on school grounds but must be turned off and put away. If a phone rings or is heard during school and/or a staff member sees the phone, it will be taken from the student and efforts will be made to contact the parent, if needed. If a student is in violation of the cell phone policy, a staff member may elect to return the phone only to the parent/guardian. This is especially true for repeat offenders. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices.

## FIELD TRIPS

---

Field trips enhance the classroom curriculum and are an extension of the activities being studied. They are worthwhile and beneficial to a child's academic program. Often, fees must be paid in advance. If your child will not be attending the field trip, you must notify the teacher at least 3 days in advance to receive a refund. (No refunds will be made after this time.) If your child is ill on the day of the field trip and a charter bus was secured for the trip, that portion of the fee will not be refunded.

If bag lunches from the school cafeteria are to accompany students on a field trip, it will consist of a menu choice.

Students are expected to follow all school rules and will not be allowed to attend a field trip if they have displayed consistent, unacceptable behavior in school.

Students will be transported to and from field trips by school transportation (school or charter bus).

**Parents who are not chaperoning** a field trip **cannot meet the bus at the field trip site** and join the class group.

**FIELD TRIP CHAPERONES:** A limited number of chaperones per classroom are chosen on a first-come, first-served basis to attend a given field trip. Chaperones should not expect to attend more than one field trip per classroom per school year as teachers use a rotating system to include as many parents who wish to be considered as possible.

### **Guidelines for Chaperones:**

- Arrive at school 15 minutes prior to the scheduled field trip departure time.
- Usual visitor sign-in procedures apply (present photo ID and sign-in with the hall monitor or receptionist).

- Children, relatives, or friends not already approved **MAY NOT** attend the field trip.
- As a field trip chaperone, your job is to supervise a group of students, not just your own child. Remain in your designated group only and follow the guidelines given to you. Notify the teacher of any behavior concerns.
- Wear appropriate clothes as outlined in this handbook. Your outfit should be appropriate to the field trip destination (i.e. sneakers for the Pumpkin Patch, nice pants for the theatre, etc.)
- The field trip is an extension of the school day, so guidelines apply (no smoking, no junk food, no purchasing of alcoholic beverages, no purchasing souvenirs for any child including your own, no cell phone use).
- Students may not be transported by private car to or from a field trip.
- Everyone must return to school after the field trip. If you are taking your own child home with you, you must sign him/her out in the office at the end of the field trip. Taking your child out of school early after a field trip is considered an unexcused early dismissal.
- A signed Chaperone Agreement must be on file at school before you will be considered to chaperone a field trip.

## FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS/CRISIS PREVENTION

---

Fire and other emergency evacuation drills are conducted regularly. When a fire alarm is sounded, students are to evacuate the building quickly and in an orderly manner. Students must not talk and should remain focused on their teacher awaiting further instructions. Each room in the school will have a diagram posted showing

the proper evacuation route. The law requires that everyone move at least 50 feet from the building and remain outside until the “all clear” signal has been given. In addition, there will be other drills conducted during the year such as bus evacuations, tornado drills, and lock down drills.

Each teacher also has a crisis manual and there is a viable Threat Assessment Team in place for each school.

## **HALL PASS PROCEDURES**

---

Students will utilize hall passes when they are sent outside of their assigned classroom. The hall pass must be signed by the person issuing the pass and a return signature must be obtained to return to class. This promotes the safety and accountability of all students.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

---

### **LATE OPENINGS (2-hour delayed opening):**

When school opens late due to inclement weather, classes will begin at 10:25 A.M. and dismiss at the usual time (3:15 P.M.).

**SCHOOL CANCELLATION OR EARLY CLOSING:** When it is necessary to cancel school or alter the regular opening/closing times due to inclement weather or an emergency, the following FM radio and TV stations will make an announcement:

TV Channels 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 83

FM Radio 101.5, 93.3, 95.9, 99.3, 104.5, 96.9

AM Radio 1230

The information will also be sent out via our alert system and posted on our website ([www.cityschools.com](http://www.cityschools.com)) and [www.fredericksburg.com](http://www.fredericksburg.com).

To receive notice of weather-related school closings/delayed openings/early closings via text and/or email, **sign up for alerts** at [www.fredericksburgalert.com](http://www.fredericksburgalert.com). For your convenience, a link is also on our website ([www.cityschools.com](http://www.cityschools.com)).

On days when school closes early due to weather conditions, dismissal times will be dependent upon weather conditions and arrival of buses.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

---

Items that are found should be turned in to the main office. Lost and found items are then kept in a central location for visibility purposes. These items may be donated and/or discarded at the end of each nine weeks, so please be sure to check the lost and found periodically for your child’s belongings.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/RECESS**

---

**RECESS:** Students are scheduled for outside recess daily when the temperature is above 32 degrees or the heat index is below 90 degrees. If playground areas are snow-covered, blacktop areas will be used for outside activities. Exceptions to this are when a weather alert has been issued, it is raining, snowing, sleeting, unusually windy, the wind chill (“feels like”) temperature is below 32 degrees, or if the ground is extremely wet. In these instances, indoor recess (physical activity) will take place.

Students should wear appropriate outerwear and shoes for outside activities.

## **MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS POSITION STATEMENT**

---

Fredericksburg City Public Schools recognizes the link between student health

and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting health lifestyles. One aspect of a healthy lifestyle is the area of mental health. Mental health is an integral component of students' overall well-being and it plays a major role in their academic successes. FCPS has school counselors and registered nurses in every school to help support students. Additional supports for students include programs and services related to bullying prevention, drug and alcohol prevention, and self-destructive behavior assessments. Community counseling service resources are also made available to staff and parents to assist students and families with various mental health issues. Students and staff have access to school counselors, nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers throughout the division to help promote positive mental health and well-being. Various resources and programs are available in schools and in the community to provide assistance to individuals requiring mental health support (i.e. groups, referrals to community agencies, referrals to individual counseling, etc.). Individual schools have implemented various bully prevention programs or campaigns. Outside agencies provide in-school (therapeutic day treatment) support to qualifying students at all levels within the school day.

## **NOTIFICATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATING AND 504 ACCOMMODATIONS**

---

### **SCREENING FOR 504 AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

(504 Accommodations & Special Education)

If your child has any sort of learning or physical problem, he/she may qualify for accommodations under a 504 Plan or special education services. Please call to discuss your concerns with the classroom teacher, counselors, and/or administrator at

Hugh Mercer (372-1115) or Lafayette (310-0029).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: The Rights of Individuals with Handicaps Under Federal Law: No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reasons of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. (Before any psychological testing will be done on any student, parental permission will be obtained).

The U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), enforces Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). The provisions of these civil rights laws apply to any programs or activities receiving or benefiting from Federal financial assistance.

Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

## **VISION AND HEARING SCREENING**

---

All kindergartners (in compliance with the Commonwealth of Virginia law) will have their hearing and vision screened within 60 days of their initial enrollment at Hugh Mercer or Lafayette. Screenings will be administered by the school nurse.

First and second graders will be screened at the parent's or teacher's request.

## **GIFTED EDUCATION**

---

If you feel your child may be gifted and in need of gifted education services, please reach out to our counselors for referral

forms. Referral due dates are listed in the school's newsletter.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

---

FCPS provides a comprehensive school counseling program in each of our schools.

FCPS counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other school and community members to foster, to promote, and to improve student success and achievement.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION REGULATIONS**

---

Fredericksburg City Public Schools are committed to ensuring every student be exposed to an environment that promotes lifelong learning, encourages responsible citizenship, endorses productive work habits, and supports an understanding and acceptance of the diversity in our community. We strive to graduate students that are proficient readers and critical thinkers who can demonstrate sound academic and social behaviors in order to be productive citizens in the world of work as well as in the community. Every teacher, administrator, and parent involved in the lives of our students shares in the responsibility to ensure that all students meet these expectations.

Fredericksburg City Public Schools are committed to ensure every student will have the opportunity to work in an environment that is safe, clean, healthful, and supportive. The school system will provide students a quality educational program that is responsive to individual strengths and weaknesses. Parents/guardians will receive timely information about their child's progress.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children come to school each day, on time, and prepared to

learn. Students are responsible for coming to school and class prepared and on time, committed to strive for success, and willing to contribute to the school environment in a positive and responsible manner.

This promotion policy has been developed to compliment the expectations and responsibilities set forth in the Virginia Standards of Learning. This policy:

- ensures promotions are earned and based on academic achievement
- diminishes grade retentions to the greatest extent possible
- ensures students will enter classrooms with the skill and knowledge necessary to do grade level work, and graduates will possess the academic competencies necessary for higher education or the world of work
- establishes a process that supports students and reinforces the need to have them work hard
- recognizes that students learn at different rates and puts into place educational procedures that respond to a differentiated instructional program, and
- defines the parameters of learning for which teachers, administrators, parents, and students are accountable.

Promotion to the next grade at the elementary level is achieved by acquiring the skills necessary to be academically successful. The following general requirements will be utilized in grades K-5 to determine a child's promotion to the next grade level.



## Course Requirements:

**Reading** – students must be reading on grade level and pass a cumulative reading test at the end of the year.

**Math** – Students must take and pass grade level math and pass a cumulative math test at the end of the year.

**Science and Social Studies** – Students must take science and social studies and successfully pass these classes.

## Assessment Requirement:

All students will be administered monthly assessments to assist in determining instructional reading level.

## Attendance Requirement:

In order to be promoted, a student may accumulate no more than twenty-five (25) absences, excused or unexcused.

When there is an appeal regarding promotion, the principal will make the final decision on each student based on the recommendation made by the Promotion Committee. The principal will notify the student's parents of the decision.

## Guidelines for Promotion

- Successful student promotion is the primary focus at HMES and LES. All methods of remediation should be utilized prior to any discussions regarding retention.
- A student may only repeat the same grade level once during his/her academic career in grades K - 5.
- Parents will be notified at the end of the first semester of their child's academic status regarding achievement and success.
- Progress reports (interims) will be sent home every 4.5 weeks.
- Report Cards will be sent home every 9 weeks.

- Parents are required to have their child in school each day. If a child is absent from school, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school of the absence.
- If it is determined by a teacher that a student may not be promoted to the next grade level, the teacher must notify the parents of this recommendation no later than March 15 of the school year.
- In May of each school year, a promotion/retention committee will be developed to study the data on students recommended for retention.

Students who are promoted but still in need of remediation based on their academic performance will be required to attend Summer School.

The principal of HMES or LES shall make the final decision on each student based on the recommendation by the Promotion Committee. The principal will notify the student's parents of the decision.

**Parental Appeal:** If a parent strongly disagrees with the promotion recommendation made by the principal, then the parent must appeal the decision with the Superintendent or designee.

## PROMOTION/RETENTION

### Fredericksburg City Public Schools

---

### Attendance/Promotion/Retention

School attendance is critical for academic achievement and the preparation of students for the world of work and personal success. Student attendance is a joint effort between the school and the home. Students are expected to arrive to school on time and to attend class for the full instructional day. A parent or guardian must inform the school each time his/her child is absent from school, and each school will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or guardian of a student's absence.

The only absences that may be excused include the following: illness, medical/dental appointment, court appearance, death in the family, religious holiday observance, and extenuating circumstances as determined by the administration. A written note from the parent, guardian, or physician must be provided within two days after the absence for it to be excused.

Excessive absences can lead to a conference with parents or a referral to the court system. Students with three absences will have a letter sent to the parents/guardian; students whose absences exceed five days will have a plan developed jointly with the parent to resolve the nonattendance. A conference will be scheduled with the parent and student within 10 days after the sixth absence. Upon the seventh absence, the principal will notify the district truancy designee to take action.

Students with twenty-five (25) absences shall be retained. Students will be permitted to make up work missed during absences, but the parent or guardian must request assignments through the counselors' administrative assistant at Hugh Mercer or Lafayette.

Promotion to the next grade is achieved by acquiring the skills necessary to be academically successful. Students must take and pass reading and mathematics on grade level. Students who are significantly struggling in these academic areas by the end of the second quarter of the school year will be identified by teachers, counselors, and administration. These students will be noted as at-risk for retention and parents/guardians will be notified thereafter. In addition, in order to be promoted, a student may accumulate no more than twenty-five (25) absences, excused or unexcused. If there is an appeal regarding promotion, the principal will make the final decision based on the recommendation made by the Promotion Committee. The

principal will notify the student's parents of the decision.

## SUMMER SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

---

Students who meet two or more of the following criteria will be **required** to attend Summer School:

- Received a grade of *Needs Improvement* (N) on at least two report cards in reading and/or math.
- Reading below grade level.
- Did not pass his/her cumulative reading/math year-end assessments.

Additional students will be recommended by teachers if space permits. Parents will be notified regarding Summer School requirements.

## TEXTBOOKS

---

Fredericksburg City Schools has a free textbook system. However, students are expected to return them in good condition. A student is responsible for those textbooks issued to him/her. This includes the cost of lost and/or damaged textbooks.

## TOBACCO USE

---

### TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The possession or use of tobacco products by students is prohibited in all Fredericksburg City Public Schools. The school staff strictly enforces this regulation. It is also a violation of state law for minors to be in possession of tobacco products.

## TRESPASSING

---

Students who are assigned out of school suspension are not allowed on any school property during the time of the suspension. Students who have been

expelled may not be on any school property. Violations may result in trespassing charges being filed. Students who refuse to leave an after-school event after being told to do so are considered trespassing. Students on school property at night without official authorization may be considered trespassing. Individuals on school property without permission and who fail to respond to school officials appropriately will be considered trespassing. Students who are suspended are not allowed to attend the after-school Boys & Girls Club during this time. School property consists of all properties of the Fredericksburg City Public Schools.

## **TITLE 1 SCHOOL STATEMENT**

---

Hugh Mercer and Lafayette receive funding as a Title I School-Wide Program. These funds are used to provide additional support staff, training for teachers and parents, instructional materials and programs for all students. The Title I school-wide plan may be viewed at any time through our website or by contacting the school for a paper copy.

Through our Title I plan, parents and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback about the school, the programs offered, and the materials used. This feedback is welcomed through an annual survey, quarterly School Committee meetings, and individual meetings with staff.

If you wish to set up a meeting with our administrative team or teaching staff to provide feedback or ask questions, please contact the main office at your child's school.

## **COVID-19**

---

FCPS works cooperatively with state and local health experts to keep student and

staff safe. As guidance for mitigation, distancing, or PPE changes, we will inform families and staff. Reach out to our administration or nurse with any questions you may have.