

West Bainbridge Primary School

915 Zorn Road

Bainbridge, GA 39817

Phone: (229) 248-2821 Fax: (229) 248-2820

<https://wbp.boe.dcboe.com/>



“Home of the Wildcats”

2023-2024

Ortega Ross, Principal
R.C. Tucker, Assistant Principal

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR
CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER**

Georgia Law requires students to attend school unless a mental and/or physical condition justifies being excused. Any parent, guardian, or other person having charge of a child or children who violates the compulsory attendance law is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100), or imprisonment not to exceed thirty days or both. Each day's absence from school in violation of this Act shall constitute a separate offense, O.C.G.A. 20-2-690. The Attendance Worker shall investigate all cases of failure to enroll or habitual absences by children and shall recommend appropriate action in accordance with state laws and State Board policies.

***I HAVE RECEIVED MY COPY OF THE WEST BAINBRIDGE
PRIMARY STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR 2023-2024 SCHOOL
YEAR.**

**PARENT
SIGNATURE**_____

**DATE
RECEIVED**_____

**CHILD'S
NAME**_____

HOMEROOM TEACHER_____

GRADE_____

The staff and administrators at West Bainbridge Primary welcome students and parents to the **2023-2024 school year. We are dedicated to providing the best possible education for our students**, which will allow every student to achieve his or her greatest potential. For this to be possible, it will require effort and cooperation from students, parents and teachers. We will communicate with our West Bainbridge Primary families through monthly newsletters, teacher correspondence, and our website. In addition, progress reports will be sent home in grades K-2. Our staff will make every effort to maintain a positive relationship between home and school. Communication and regular conferences are vital, and we encourage parents to contact us if any problems arise. Our most successful students are those whose parents are informed and active in their school life. With your help, we are confident that this school year will be the best one ever!



August 9, 2023

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed on December 10, 2015 reauthorizes the 50 year old Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. ESSA provisions to help ensure success for students and schools include advancing equity for disadvantaged and high-need students, requiring high academic standards to prepare students to succeed in college and careers, providing vital information to families, educators and communities through annual statewide assessments, as well as other provisions.

Georgia's Single Statewide Accountability System is the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). The CCRPI will serve as a comprehensive report card for all schools in Georgia. The state system will give parents, students, teachers and families a more complete and comprehensive picture of where a school or district is meeting performance expectations or where it is not. CCRPI reports can be found by accessing the Georgia Department of Education website at www.gadoe.org.

Your child attends West Bainbridge Primary, which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. If at any time you wish to receive additional information regarding your child's performance on state assessments beyond that which is provided immediately following the assessment, please contact us.

West Bainbridge Primary continues to make progress in a number of areas due to the hard work of our teachers. The instructional staff is ready for the coming school year and is prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in the Every Students Succeeds Act. The regulations allow you to learn more about the professional qualifications of your child's teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s). We are happy to provide this information to you at any time you may ask. 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.

Please contact Ortega Ross, Principal, at West Bainbridge Primary at 229-248-2821, Mr. Chip Davis, Director of Federal Programs, or Mrs. Jennifer Wilkinson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources at 229-248-2200, for this information.

West Bainbridge Primary's staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to become college and work ready. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled and we are proud to report that all of our staff is professionally qualified. Parents will be notified in a timely manner if their student has been assigned or taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who has not met subject or grade level requirements for professional qualifications.

Parent and Family Engagement play an important part in every child's success. Parent Family Engagement Plans and Parent/Student/School compacts are distributed to every parent at the beginning of the year. Parent resource centers are located at the school and district level and are available to parents to check parent portal or to obtain resources for students. Monthly Parent and Family Engagement Newsletters are provided to inform parents of workshops and events occurring throughout the district.

Parent volunteers and chaperones provide a valuable resource and result in positive experiences for students, families and schools. All volunteers and chaperones must complete an initial training and background check followed by annual online updates. Upon completion of training, a picture id badge will be issued annually before a parent or guardian may serve as a volunteer, chaperone, or accompany students on a school trip. Training must be completed at least two weeks in advance of the time scheduled to volunteer or chaperone. For more information, visit the Decatur County Schools website and access the "For Parents" tab.

West Bainbridge Primary is committed to ensuring that your student is provided a quality education through the ongoing implementation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. "Excellence, Engagement, and Accountability for all" is being achieved by the educational team at this school and throughout the district. Achievement of District AdvancED Accreditation supports our vision for continuous school improvement.

Please feel free to contact Ortega Ross, Principal, at 229-248-2821 should you have additional questions about your child's school or academic progress.

Additional information can also be viewed on the district website, www.dcboe.com, by clicking the Federal Programs link. We look forward to a successful 2022-2023 school year.

Sincerely,

Boyd English

Dr. Boyd English, Superintendent

Ortega Ross, Principal

Decatur County Schools

1417 Dothan Rd.
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817
(229) 248-2200 • Fax (229) 469-5094

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is a policy of the Decatur County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, veteran status, or handicapping condition in its educational programs, activities, and employment practices.

The Board shall comply with all aspects of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended, 1973), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended, 1974), Title XXIX of the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984.

For compliance information contact the Coordinator for Title VI, Title IX and section 504,

Chip Davis
Decatur County Board of Education
1417 Dothan Road,
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817
229-248-2835

NOTA DE NO DISCRIMINACION

Es la política de la Junta Educacional del Condado de Decatur de no discriminar en función a raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, estatus de veterano, o condición de discapacidad en sus programas educacionales, actividades, y prácticas de empleo.

La Junta cumplirá con todos los aspectos del Título IX de las Enmiendas de Educación de 1972, Título VI de la Ley de los Derechos Civiles de 1964 (modificado, 1973), Título VII de la Ley de los Derechos Civiles de 1964, (modificado, 1974), Título XXIX del la Ley de Discriminación por Edad de 1967, y sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, y Título II de la Ley de Educación Profesional Carl D. Perkins de 1984.

Para información de conformidad contactar al/la coordinador/a del Título VI, Título IX y sección 504.

Chip Davis
Junta de Educación del Condado de Decatur
1417 Dothan Road,
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817
229-248-2835

MISSION

The mission of West Bainbridge Primary is to empower all students to engage and succeed in a global society by providing rigorous & equitable opportunities, nurturing environments, sustained partnerships, college & career readiness and character development.

VISION

Excellence, engagement and accountability.....for all.

HOURS

Office7:00-4:00

Teachers7:45-3:45

Student Hours

7:00-7:30	Bus students arrive
7:00	Car Riders begin to arrive
7:50	Announcements
8:00	Tardy bell---late students must go by office for a late slip
2:45	Dismissal of car riders
3:05	Dismissal of bus students

ARRIVAL

The safety of our students is our greatest concern. Please carefully read the guidelines for arrival and dismissal and help us have a safe and orderly campus.

Parents are allowed to walk their children into school for the first week. For safety reasons, parents may not walk their children into the building after the first week. Staff members are positioned throughout campus to ensure the safety of students as they walk to class independently.

Bus Students begin to arrive at 7:00 in the circular drive out back. PK students go directly to the classroom. K-2 students should go directly to the location assigned for that grade level. All bus students are supervised by staff members and dismissed to classrooms at 7:45.

Car Riders will be dropped off in two different locations. PK and Kindergarten car riders and their siblings will be dropped off in the front and 1st-2nd will be dropped off and picked up in the back of the building. Students may not begin to exit the cars until 7:30 without prior approval from administration. Staff members or school patrol members will assist students exiting vehicles, so students should not exit the vehicle until that time. Parents/Drivers should not get out of the cars. Once exiting the car, students will report to their assigned grade level

locations.

Locations for students arriving before 7:45:

PK – Designated PK classrooms

K – Gym

1st and 2nd Grade – Cafeteria

DISMISSAL

You will provide the information for afternoon dismissal on the pink sheet provided in your beginning of the school year packet. **If there is a change in your child's afternoon dismissal procedure, the school must have a note (i.e. a note to ride or not ride a bus, or ride in a different car pool) sent to school in the morning. Do not call the office to leave a message for your child concerning afternoon pickup; this should be taken care of before he/she comes to school and will only be allowed in case of emergency.**

Bus and Daycare Vans – will dismiss at 2:45 in the back circular drive. Cars are not allowed on this back driveway at any time. Buses will begin to arrive at 3:30.

Car Riders will dismiss at 2:45. Students should wait quietly in the hallways for their name to be called. A staff member will assist your student into your vehicle. This is a very BUSY and CONGESTED time of the day that will run smoothly if the following guidelines are followed:

1. Safety is our goal – please be patient while we assist students in each car. Make sure your child is buckled up **before** you leave.
2. **PULL ALL THE WAY UP!** We can load several cars, but we need you to pull up to the teacher at the end of the pick-up area.
3. Have your “name card” in the front windshield so that we can have your child ready to load in your car.
4. Please **DO NOT** talk on the cell phone during pickup time.
5. Vehicles may begin to enter the front driveway no earlier than 2:45 pm each day.
6. If you need to talk with your child's teacher, or get out of your car for any reason, please pull into a parking space. Vehicles are not allowed to pull over on any part of the driveway between 7:30 and 8:00 am or between 3:00 and 4:00 pm.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM INFORMATION

Breakfast is free to all students and will be served in classrooms beginning at 7:45.

If students wish to eat breakfast at school, they must arrive **no later than 7:50 so that they will have adequate time to eat breakfast.**

A free and nutritious lunch will be offered to all students with a menu determined by the lunchroom staff in conjunction with the food service director. Please contact the office or lunchroom manager if your child has a food allergy so that the appropriate paperwork can be completed and precautions taken at school. The lunch menu will be posted in the classrooms,

on the school website, and in the local media.

Children may bring lunches to school if they wish, however, soft drinks and restaurant meals are not allowed. **(See appendix)**

LABELING PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All personal belongings should be labeled. This includes, but is not limited to, outdoor clothing, pencil boxes, book bags and lunch boxes. Lost and found items are turned into the school office. If the item is unlabeled and not claimed promptly, it will be donated to local charities.

VISITORS

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. All visitors are required to report to the school's office upon entering the building. **Each visitor must sign in and obtain a visitor's pass before proceeding to the classrooms.**

Guidelines for classroom observation by parents or legal guardians:

1. The Decatur County School System is an open system and encourages parent, guardian and community involvement.
2. To assure the safety of all students, visitors are required to check in at the office upon arrival at school in order to obtain a visitor's pass.
3. To maintain an optimal learning environment, parents or guardians should arrange classroom visits with the principal in order to avoid testing days, field trips, or other similar preplanned group activities.
4. While visiting the classrooms, visitors should avoid activities which would distract students, such as walking about the room, talking to the teacher during class, or talking with students. The rights of all students to privacy and to a proper learning environment must be strictly observed. (Teacher/Parent conferences should be scheduled at other times.)
5. Visits should not exceed 30 minutes.
6. A maximum of two visits per month are allowed for each student.
7. Visits should not be for the purpose of "monitoring" a teacher. If the visitor has questions regarding a specific teacher, this matter should be properly addressed to the school principal.
8. When appropriate, the principal and/or administrator may choose to accompany the visitor during the visit.
9. No cell phones are allowed in the classrooms or hallways.
10. Appropriate attire is required for class visits and special events on campus.
11. Younger students/siblings will not be allowed during classroom visits.
12. If during the visit the principal considers the classroom observation to be other than in the best interest of the students being served, he/she may terminate the visit.
13. If a parent or guardian violates the visitation protocol the principal has the discretion to suspend or terminate visitation privileges.

NOTE: Decatur County Schools welcomes parents and/or guardians into our schools,

however, we will follow all CDC and local health professional guidance and may restrict visitation procedures as needed in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all stakeholders.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is extremely important to success in school, and students should develop good work habits by arriving ON TIME each day. REMEMBER.... students are late at 8:00, and announcements begin at 7:50. The Decatur County BOE is committed to ensuring that students have good attendance, which is necessary to obtain adequate progress in school. Students with excessive or unexcused absences, or tardies, may be referred to the attendance committee and/or referral to court. **See the DCBOE Attendance Policy in the appendix.**

Tardy

Any student who arrives at school after the 8:00 bell is tardy. A parent/guardian should accompany the student into the building to sign him or her in for the day. Please note: **students must be in their classroom at 8:00.** Students desiring to eat breakfast should be at school before 7:50.

For students who are out of zone, if your child accumulates 10 or more tardies, your child will be reassigned to your zone school.

Absences

A doctor's excuse or written excuse is required within five days when a student is absent from school. Failure to bring an excuse within three days after returning to school shall constitute an unexcused absence. A student who has an excused absence is permitted to make-up work that has been assigned. Students will have three days to complete missed work.

Students Signing Out Early

Please be advised that if your child is signed out early he/she is missing an important part of the school day and his/her grades may be affected. Leaving early other than for a doctor's appointment or emergency is discouraged. Signing out early should not be done to "beat the traffic". Students can only be called to the office after the parent arrives in the office. Students are responsible for making up any work missed. Students are not allowed to sign out after 2:30 p.m.

Georgia Law requires students to attend school unless a mental and/or physical condition justifies being excused. Any parent, guardian, or other person having charge of a child or children who violates the compulsory attendance law is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100), or imprisonment not to exceed thirty days or both. Each day's absence from school in violation of this Act shall constitute a separate offense, O.C.G.A. 20-2-690. The Attendance Worker shall investigate all cases of failure to enroll or habitual absences by children and shall recommend appropriate action in accordance with state laws and State Board policies.

LEAVING CAMPUS

Students are not allowed to leave school during school hours for any reason without the knowledge of their teacher and the administrator. Students must be signed in and out utilizing Checkmate in the office by the parent/guardian whenever leaving and /or returning to school.

WITHDRAWALS

In the event that it is necessary for a child to change schools (in-county or out-of-county), the office must be contacted by the parent/guardian at least 24 hours prior to the actual withdrawal date. Upon notification, the appropriate records for the child will be sent to the new school.

DRESS CODE

Students attending Decatur County Public Schools in Grades PK through 2 must conform to the following dress code:

1. Hats and sunglasses may not be worn in the school building or on school buses.
2. Book bags (other than clear or mesh) are not permissible on campus.
3. Shoes must be worn. Tennis shoes are required on PE days.
4. No tank tops, halter tops, shirts that expose the midriff or back, or see-through clothing allowed. Ripped jeans that expose skin above the knee should not be worn without tights underneath.
5. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be fingertip length or longer when standing erect.
6. Proper undergarments must be worn.
7. Pants, shorts, and skirts must be the appropriate size for the student and must be worn at the appropriate waist level. Saggy pants and pants that expose undergarments should not be worn.
8. Clothing that displays inappropriate language or suggestive sayings, pictures (ie., drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, profanity, sexual pictures, etc.) cannot be worn at school.

*The principal at each school may deem it necessary to restrict certain clothing, etc. The principal or principal's designee will determine if attire is disruptive or inappropriate.

BOOK BAGS

Students must use either a clear or mesh book bag in all Decatur County Schools.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices are not allowed on the school campus. Any cell phone or other device brought to school will be sent to the front office and will be returned only to the parent.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

A calling system has been established to notify parents and students of emergencies or important events. Recorded messages are phoned automatically to parent's home/cell phone numbers. Parents with email access may periodically receive school or school system notification in this manner. This system is utilized for emergency or informational purposes only.

MEDICATION IN SCHOOL

Prescription medicine must be in the prescription bottle with instructions, child's name, and parental permission attached to the bottle. Medication must be administered by the school nurse. Special needs for nonprescription medication must be cleared and administered through the nurse. If your child will be taking medicine on a daily basis at school, please see the nurse in order to complete the appropriate paperwork. Aspirin will not be given under any circumstances.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or by a member of the school staff. If treatment is necessary, the parent/guardian will be notified. We are prepared to treat minor scrapes and scratches as well as bites and stings. In case of an emergency, if the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we must have the student's family doctor's name on file in the office, as well as a signature on your child's nurse information card giving us permission to secure medical attention in the event that you cannot be located.

IMMUNIZATION

The State of Georgia requires that all students entering Kindergarten and Seventh Grade have an up to date Georgia Certificate of Immunization on file. The Georgia Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) must be obtained from your private physician or the local health department and turned into the school by August 10, 2023. Your child will not be given a schedule or allowed to attend school until the required Certificate of Immunization is received by the school nurse. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

The immunization requirements for school and childcare facility attendance are outlined in the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) and the Policy Guides 3231INS and 3231REQ. Childcare facility operators, school personnel, healthcare providers and parents are responsible for seeing that these rules and laws are enforced. This information summarizes your responsibilities and provides guidelines to help your school or childcare facility comply with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 20-2-771.

INSURANCE

Student Accidental Insurance is made available to students through an independent company and is offered at the beginning of the school year. Claims must be made directly to the insurance company. Please note that this is a limited benefit policy. The school is not responsible for payment of any claims.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE

It is very important that every student maintains an up-to-date address and telephone number for home and emergencies in the office. The parent/guardian must notify the school immediately if there is any change of address or telephone number during the school year.

COPIES

There will be a charge to make copies of documents (birth certificates, etc.) for parents/guardians. Please allow 48 hours for requests to be processed.

CHECK POLICY

We do not accept checks here at West Bainbridge Primary.

STUDENT RECORDS/MEDIA RELEASE WAIVER/PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

The Decatur County School District has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name, address and telephone number
- Student's date and place of birth
- Student's participation in official school clubs and sports
- Weight and height of students if he/she is a member of an athletic team
- Dates of attendance while enrolled in Decatur County Schools
- Awards received during the time enrolled in Decatur County Schools

Unless you, as the parent/guardian or eligible student request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public. Any school district receiving ESEA funds must, upon request of military or higher education institutions, provide access to secondary school student's names, addresses, and telephone listing. School districts must notify parents of the option to require prior written parental consent to such listings. School districts must provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as is provided generally to post-secondary educational institutions or prospective employers. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to be disclosed to the public upon request.

You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by the news media at school or some school activity or event. This may occur unless a parent/guardian objects in writing to your student being photographed, videotaped or interviewed to the principal of the school where your student is enrolled. You are also notified that from time to time your student's photograph, art work, poetry, creative writing stories, or other pieces of acclaim or interest connected with a school activity or function, may be displayed on the Decatur County School's website – www.dcboe.com and the local media. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which your student is enrolled in writing within 10 days from the date of enrollment.

GEORGIA STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY 2.0 – Primary

The Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 is an anonymous, statewide survey instrument that identifies school climate issues that impact student achievement. In order to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for your child, the Georgia Department of Education collects survey information from students during the school year. The survey for elementary schools includes 15 school climate questions and should take no more than 10-15 minutes for students to complete. All student survey data is anonymous and self-reported. The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) gives you the right to opt your child out of participating in the survey. If you do not wish for your child to participate in the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0, please notify the school in writing. If you would like to examine the survey, please contact the school and we will be happy to provide you with a copy for your review.

DELIVERIES

Please do not send gifts, flowers, or balloons to students at school. This includes Valentine's Day.

PARTIES

Teachers are more than happy to help parents arrange a short birthday acknowledgement for your child. Please speak with your child's teacher in advance. All treats should be dropped off in the main office before 12:00 (noon). Parents should be mindful of the district's nutritional policy as well as the dietary restrictions of students in the classroom. Treats **MUST** be store bought with ingredients labeled. No home baked goods will be permitted to be shared with other students. Please, no products containing nuts. Please remember that party invitations should not be given out at school.

FUNDRAISERS

Occasionally our school participates in money-making projects. Money made from these projects is directly placed back into the school to purchase supplemental instructional materials, playground equipment, art, music, and/or P.E. supplies. Students are not allowed to sell items for money-making projects at school or on the school bus.

PROGRAMS/SPECIAL EVENTS

Programs and special events are generally held in the gym. Due to limited parking we ask parents to fill in remaining parking spaces in front and continue parking in rear of school once the front area is full. Vehicles may not park behind other cars parked in marked spaces. Do not block others in. Vehicles parked in designated handicap spaces must have a handicap tag, decal or identification designating the need for handicap parking.

PARENT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parent engagement is a vital part of every child's education. Our school has a Parent Resource Center located in Room 300.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND CHAPERONES

Parent volunteers and chaperones provide a valuable resource and result in positive experiences for students, families and schools. All volunteers and chaperones must complete an initial training and background check followed by annual online updates. Upon completion of training, a picture id badge will be issued annually before a parent or guardian may serve as a volunteer, chaperone, or accompany students on a school trip. Training must be completed at least two weeks in advance of the time scheduled to volunteer or chaperone. For more information, visit the Decatur County Schools website and access the "For Parents" tab.

PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

We are committed to continually seeking to improve instruction for our students. We hope that as a parent, you will become involved in our school improvement initiatives as we continue to monitor student achievement and set high expectations. We are proud of the professional credentials of our teaching staff and will furnish to you, upon request, the professional qualifications of any of your student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. **See "Right To Know" letter on page 1**

CONFERENCES

Teachers are available for conferences on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during planning time and after 3:40 or by appointment. Teachers are on duty and are supervising students beginning at 7:45, so please schedule a meeting in advance so that you and the teacher are able to communicate without interruption.

GRADING PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

Grading Scale for Grades 1-2:

A – 90 -100

B – 80 - 89

C – 70 - 79
F - Below 70

E – Indicates the student is working below grade level.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

1. A student shall be promoted when the student has met promotion criteria.
2. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) shall establish promotion standards for students with disabilities. The IEP Committee shall serve as the Placement Committee for these students. Members of the committee should include the general education teacher, the special education teacher, the parent/ guardian, and the Local Educational Administrator (LEA). Others may be asked to attend as needed.

Kindergarten Students – Promotion based on meeting the state requirement on the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) and demonstrating successful performance in reading and math programs based on the Kindergarten Rubric.

Grades 1 and 2 - Promotion will be based on receiving passing grades (yearly average) and performing on grade level in the reading and math programs. A “E” is considered below grade level.

Decatur County Schools is a Strategic Waiver System, which allows our system to waive specific state board rules. In our current strategic waiver, we chose to waive O.G.C.A 20-2-283 & 20-2-284. This waiver allows us as a system not to retest students for the 2019-2020 school year. The waiver also allows us to be able to use other vital information from your child’s entire school year and not only state assessment scores in the promotion and retention policy for the 2023-2024 school year.

PROGRESS REPORTS

All grade levels will send home graded work on a weekly basis and Progress reports every 4 ½ weeks during the 9 weeks grading period for grades K-2.

A report card on the progress of each student is issued each nine weeks. This report is given to the student to take home and will not be mailed. The parent/guardian should sign the envelope and return it to the school the following day. Parents may keep the report card.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

We celebrate academic excellence and will recognize students at Honors Programs. The following academic awards will be given:

1. A-Honor Roll: Must have an “A (90-100)” average in all subjects for the end of the year average. Students may have a “B” during the year, but all yearly averages are “A”s. Students with an “E” (working below grade level) are not eligible for A-Honor Roll.
2. A-B Honor Roll: Must have all “A (90-100)” and “B (80-89)” averages in all subjects for the end of the year average. Students may have a C on the report card, but all yearly averages are “A’s” and “B’s”. Students must have at least one “A” to be eligible for A-B Honor Roll. Students with an “E” are not eligible for A-B Honor Roll.
3. Effort Award: Students who do not meet the honor roll requirements above, but consistently give 110% effort.
4. English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies Awards: Students must have a yearly average of 95 or better. Students with an “E” (working below grade level) are not eligible for ELA/Reading Award.
5. Perfect Attendance: Must be in attendance every day of the school year with no tardies or early releases.

For the purpose of determining awards, the averages on May 13, 2024 will be used. The final grade may be different on the yearly report card.

DECATUR COUNTY PROGRAM FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

The Decatur County Program for Exceptional Students offers specialized instruction and related services for eligible students ages three to twenty one. The procedures for identifying and determining eligibility for the program are governed by the Georgia Department of Education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The state of Georgia recognizes eligibility categories which include intellectual disabilities, hearing impairment including deafness, speech or language impairment, visual impairment including blindness, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, specific learning disability, or deaf/blindness. Decisions regarding eligibility, least restrictive environment, accommodations, and services are made by a committee of individuals including the parent. The committee collaborates and develops an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to support students' individual needs. IEP annual review meetings are held annually to determine progress and necessary specialized services. IEP committee meetings include parents, teachers, local education authorities, and related service providers.

Decatur County offers the full continuum of services for students with identified disabilities and strives to serve each student to the greatest extent possible in the least restrictive environment. Special education instruction is specially designed by qualified staff and provided at no cost to parents. Related services are provided for eligible students as deemed necessary by IEP teams. Related services may include special transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adapted physical education, speech/language therapy, psychological, and audiology services.

If you suspect your child has a disability or have questions regarding special education or related services, contact Catherine Gossett, Director of Program for Exceptional Students at 229-248-2828.

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/chemotherapy or students with other serious health conditions). Students must be enrolled in a public school in Georgia in order to receive HHB services.

HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are by design temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive (five days for student on block schedule) or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented.

For HHB forms or questions contact your school counselor or:

Sylena Wiggins

Hospital Homebound Coordinator

229-248-2828

GIFTED EDUCATION

By definition, a gifted student is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability, exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. Decatur County Schools follow the Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students and due process in the identification and placement of students for gifted education services. Formal identification of students begins in kindergarten. To be eligible for gifted education services, students are evaluated in four data categories: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. Eligibility decisions comply with Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38. In addition to the automatic referral process, which is based on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment, iReady Diagnostic, and NWEA MAP

testing results, a student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.

Parent referrals for consideration for gifted education services should be submitted in writing to the gifted coordinator (bdeal@dcboe.com) by **January 12, 2024**. Parent referrals are presented to the eligibility team which consists of grade level teachers, the gifted teacher/coordinator, the school counselor, and an administrator. This team is responsible for reviewing the student's profile of information which consists of observational data, academic records and data, and the student's standardized testing history. After reviewing the information, the team makes a determination of whether further evaluation is warranted.

Other reported gifted referrals should be submitted in writing to the gifted coordinator (bdeal@dcboe.com) by the due date determined at each grade level. Referrals are then submitted to the eligibility team which consists of grade level teachers, the gifted teacher/coordinator, the school counselor, and an administrator. This team is responsible for reviewing the student's profile of information which consists of observational data, academic records and data, and the student's standardized testing history. After reviewing the information, the team makes a determination of whether further evaluation is warranted.

Gifted services are available in grades K-12 and are provided through the following models:

Primary and Elementary-

Resource

- Pullout for identified gifted students
- Enriched Content Based Curriculum based on state gifted standards

Advanced Content Classes

- taught by gifted endorsed classroom teachers
- Enriched and Accelerated Content-Based Curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence

Middle School-

Advanced Content Classes

- taught by gifted endorsed classroom teachers
- Enriched and Accelerated Content-Based Curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence

High School-

Advanced Placement (AP)

- Guidelines set by College Board
- Teachers have special training from College Board, and/or are gifted endorsed

REMOTE LEARNING

Remote Learning is not offered at the primary school level

SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Decatur County Schools notifies parents and students that Section 504 student rights and procedural safeguards are included in their entirety in our student handbooks and on our website. Parents and students are entitled to Section 504 student rights and procedural safeguards on request.

1. **Overview:** Any student, parent, or guardian may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding a child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Request 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 request 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. Student name
 - b. Address of student
 - c. School student is attending
 - d. Reason for request of the hearing
 - e. Decision objecting to
 - f. Remedy suggested
 - g. Name and contact information of person requesting a hearing

Within 10 business days from receiving the Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and a place for a hearing. If the written request from the parent, guardian, or student is incomplete, Section 504 Coordinator will tell the grievant what specific information is needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will stop until the Request for Hearing contains all the above noted information.

3. **Mediation:** The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues. Mediation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. If mediation is terminated without an agreement, procedures for conducting an impartial hearing will be followed without an additional Request for Hearing.

4. Hearing Procedure:

- a. The 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official and hearing within 45 calendar days unless a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
- b. A continuance request in writing to all parties may be granted by the hearing officer with good cause.
- c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- d. The grievant may be represented by legal counsel at his/her own expense. The grievant may participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If represented by legal counsel at the hearing, the grievant or legal counsel must notify the 504 Coordinator in writing at least 10 calendar days before the hearing. Failure to do so will constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- e. The burden of proof will be on the grievant. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the school or 504 Coordinator to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A school or 504 Coordinator shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the system unless it is demonstrated by the school or 504 Coordinator 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.
- 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 system. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the system.
 - l. Unless otherwise required by law the impartial review official shall uphold the action of the 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 with 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 him or her under the law or existing state or federal rule or regulations.
- Georgia Department of Education
Richard Woods, State School Superintendent

NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS UNDER SECTION 504

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 any questions or need additional assistance, please contact your system's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address: Catherine Gossett, Director, Program for Exceptional Students, 229-248-2828, cgossett@dcboe.com – office email. The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide Hand parents and/or students with the following rights:

- 1. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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.

4. Your child has a right to participate in an education setting (academic and non-academic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs.
5. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students.
6. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility.
7. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child.
8. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent change of placement.
12. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
13. You have the right to examine your child's educational records.
14. 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.
15. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request.
16. 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.
17. You have the right to, at any time; file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS

In July 2012, Senate Bill 289 and House Bill 175 passed allowing students opportunities to take online courses. This legislation does not require an online course to graduate, but provides an online learning option should your student or you choose this option. Decatur County School System will provide online learning opportunities through Georgia Virtual School beginning the 2013-2014 school year by allowing students to take a course or courses as part of their assigned required courses. Students who wish to pursue online course enrollment should read information provided on the Georgia Virtual website, www.gavirtualschool.org. Pay close attention to deadlines in the Georgia Virtual process as well as the list of courses offered. For more information about the opportunity for your student to participate in online courses, please contact Ortega Ross, Principal, at 229-248-2821.

Decatur County Schools Instructional Technology Handbook Usage and Guidelines

Decatur County Schools use instructional technology as one way of enhancing our mission to teach the skills, knowledge and behaviors students will need as responsible citizens in a global community. The Decatur County School System utilizes DCBOE student accounts, DCBOE devices, the DCBOE electronic network as well as the option of utilizing a personal device on our guest network. When using DCBOE issued accounts, network, and/or devices, students are expected to follow the *Use of Electronic Devices by Students Board Policy Descriptor Code: JCDAF*. Technology discipline offenses will be addressed as outlined in the **Discipline Procedures for Technology Infractions** and the misuse of technology may result in the restricted use of DCBOE and/or personal devices while on school grounds.

1:1 Devices

In an effort to increase access to 21st Century skills and prepare students for all potential models of instructional delivery (Face to Face, Remote, Distance Learning), Decatur County Schools will be issuing Chromebooks to individual students in all grade levels K-12 for use during the school year. Before receiving devices, students must have the following signed documents on file at their home school:

- **DCBOE Chromebook User Agreement**
- **Technology Usage Fee of \$25.00**
- **Instructional Technology Usage and Guidelines**
- **Discipline Procedures for Technology Infractions**
- **Electronic Network Use Rules**

Device Damage and Repairs

The **DCBOE Chromebook Usage Fee** covers normal wear and tear of the device and annual maintenance costs. Repairs to student devices are covered by this fee as long as students have complied with expectations set forth in this contract and the DCBOE Technology Acceptable Use Policy. However multiple damages, negligent care, or device misuse can lead to additional charges and fees.

Students assume the risk of damage to school issued chrome books if the device is damaged or lost during student use. Decatur County Schools reserves the right to charge any student for a damaged device based upon the school administration's review of any particular incident. Any student found to willfully damage a device could face disciplinary action in addition to the cost for the repair of the device. Depending upon the extent in which the Chromebook is damaged, the repair/replacement cost will vary between \$50.00 and \$400.00. Students should not tamper with any school barcoding or DCBOE cases. These are essential to management and students may be fined if they are removed.

Chargers

Each student will be provided one charger for his or her device at the beginning of the school year. Students should verify the functionality of their charger within the first week of receiving their device. If a charger is found to be defective or damaged within the first week of a student having the device, then the district will replace the charger at no cost to the student. At the end of the school year the charger should be turned in with the device. Any charger returned with a different barcode or a removed barcode may result in a fine. If a student's charger is lost or damaged throughout the school year, then the student may be required to purchase a replacement charger.

Please Note

Students should not tamper with any school barcoding or DCBOE cases. These are essential to management and students may be fined if they are removed. Students should not apply stickers to cases or devices as they can damage the device. Lending and borrowing chromebooks is discouraged and should be limited.

Taking Devices Home

Your student's device is a vital part of instruction at Decatur County Schools. Students will be able to take their device home throughout the school year. Students are responsible for bringing chargers with them to school and keeping their devices charged for instruction.

- **Primary Students in Grades 2**
Elementary students will leave their devices at school unless otherwise instructed by their classroom teacher or in the instance that the system initiates the distance learning model of instruction. Students who have prolonged absences, require quarantine, or remote learning may make arrangements with the school for device usage. Please contact your school administration for more information.
- **Elementary Students in Grades 3-5**
Elementary students will leave their devices at school unless otherwise instructed by their classroom teacher or in the instance that the system initiates the distance learning model of instruction. As the school works to increase student responsibility and access to technology teachers may send devices home for student work on those occasions, students are responsible for keeping their devices charged and safe and returning with them promptly the following school day. Students who have prolonged absences, require quarantine, or

remote learning may make arrangements with the school for device usage. Please contact your school administration for more information.

- **Middle and High School Students in Grades 6-12**

Students will be responsible for bringing their devices with them to and from school. They are responsible for keeping their devices charged and safe. Not having a device or charger when needed in class may limit student access to instruction and therefore may result in disciplinary or academic consequences.

Web Filtering

The Decatur County School System also believes staff and students should have open access to local, national, and international sources of information. The system, by providing access to electronic services via the Internet, recognizes the potential of such services to support curriculum and student learning. The goal of providing this access is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Using the electronic services via the Internet is a privilege; therefore all students must sign and abide by the **Decatur County School Acceptable Use Contract**.

Google Classroom

Decatur County Schools' Teachers will be using the Google Classroom platform for communicating with students and parents about instruction both in and out of the classroom. All students will receive classroom codes from each of their teachers. Assignments and daily work will be posted under each classroom's CLASSWORK tab in the **TODAY'S WORK** section. Students will also have access to past assignments and recorded class content through this platform. Parents can elect to receive regular progress updates by email from the platform to help support their child's achievement. With this in mind it is critical that parents do their part to keep all email contact information up to date with their school office.

The documents (in bold) mentioned above must be signed and on file. Failure to submit to the terms and conditions as prescribed by these documents may result in loss of privileges or disciplinary action. Please see individual school discipline policies and/or handbooks for how technology infractions and violations will be handled.

Decatur County Schools Electronic Network Use Rules

While the Internet offers students and teachers access to a variety of information, the system recognizes misuse and abuse is possible. The system will make every effort to protect students and teachers from these misuses and abuses but it is the responsibility of each user to continuously guard against inappropriate and illegal interaction with the electronic services. The Decatur County School System is taking all reasonable steps to ensure the Internet is used only for purposes consistent with the curriculum.

Using the electronic services via the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The privilege may be revoked at any time for unacceptable conduct. Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to the following.

1. Using the Internet for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts.
2. Using the Internet for financial or commercial gain.
3. Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance.
4. Vandalizing the data of other users.
5. Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
6. Invading the privacy of individuals.
7. Using an account owned by another without authorization.
8. Posting personal communications without the author's consent.
9. Posting anonymous messages.
10. Placing unlawful information on a system.
11. Using abusive or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private messages.
12. Sending of messages that are likely to result in the loss of recipient's work or disrupting systems; for example a computer virus.
13. Sending "Chain Letters" or "Broadcast" messages to lists or individuals, or other types of communication which would cause congestion of the networks.
14. Using the Internet to send/receive messages and images which are inconsistent with the district's curriculum, and conduct guidelines. These include, but are not limited to, racist, sexist, pornographic, dangerous, and obscene messages and images.

The Decatur County School System makes no guarantee of any kind, for the Internet service provided to the student. The system will not be responsible for any damages claimed or suffered by any child or parent relating to the use of the Internet. This includes the child's exposure to materials a parent otherwise would have a right of notice and/or consent to, pursuant to state or federal law.

Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the individual's own risk.

The Decatur County School System believes that the benefits to educators and students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, far exceed any disadvantages. But ultimately, parent(s) and guardian(s) of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their child or ward should follow. To that end, the Decatur County School System supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for Internet access.

School computer systems are for use by authorized individuals only. Any unauthorized access to these systems is prohibited and is subject to criminal and civil penalties. Individuals using these systems are subject to having all activities on these systems monitored by the system or school personnel. Anyone using these systems expressly consents to such monitoring. Prosecution and/or account termination may occur.

It is possible for all users of the Internet (including your child) to access information intended for adults. Although the Decatur County School System has taken all reasonable steps to ensure the Internet connection is used only for the purposes consistent with the curriculum, the district or school cannot prevent the availability—or even begin to identify—inappropriate material elsewhere on the Internet. Computer security cannot be made perfect and it is likely that a determined student can make use of computer resources for inappropriate purposes.

By initialing the signature page, you are acknowledging the following: I have read the Electronic Network Use Rules document, understand it, and agree to adhere to the principles and procedures detailed within. We understand and accept the conditions stated above, and agree to hold blameless, and release from liability, the Decatur County School System, the sponsoring

school, its subcontractors, and employees. I understand that my child is expected to use good judgment and follow the attached Electronic Network Use Rules in making electronic contact with others. Should my child breach the Electronic Network Use Rules, I understand that my child will lose all network privileges on the Decatur County School System network and may be subject to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion.

MEDIA CENTER

The media center is available for students, parents and teachers. Students are encouraged to read fiction and nonfiction for pleasure.

Overdue, Damaged or Lost Books

Library Overdue Notices will be sent with progress reports to inform parents/staff of any missing library books. Damaged books that are returned are charged for the amount of damage and students/ parents must pay to replace or repair the book. Lost books must be replaced, and the student/parent must send the amount of the book as indicated by the notice sent to the parent. Report Cards will be held at the end of each nine-week grading period if students have overdue books or if students owe fines for lost or damaged books.

BUS INFORMATION

See the Code of Conduct and School Bus Ride Guide in the appendix.

DISCIPLINE

All elementary schools in Decatur County abide by the local board policy JCD, Student Behavior and Conduct Regulations. Our schools are committed to maintaining a well-disciplined atmosphere where children will have the greatest opportunities to learn. We believe that discipline is an on-going process, which helps students learn to be responsible and capable of making choices that are in the best interest of others, as well as themselves. We believe students need guidance, rules, and consistency in the enforcement of rules. We also feel that it is the joint responsibility of the parents/guardians and teachers to praise and reinforce appropriate behavior. We have established a strong, positive discipline program which includes specific school-wide behavior expectations and consequences. Positive reinforcement will occur when good behavior is exhibited. A listing of the school wide procedures is included for you to review with your student at home. For severe or recurring discipline problems, parents/guardians will be expected to be involved as a part of the adult team working to help the student improve his/her behavior. Compliance with the standards of conduct adopted by Decatur County Schools is mandatory for every student.

Primary Decatur County Discipline Plan

Incident	1st Disposition	2nd Disposition	3rd Disposition	4th Disposition	5th Disposition
LEVEL I - Assigned by Teacher	* Teacher Discretion	* Teacher Discretion	* Teacher Discretion	* Teacher Discretion	Office Referral
General Class Disruption					
Misuse of Technology	- Teacher will handle Level 1 discipline at their discretion. - Before an office referral for Level 1 offenses teacher must have at least one parent contact by phone. - Other consequences that can be used by teachers include but are not limited to: loss of privileges, lunch detention, time out, conferences, in school detention.				
Disregard for directions or commands					
Cheating, Forgery, Giving False Information					
Loitering, Off-Limits Area					
Other Disrespectful Behavior					
Public Displays of Affection					
Inappropriate verbal, or non-verbal expression					
LEVEL II - Assigned by Admin	1/2 day ISS *PD	1 days ISS PD	1 Days OSS *PD	1 Day OSS *PD	2-3+ Days OSS *PD, BP
Level I office referral	- Level II referrals are cumulative in nature. The progression of discipline will follow this level of consequences. - At the 2nd infraction of OSS a parent conference will be conducted to discuss behavior plan and parent support options.				
Skipping school, leaving campus w/out permission					
Disrespect toward school authorities					
Horseplay, Unruly Conduct, Hitting/Pushing					
Obscene material, inappropriate touching or contact					
LEVEL III - Assigned by Admin	2 Days OSS *PD, BP, PP, PT, STA	3 Days OSS *PD, BP, PP, PT, STA	5+ Days OSS *PD, BP, PP, PT, STA		
Fighting					
Trespassing	Due to severity of Level III discipline, consequences may be skipped at principal's discretion.				
Bullying, as defined by GA Code.					
Gang Activity or Paraphernalia					
Tobacco Possession, Use, or Paraphernalia					
Damage, Destruction, or theft of property					
LEVEL IV - Assigned by Admin	10 Days OSS *PD, PP, BP, PT STA				
Fighting resulting in injury					
	Due to severity of Level IV discipline, consequences are more severe and a disciplinary tribunal and/or alternative school placement may occur at the principal's discretion.				
Weapons					
Alcohol possession, alcohol consumption					
Drugs: possession, distribution, paraphernalia					
ALL threat of harm to school, students, and staff.					
Bus Referrals	Warning and Parent Contact *PD	3 days bus suspension *PD	5 days bus suspension *PD	10 days bus suspension *PD	Bus suspension for remainder of the year *PD
	Major bus discipline/disruption, consequences may be skipped at principal's discretion.				

(ISS= In School Suspension, OSS=Out of School Suspension, PD=Principal discretion, BP=Behavior Plan, PP=Possible referral to Police, PT=Possible referral to tribunal, STA=Subject to arrest.)

*Student discipline at the primary schools will start over at the beginning of the 2nd semester.



Addendum to Discipline Plan for Safety - Fight Policy (Rationale)

- **Fighting is a safety concern and has a negative impact on the climate and culture of schools. There are actually two (2) incidents involving the occurrence of a school fight — I. Fight II. Disruption of the School Day/Disorderly Conduct**

Addendum to DCS Discipline Plan as Follows:

Effective 2023-2024 - Addendum to the DCS Discipline Plan - Fight Protocol

*** Fighting will not be tolerated in the Decatur County Schools. All fights are considered an act that threatens the safety of our students. Additionally, a fight in our school system is seen as an act that disrupts the school day and directly threatens the climate/culture within our schools. The following disciplinary action will be implemented by school administrators to students who fight at school, school functions, and all school related activities for the first offense:**

<u>Infraction</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Disciplinary Action</u>
Fighting	BHS/BMS	5 days OSS
* Disrupting School Day		5 days ISS Upon Return
Fighting	HES	3 days OSS
* Disrupting School Day		3 days ISS Upon Return
Fighting	JWP/WBP	2 days OSS
* Disrupting School Day		2 days ISS Upon Return

- **Guidance Session held with students and school guidance counselor upon return from OSS and before students report to ISS for disrupting the school day.**
- **NBLC will follow the fight policy with principal discretion as it relates to student discipline records. Student's fighting at NCLB could receive additional disciplinary action as it relates to his/her alternative school placement.**

Major Offenses:

Major offenses include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Hitting, rough or physical abuse
2. Throwing objects
3. Defiance of authority
4. Disrespectful/abusive language or actions
5. Bullying
6. Continuous, disruptive behavior
7. Willful destruction of property

Serious Offenses

Serious discipline offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Physical assault on a school employee
2. Possession of a dangerous weapon or the use of an object
3. The use, possession, or sale of alcoholic substances, narcotics, tobacco, or other noxious substances
4. The use, possession, or sale of explosive devices

WEAPONS

Students should understand that weapons of any kind present an immediate and real danger to students, faculty and staff, and can disrupt the learning environment. Federal law (PL 103-227) states that no federal funds may be provided to any local educational agency unless that agency has a policy in place requiring the expulsion of the student from school for at least one year for possession of or for bringing a firearm to school. Refer to local board policy JCDAE.

The Georgia Department of Education sponsors a HOTLINE that provides a 24-hour reporting system for students to report weapons, violence (including bullying), or drugs anonymously by calling 1-877-SAY-STOP. Information is recorded and shared with the local school system and local law enforcement. An investigation is conducted upon receipt of the report.

Student Codes of Conduct

It is the policy of the Decatur County Board of Education that each school within this school district shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment and which will comply with state law and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15. Each code of conduct shall include the following, at a minimum:

1. Standards for student behavior designed to create the expectation that students will behave themselves in such a way so as to facilitate a learning environment for themselves and other students. The standards should be designed also to encourage students to respect each other and school district employees, to motivate students to obey student behavior policies adopted by this board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within this school district;
2. Student support processes designed to consider, as appropriate in light of the severity of the behavioral problem, support services available at each school, the school system and other public entities or community organizations which may assist students to address behavioral problems;
3. Progressive discipline processes designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline imposed by each school will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student, the previous discipline history of the student and other relevant factors, while ensuring that each student receives the due process mandated by federal and state law;
4. Parental involvement processes designed to enable parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators to work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance. The process should enable parents, guardians and school employees to communicate freely their concerns about student behaviors which detract from the learning environment.
5. All other specific requirements as set forth in any existing State Board of Education Rule or in Georgia law.

LEVELS OF MISCONDUCT:

Level I infractions:

Level I infractions are discipline infractions that are to be handled by the classroom teacher. Level I infractions are minor disruptions that do not elevate to the level that an administrator needs to be notified. Teachers need to control their room and be the main disciplinarian. If referrals are made to the administration for minor infractions teachers lose their authority for enforcing rules and take the chance of losing their effectiveness.

Examples of Level I infractions that should not be referred to an administrator. Include but are not limited to:

- General Class Disruption
- Misuse of Technology
- Disregard for directions or commands
- Cheating, forgery, giving false information
- Loitering, off-limit areas

Other Disrespectful behavior
Public displays of Affection
Inappropriate verbal, or non-verbal expression
Out of Seat
Dress Code violations
Talking / behaving off-task
Tardy
Making noise
No materials (textbook, agenda book, supplies, etc.)
No homework
Sleeping
Teeth sucking/eye rolling
Student arguments/bickering

CONSEQUENCE for Level I Infractions: (see Infraction Chart)

Level I infractions are to be handled by the classroom teacher. Each teacher has discretion to handle these infractions as needed. Teacher will develop a set of clear consequences for their classes for Level I infractions to include but not limited to: loss of privileges, lunch detention, time out, conferences, etc. Teachers must include at least one parent contact within the first four dispositions. Class Dojo and emails are only acceptable with a verification that the parent received the correspondence.

The 5th and any subsequent dispositions for Level I infractions turns into a Level II infraction and an office referral for cumulative Level I offenses.

Level II infractions:

Level II infractions are infractions that elevate to the level of needing to be referred to the school administration. School administration will address all Level II infractions. Level II infractions are cumulative Level I offenses or offenses that are more severe in nature but do not rise to the level of being a violation of the law.

Examples of Level II infractions that should be referred to an administrator. Include but are not limited to:

Cumulative Level I offenses (after teacher protocol has been followed)
Skipping school
Leaving campus w/out permission
Leaving classroom w/out permission
Disrespect toward school authorities
Horseplay
Unruly Conduct
Obscene material
Inappropriate touching or contact

CONSEQUENCE for Level II Infractions: (see Infraction Chart)

Level II infractions are infractions that will be handled by school administration. These infractions will be progressive in consequences. Consequences for Level II infractions include but are not limited to: In school suspension, out of school suspension, police referral, subject to tribunal, subject to alternative placement, and subject to arrest. In the execution of all Level II infractions the

School Principal has discretion to handle infractions as deemed necessary based on the individual circumstances.

Level III infractions:

Level III infractions should always be referred to school administration. School administration will address all Level III infractions. Level III infractions are infractions that are serious in nature and could elevate to the level of arrest. Level III infractions will be dealt with in a much more severe nature due to the serious nature of the offense.

Examples of Level III infractions that should be referred to an administrator. Include but are not limited to:

- Fighting
- Trespassing
- Bullying (as defined by GA Code)
- Gang Activity or Paraphernalia
- Tobacco Possession, Use, or Paraphernalia (including VAPES)
- Damage, Destruction, or theft of property

CONSEQUENCE for Level III Infractions: (see Infraction Chart)

Level II infractions are infractions that will be handled by school administration and should involve parents. These infractions will be progressive in nature and consequences will be increased from Level II due to the seriousness of the dispositions. Consequences for Level III infractions include but are not limited to: In school suspension, out of school suspension, police referral, subject to tribunal, subject to alternative placement, and subject to arrest. In the execution of all Level III infractions the School Principal has discretion to handle infractions as deemed necessary based on the individual circumstances dictate.

Level IV infractions:

Level IV infractions are infractions that are serious in nature and are to be referred immediately to school administration. School administration will address all Level IV infractions. Level IV infractions are infractions that violate the law.

Examples of Level IV infractions that should be referred to an administrator. Include but are not limited to:

- Fighting resulting in injury
- Weapons (as defined by Board Policy and GA Code)
- Alcohol possession, alcohol consumption
- Sexual Misconduct
- Drug: possession, distribution, or paraphernalia (including Vapes containing THC)
- All threats of harm to school, students, and staff

CONSEQUENCE for Level IV Infractions: (see Infraction Chart)

Level IV infractions are infractions that will be handled by school administration and should always involve parents. These infractions will result in tribunal and/or alternative placement. Level IV infractions will be referred to local law enforcement. In the execution of all Level IV infractions the School Principal has discretion to handle infractions as deemed necessary based on the individual circumstances dictate.

Bus Misconduct:

For the safety of our drivers and our students bus misconduct will be taken very seriously. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right, and a student that fails to follow the drivers' directions can and will lose that privilege. Minor infractions will usually begin with an administrative warning and a parent contact. Repeat offenses of minor infractions or more severe infractions, such as fighting, disrespect, etc., will result in immediate bus suspension.

SCHOOL WIDE PROCEDURES

Hallway

1. Students will use the 3,2,1,0 rule (3-3rd tile, 2-hands by your side, 1-behind the other, 0-talking/noise).
2. Quiet courteous behavior.
3. Go directly to and from destination.
4. Stand free of doorways and exits.
5. Students must have a hall pass while in the hall, unless they are with an adult.

Cafeteria

1. The cafeteria is a place to talk quietly, not to scream, whistle or yell.
2. Enter and exit quietly and orderly, one at a time.
3. Stand in a single file line.
4. Use good manners in speaking to lunchroom workers and others.
5. Pick up necessary items in cafeteria line first time through.
6. At a table, only talk to your neighbors beside you and in front of you.
7. Practice good eating habits.
8. Remain in seat unless given permission to leave.
9. Clean personal space including stool before leaving.
10. Students are to STOP at the stop sign and put trays in window one student at a time.

Restroom

1. Flush toilet and wash hands after each use.
2. Place paper towels in trash cans.
3. Individual use of stalls and urinals.
4. Use appropriate behavior in restroom.
5. Designated monitors are to report any problems to the teachers.

Assemblies

1. Sit and respond appropriately.
2. Use good manners.
3. Talk very quietly before and after assembly.
4. Listen quietly to performance.

Playground

1. Do not run going from or coming into the building.
2. Refrain from karate, wrestling, hitting, flipping, and fighting on the playground. No physical contact games (tag, Frisbee, football, etc).
3. Do not climb the fence or trees.
4. Use playground equipment with care.

5. Wood chips and rocks are to remain in designated areas. Rocks should not be in hands or pockets.
6. Shoes must be worn at all times.
7. No pushing each other in the swings.
8. Use slide correctly. Do not slide backwards, on your stomach, or in any position other than the correct way. No climbing up the slide.
9. Stay in designated boundaries.
10. Sit at picnic tables or benches to eat snacks.
11. Put TRASH in containers.
12. Walk to line up with your class.

Media Center

1. Walk to and from the media center quietly. This includes the outside breezeway.
2. Each student must have a pass to go to the media center.
3. Speak softly in a whisper voice.
4. Students are responsible for turning in books within 2 weeks. Books may be renewed one time.
5. Replacement barcodes may be purchased for fifty cents. Barcodes will be printed as soon as time permits.
6. Do not touch any computer equipment at the checkout center. Wait for the librarians.
7. Students must have an AR folder to check out books. The folder must contain the record sheet complete with the student's reading level, list of books read, and teacher's signature.
8. Overdue notices will be sent home with progress reports. If a book is determined to be lost, the student must pay for the book before full checkout privileges are reinstated. Report cards will be held if students have overdue books or if students owe fines for lost or damaged books. Fines for lost and damaged books remain on the student's record while enrolled in Decatur County Schools.
9. If a book is found after a replacement fee has been paid, it will be reimbursed ONLY through the end of the school year in which it was lost.
10. Parents may check out books through the media center for their child's use at home. Students may not check out books under the parent's name.

Morning

1. Upon arrival each student should report to his/her grade level's designated location. With the exception of bus riders, students should not enter the buildings before 7:30.
2. At 7:45, go directly to the classroom, picking up breakfast from the cart. Do not stop at the bathroom or library.
3. Quietly enter the classroom, following the individual teacher's classroom procedures.

Afternoon

1. Leave in an orderly fashion.
2. Students should wait quietly in the hallways/gym until the student's name/bus is called. Exit the building with an adult. Students should not enter any building after dismissal.
3. All students need to cross the street with an adult.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire Drill

1. When the first drill bell rings, line up quietly and orderly.
2. Walk down the hallway quietly.
3. While outside in line, stay orderly in a single file line until the bell rings to come back inside.
4. Students should not talk until the fire drill is over.

Tornado/Severe Weather Drill

1. When the drill sounds, walk quietly outside the doorway and get into the position your teacher has shown you.
2. Talking is not allowed until the drill is over.

Severe Weather Causing School to be canceled

In the case of severe weather and threats of unsafe conditions for attending schools, the Superintendent shall make the decision to close schools. The public will be notified by local radio and television stations and by a phone call from the Superintendent via the DCBOE emergency communication system.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A HARASSMENT-FREE SCHOOL

Sexual harassment is unlawful and unacceptable in the school or workplace. Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is illegal. Because of the importance we place on these types of issues, this school has instituted a procedure for investigating harassment complaints. It is our policy to investigate and resolve these issues in a prompt manner. If you have been harassed, or another's conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, please notify the principal.

Appendix

- **Notice of Student and Parent Rights under Section 504**
- **Decatur County 504 Procedural Safeguards**
- **Procedure for Foods and Beverages brought into Cafeteria**
- **Food Allergy Memo**
- **Payment Procedure**
- **2023-2024 Attendance Guidelines Overview**
- **School Bus Code of Conduct**
- **School Bus Ride Guide**



Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504

Decatur County School System

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 Mrs. Catherine Gossett, Decatur County School System Section 504 Coordinator at the following address: 14147 Dothan Road. Bainbridge, GA 39817, Phone: 229-248-2838.

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 peers.
2. Your child has the right to free and appropriate educational (FAPE) 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.
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.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those

provided for non-disabled students.

5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child.
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.
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.
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.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records.
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.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedures (Section 504 Procedural Safeguards) upon request.
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.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

06.05.23

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under 504



PROUD
TRADITION

Decatur County Schools

THE BEARCAT WAY

PROMISING
FUTURE

**Decatur County Board of Education's Procedure
For
Foods and Beverages Brought Into the School Cafeteria**

As a result of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, school systems were mandated by the United States Department of Agriculture to update 2006 Local Wellness Policies to include the promotion of healthier food choices.

As stated in Decatur County BOE policy EEE, the goal is to promote wellness and healthy nutrition for students and staff. All foods available on campus must have as an objective the promotion of student and staff health and the reduction of childhood obesity. In addition, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations prohibit the sale of non-nutritional foods and carbonated beverages during meal times at all school levels.

The objective of the Decatur County School Nutrition program is to provide students and staff with meals that are balanced and encourage good nutrition. School Nutrition meals must meet the USDA's current Dietary Guidelines and Requirements for Americans. Food choices are evaluated to reduce fat, sugar and sodium while providing the proper amounts of nutrients and calories for different age groups. A nutritious breakfast and lunch is served daily at each school.

It is for the reasons listed above that, while encouraging parents and guardians to enjoy a special meal with their child (ren), we are implementing the following procedure:

Procedure for Foods and Beverages Brought into the School Cafeteria:

- Students who bring their lunch should pack it appropriately and drinks (non carbonated) should be in a non-breakable container.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the school and enjoy a nutritious school meal with their student.
- **NO outside foods or beverages from restaurants will be brought into the cafeteria.**
- Students who have food allergies or medical conditions that require special

foods must have a doctor's statement on file.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

This institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider.



School Nutrition Program
1417 Dothan Road
Bainbridge, GA 39817
229-243-5321

TO: Parents / Guardians
FROM: Nita Floyd, School Nutrition Director
DATE: July 2023
SUBJECT: Meal Substitutions for Medical or Other Special Dietary Reasons

According to Federal Regulations the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, are **required** to make substitutions to the standard meal patterns for participants who are considered disabled and whose disability restricts their diet.

Substitutions for individual participants who are unable to consume a food item because of medical or other special dietary needs shall be made on a case by case basis. These cases must be supported by a statement signed by a Licensed Healthcare Professional which may include physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners. The supporting statement shall include:

- A. An identification of the medical or special dietary need which restricts the participant's diet; and
- B. The food or foods to be omitted from the participant's diet, and the food or choice of foods that may be substituted.

The statement will be kept on file and a medical alert will be entered in to the point of sale software. This will appear as an alert box when the student's meal information appears that will remind the cashier to check the tray for restricted foods. When possible, the serving line will be labeled indicating an at risk food. In addition an alert list will be posted in the kitchen/ food preparation area to remind workers of key allergy foods.

You may download a copy of the Special Dietary Needs Form at www.dcboc.com and click on School Nutrition.

For further clarification call Nita Floyd at 229-243-5321.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



School Nutrition Program
1417 Dothan Road
Bainbridge, GA 39817
229-243-5321

PAYMENT PROCEDURE

The School Nutrition Program encourages customers to use SchoolCafe or checks to prepay for food purchases. Both Options provide parents documentation of payment.

PAYMENT TO Schoolcafe'

- ❖ Make a prepayment into your student's account using a check, credit card, or debit card at **www.schoolcafe.com** or by calling **855-729-2328**

PAYMENT BY CHECK

- ❖ Make check payable to each school lunchroom.
Check must include:
 - Full Name
 - Street Address
 - Home Phone Number w/Area Code
 - Work Phone Number w/Area Code
 - Driver's License Number w/State
- ❖ List customer name on the memo line of check.
- ❖ Place check in an envelope with customer name and amount enclosed on outside of envelope.
- ❖ Turn the envelope in to the school lunchroom manager.
- ❖ DO NOT include fees for other items with your school nutrition money.

CASHING A CHECK

No one is allowed to cash a check out of School Nutrition Program monies. Checks will only be accepted for the amount of money to be credited to an account or for the amount of a food purchase.

RETURNED CHECKS

Returned checks are now being processed by **Envision Payment Solutions, Inc.** If a check is returned due to non-payment, these procedures will be followed:

1. If your check is returned, it may be re-presented electronically. You authorize service charges and processing fees, as permitted by state law, to be debited from the same account by paper draft or electronically, at our option. If you have any questions you may contact **Envision** at (800) 290-3957 or www.envisionpayments.com.

2. Once an individual has had two returned checks, the School Nutrition Program Manager will not be allowed to accept any additional checks from that person/account until the previous debts have been taken care of.

At the beginning of each school year, individuals who eliminate any prior debt will be reinstated as a customer in good standing.

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Esta institución es un proveedor que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.



Decatur County Schools

Attendance Protocol

2023-2024

<p>1-7 unexcused absences (UNA)</p>	<p>School Level Interventions. School will make a minimum of three reasonable attempts to have verbal communication with student, parent, guardian and/or other person having control of the student to inquire about the reason for the absence and to inform them of the attendance protocol. A parent conference may be held when a student reaches 5-6 unexcused absences to develop interventions to deter further unexcused absences. School will document all information into Infinite Campus in the Contact Log. A School Level Attendance Letter will also be mailed to parents/guardians.</p>
<p>10 unexcused absences</p>	<p>School Social Work Interventions. The school will submit an attendance referral and supporting documentation to the School Social Worker. The School Social Worker will visit the home to offer assistance to prevent further absences. The School Social Workers will also work in collaboration with the School Faculty and/or Judicial System to develop and implement strategies to work with students and/or parents/guardians to prevent further unexcused absences.</p>

15 unexcused absences	Attendance Task Force Committee Interventions. The parents/guardians will attend a Mandated Attendance Task Force Meeting to discuss unexcused absences and recommendations from the Committee.
18 unexcused absences	Referral to State/Juvenile Court. A warrant and/or juvenile complaint will be issued for violation of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law if the student continues to increase unexcused absences.
Parent Excuses	Each school will only accept 5 parent/guardian handwritten excuses.
Excuses	Excuses are to be submitted within 5 days of student returning to school.

The Attendance Protocol covers students in Kindergarten up to age 16. Principals/Directors will be responsible for appointing the school level Attendance Contact person.

The Attendance Task Force Committee

***Attendance Director**

***School Social Workers**

***Administrator (School Designee)
Children Services**

***Department of Family and**

***Department of Juvenile Justice**

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

2023-2024

Decatur County Schools

This document includes a protocol for addressing and decreasing the incidence of truancy in Decatur County. This protocol reflects a partnership among various local agencies, offices, and individuals to promote the educational progress of children and families in Decatur County.

This partnership includes, but is not limited to, representatives of the following entities:

Decatur County Superior Court
State Court of Decatur County
Solicitor General
Decatur County Juvenile Court
Decatur County District Attorney's Office
Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
Decatur County Board of Education Representatives
Decatur County Board of Education Attorney
Decatur County Sheriff's Office
Decatur County Department of Family and Children Services
Decatur County Health Department
Decatur County Family Connection Collaborative
Director of Bainbridge Public Safety
Decatur County Mental Health Department

The purpose of the committee is to make recommendations to the Decatur County Board of Education regarding attendance policy and procedures, as well as to create guidelines for collaboration between local and state agencies having an interest or function related to educational achievement and school attendance in Decatur County.

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee has agreed upon procedures, which are intended to allow the reduction of truancy at the individual, family, and community levels. It is understood, however, that these procedures are general guidelines, and extenuating circumstances may be considered, as allowable by law, for each student and family. In addition, it is understood that each state and local agency involved must first adhere to its own policies, which were considered in the development of this protocol.

Operational Authority

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee is operational under authority of the chief superior court judge as defined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.2. Following adoption of this written protocol and filing with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), the

committee will meet quarterly during its first year and twice annually thereafter for the purpose of evaluating compliance and effectiveness, and to modify the protocol as appropriate.

Tardies and Early Checkout

Definition of Terms

Tardy to School: Any student arriving at school following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal established by the Principal and intended to indicate the start of the school day. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the bell, chime, or other audible signal will be considered tardy to school.

Tardy to Class: A student is “tardy to class” when he/she arrives to class following the ringing bell, chime or other audible signal indicating the beginning of instructional time.

Excused Tardy: A tardy resulting from events beyond a student’s control shall be determined excused by the Principal or designee. Events may include an accident, road closed due to an accident, area power outage, late bus, or other incidents. Documentation is required to excuse a tardy.

Truant Students

Definition of Terms

Truant: Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than eighteen days of unexcused absences.

Exception for Suspension: School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Excused Absences: Local board of education shall adopt policies and procedures excusing students from school under the following circumstances, as a minimum:

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences may require an excuse from medical doctor)
- Circumstances where attendance in school endangers a student’s health or the health of others
- Serious illness in a student’s immediate family
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school

- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election
- Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly

Grades and Absences: Final student course grades shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met.

- Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.
- Make up work for excused absences were completed satisfactorily. Local boards of education are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

Absence Reduction Plan: The board of education adopts the following policies and/or procedures to reduce unexcused absences.

Parental Notification: Statement of Receipt

- The school system will provide the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school with a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.
- Within thirty (30) school days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of such student must sign a statement indicating receipt of the written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance with local school compulsory attendance policy and protocol.

Consequences and Penalties for Violation of Compulsory Attendance

The Principal or Principal's designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused absences and/or early checkouts at any time if he/she deems necessary. Consequences and penalties may include, but are not limited to the following:

One - Seven (1-7)Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:

- School will make a minimum of **three** reasonable attempts to have verbal communication with student, parent, guardian and/or other person having control of the student to inquire about the reason for the absence and to inform them of the attendance protocol. A parent conference may be held when a student reaches 5-6 unexcused absences to develop interventions to deter further unexcused absences. School will document all information into Infinite Campus in the Contact Log. A School Level Attendance Letter will also be mailed to parents/guardians.

Ten (10) Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:

The school will submit an attendance referral and supporting documentation to the School Social Worker. The School Social Worker will visit the home to offer assistance to prevent further absences. The School Social Workers will also work in collaboration with the School Faculty and/or Judicial System to develop and implement strategies to work with students and/or parents/guardians to prevent further unexcused absences.

Fifteen (15) Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:

The parents/guardians will attend a Mandated Attendance Task Force Meeting to discuss unexcused absences and recommendations from the Committee.

Eighteen (18) Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:

A warrant and/or juvenile complaint will be issued for violation of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law if the student continues to increase unexcused absences.

Parent Excuses:

- Each school will only accept **5** parent/guardian handwritten excuses.
- Excuses are to be submitted within **5** days of student returning to school.

Student Attendance Protocol

School System Procedures

Decatur County Board of Education will monitor student attendance daily. Codes for attendance used in the student records database (Infinite Campus) will be consistent between schools to indicate excused absences, unexcused absences, excused tardies, unexcused tardies, early withdrawals, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. The Decatur County Board of Education will adopt policy and procedure outlining the specific steps to be taken to monitor and address student attendance. Each school will create a building level procedure in accordance with this policy.

Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents and guardians will be given notice of State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1 and the Decatur County Board of Education school attendance policy JBD. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the policy by requesting signatures from parents/guardians that this notice was received and understood. At the middle and high school, students will also receive this notice and provide a signature. At the elementary school, this notice will be received by all students who have reached age

six (6) or above by within the first 30 days of that school year. This notice should also be included in each school's Code of Conduct.

Each school will utilize the Attendance Support Team (AST) to address attendance concerns. An AST meeting that is convened for the purpose of discussing attendance will be chaired by each school's Principal or other designated Administrator and include as its members a rotating committee of faculty having direct contact with the parents/guardians of or providing direct service to the specific student(s) to be discussed as well as the School Social

Worker. School Resource Officers will also be invited to participate, as appropriate. Each school's AST will meet as needed and be responsible for implementing and monitoring policy to reduce tardy days, early withdrawals, and truancy. Parents/guardians shall be invited to and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Daily attempts will be made to call the parents/guardians of absent students. In cases known to involve joint or shared custody or guardianship of a student, efforts should be made to contact all individuals with custodial rights. This principal shall also apply to steps mentioned hereinafter.

The School Social Worker will:

1. Review available information from the AST and parent contacts from school staff.
2. Meet with the student(s) and attempt a home visit within no more than five business days from the date of the receipt of the referral to further explore reasons for absence and offer assistance to the student and family for addressing the causes of absences. Examples of such assistance would include, but is not limited to:
 - Brief individual or group therapeutic intervention with students at school
 - Referral to public or private mental health or counseling services
 - Referral to public or private medical or dental services
 - Referral to public assistance programs
 - Referral to the school's Attendance Support Team
 - In-home support facilitated by the School Social Worker
 - Referral to outside social service or counseling providers for intensive in-home support
 - Referral to Department of Family and Children services, if deemed necessary.
3. Upon further investigation, determine the need for immediate referral of:
 - Students ages ten (10) to sixteen (16) to Juvenile Court for truancy
 - Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students ages six (6) to sixteen (16) to the Magistrate Court for Deprivation, or to Superior Court for Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance
 - Refer to the Decatur County Truancy Reduction Program in Appendix 1

In most cases, a court referral will be made at this point or at the next unexcused absence. The family will be referred to the Department of Family and Children Services for suspicion or indicators of abuse and/or neglect. If a referral is necessary, the local Child Abuse Protocol will take precedence regarding further action.

4. Continue to monitor student attendance weekly and provide support related to the student and family's educational needs once a referral is made to a court or to the Department of Family and Children Services.
5. Review end of year attendance records with each school's Principal and determine a list of active referrals for the beginning of the next school year.

In general, students known to be on probation for truancy are monitored for attendance concerns on a monthly basis the next school year.

II. Criminal Prosecution for Violation of School Attendance Law

O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 requires any person in this State who has control or charge of a child between the ages of six and sixteen to enroll and send that child to school, including public, private, and home schooling.

A child is responsible to attend school and is subject to adjudication in Decatur County Juvenile Court as an unruly child for violation of this statute. If a parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the child causes the child's absence, then that person, and not the child, is in violation of this statute. Such a violation is a misdemeanor and carries a penalty of up to \$100 fine and 30 days in jail for each violation. The law specifies that each day's absence constitutes a separate offense.

For purposes of this Protocol, the term "parent" may include any adult who has charge and control over the child, including a biological, adoptive, foster, or step-parent, a guardian or any other person who has control or charge of the child's attendance at school. In this regard, two parents residing in the same household with the child are equally responsible for the child's attendance at school.

Buses -- Code of Conduct for Students as Passengers on Buses

A. Procedures for boarding the bus:

1. Students must be at the designated bus stop at the time the bus is scheduled to arrive. The bus stop is designated by the driver and/or transportation supervisor.
2. Students who must cross the road before getting on the bus shall wait for the bus to arrive, the driver to display the proper warning signs and hand signals before

crossing the road.

3. All students must cross the road in front of the bus, never behind the bus.
4. Students shall always stand a safe distance off the road and never in the road while waiting for the bus to arrive.
5. While at the bus stop, students should:
 - a. Conduct themselves in an orderly manner
 - b. Avoid littering
 - c. Respect nearby private property rights

B. Procedures for Deboarding the Bus:

1. Students must use the service entrance door while unloading and not the emergency exit doors. The emergency exit is to be used only in emergency situations.
2. Students who must cross the road after getting off the bus should cross at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus after looking both ways to be sure no traffic is approaching from either direction and wait for the driver to signal to cross.
3. Students should walk across the road, never run.
4. Students should not ask to be let off at stops other than their assigned stop unless requested in writing by the student's parents or guardians and approved by the principal or other school administrator.

C. Rules for Riding the Bus:

1. Students shall take seats promptly after boarding the bus. No seats can be reserved. Should the driver assign a student a seat, the student must comply. Students will remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
2. Students must keep arms and heads inside the bus.
3. Students shall not use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco in any form.
4. Students shall not throw objects on the bus or out the windows.
5. Students shall not distract the driver.
6. Students shall not eat food or drink beverages.
7. Students shall not transport live animals.
8. Students shall not litter.
9. Students shall not transport items which may endanger the health or safety of any other passengers.
10. Students shall not transport weapons or fireworks.
11. Students shall not use inappropriate language as follows: It is unacceptable to use language or gestures that are lewd, obscene, profane or in general offensive and objectionable as measured by the prudent and prevailing standard of the community and the Board of Education.
12. Students shall not be disobedient as follows: It is unacceptable to be defiant or refuse to obey and follow a legitimate request, rule, regulation, directive or order.
13. Students shall not be disrespectful as follows: It is unacceptable to be discourteous, impolite, rude, or insubordinate.
14. Students shall not be disruptive as follows: It is unacceptable to interrupt in any of its settings, the orderly course of transportation affairs by any means, way, form or fashion.
15. Students shall not be abusive or aggressive as follows: It is unacceptable to fight, mistreat, misuse, demean, insult, intimidate, extort, mock, ridicule, threaten or use excessive force.
16. Students shall follow school dress codes.

17. Students are expected to comply with any and/or all other policies and regulations as stipulated by the Decatur County Board of Education.

SPECIAL NOTE: Students are subject to being recorded on video cameras at any time they are riding a school bus.

When appropriate, violations deemed will be reported to the Principal or other designee for disciplinary action.

(1st Offense) - Warning and Parent Contact

(2nd Offense) -3 days bus suspension

(3rd Offense) - 5 days bus suspension

(4th Offense) - 10 days bus suspension

(5th Offense) - Bus suspension for the remainder of the semester and/or year.

NOTE: Principals have the discretion to alter a student's discipline depending on the circumstances.

MESSAGE TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE PASSENGERS ON BUSES

Parents or guardians are ultimately accountable for the behavior of their minor children. The drivers need your cooperation and support of their efforts to enforce the rules that are essential to the safety and security of your children. While the drivers represent you in a parent-like role, the students must obey them regarding the rules for students the same as if you, the parents or guardians, were enforcing them. Your responsibility is to enforce at home that you require and expect your children to follow the specified rules while they are passengers on a school bus.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Parents or guardians who fail to act responsibly in teaching, requiring and upholding rules for their children while they are passengers on school buses may subject themselves to:

1. Providing your child's own transportation up to the remainder of the year.
2. Facing Disciplinary action from the Court System.

School Bus Ride Guide

Going to the School Bus Stop

You should leave your house early enough to ensure that you will not miss your bus. After the school year has started and your driver has had an opportunity to stabilize the bus schedule, you should be at your bus stop five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. If you have to cross the street to get on your bus, wait until the bus arrives and the driver motions you to cross. You should also check the traffic yourself.

Wait at the Bus Stop

While waiting at the bus stop you should keep your books and other materials in your hand. You should wait well away from the road. Always remember that you are at a bus stop, not a playground. When you see a bus approaching you

should wait in a single file line, do not push and shove.

Getting on the School Bus

When getting on your bus, you should always use the handrail. Never push or shove while getting on the bus. When going up the steps, you should always take one step at a time. If you are the only person in the seat, you should move over to the window.

Riding the School Bus

You should remain seated throughout your trip and follow Code of Conduct for Students as Passengers on Buses.

Emergency Evacuation

Front Door Evacuation:

1. Bus Driver will give command: "Front Door Emergency Evacuation" students are to remain seated.
2. Driver will assign two helpers beside the front door.
3. Starting with the right-hand seat, students will be led off the bus and away from the bus 40 steps or 100 feet.
4. When the students in the right-hand seat have moved forward enough to clear the aisle, the driver will dismiss the students of the left-hand seat.
5. Continue the evacuation procedure as described, right and left seats alternately, until the bus is empty.
6. Remember to walk, do not run, use the hand rails and follow your bus drivers' instructions.

Rear Emergency Door Evacuation:

1. Bus Driver will give command: "Rear Door Emergency Evacuation" students are to remain seated.
2. Driver will assign two helpers beside the rear door.
3. Starting with the right-rear seat, students will sit down in the aisle at the rear door, slide out, and be led away from the bus 40 steps or 100 feet.
4. When the students in the right-rear seat have moved out the rear door, and have cleared the aisle, the driver will dismiss the students of the left rear seat.
5. Continue the evacuation procedure as described, right then left seats alternately until the bus is empty.
6. Remember, no pushing or shoving, allow assigned helpers to assist you while sliding out the rear door and follow your bus drivers' instructions.

Water Safety

In accordance with O.C.G.A 20-2-779.3, it is important that all parents and students be aware of the importance of water safety and swimming. In Decatur County, The Bainbridge Decatur County YMCA offers swimming lessons. This agency can be reached at 229-243-0508 and is located at 1818 E Shotwell St Bainbridge, GA 39819.

NOTES: