



Pathways Educational Program

"Changing pathways for a brighter future"

2022-2023 Parent/Student Handbook

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“Changing pathways for a brighter future”

Our Mission

Pathways Educational Program is dedicated to delivering research-based therapeutic and educational support tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. Our students come from a variety of backgrounds and many have experienced significant trauma. Working together with parents and the community, consistent and intensive interventions form new pathways in the brain allowing students to heal and become productive members of society.

Pathways GNETS Center Staff Directory

Administration

Susan Weakland	sweakland@tcjackets.net	Director
Jeanna Mayhall	jmayhall@tcjackets.net	Coordinator
Janice Jones	jjones@tcjackets.net	Secretary/Receptionist

Student Services

Brooke Wingate	bwingate@tcjackets.net	Behavior Interventionist
Ashley Stephens	astephens@tcjackets.net	Crisis Interventionist
Katie Helton	khelton@tcjackets.net	Crisis Interventionist
Shae Lee	slee@tcjackets.net	School Nurse
Officer Al Banos	abanos@bhknights.net	Resource Officer
TBA		Social Worker

Educational Services

Wanda Anderson	wanderson@tcjackets.net	Support Teacher
Nicole Brooks	abrooks@tcjackets.net	Support Teacher
Faye Carter	dcarter@tcjackets.net	Support Teacher
Krysti Gambrel	kgambrel@tcjackets.net	LEAD Teacher
Felicia McCray	fmccray@tcjackets.net	Support Teacher
Amy Mercer	amercer@tcjackets.net	Teacher
Nicole Peppers	hpeppers@tcjackets.net	Teacher
Holly Smith	hsmith@tcjackets.net	Teacher
Taylor Smith	tasmith@tcjackets.net	Teacher
Bill Wilhelm	bwilhelm@tcjackets.net	P. E. Teacher
TBA		Support Teacher

Attendance

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. If your child desires to eat breakfast, please ensure that he arrives before 8:00 a.m. Supervision for students will be available at 7:30 a.m. in the Bishop Hall cafeteria. Students dropped off between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. must be dropped off at the Bishop Hall cafeteria. **Please do not drop your child off before 7:30 a.m. Students are considered tardy after 8:00 a.m. and must be signed in at the front office to obtain a tardy slip for class.** It is essential that students not miss instructional time due to unexcused tardies.

The school day ends at 2:30 p.m. due to the need to bus students to neighboring counties. If you transport your child, please remember that your child must be picked up between 2:30 – 2:40 p.m.

Compulsory Attendance Policy:

Pathways students are subject to the attendance policies and procedures of their home school systems. For further information regarding systems' policies, please contact your child's home school or refer to the "Compulsory Attendance Law" (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1) in the Board Policy/State & Federal Requirement section of this handbook.

Thomas County Schools	225-4380
Thomasville City Schools	225-2600
Grady County Schools	377-3701
Pelham City Schools	294-8715
Baconton Charter School	787-9999
Mitchell County Schools	321-7002

Enrollment:

Enrollment in Pathways is determined by the student's IEP team. Students enrolling in or attending Pathways shall be enrolled in the school district in which he resides.

Withdrawals:

Parents/Guardians must withdraw students from their home school and that system's special education office upon relocation to a different district or enrollment in a home-school program. If a student relocates to a school system within the Pathways service area, the parent/guardian must enroll the student in the appropriate system. Students are not allowed to attend Pathways if they are not enrolled in a public school system within the service area. Students who relocate to a system served by the same Pathways Center must be enrolled in the new system within five school days. After five days, the student will not be allowed to attend the center until the parent/guardian has provided proof of enrollment.

Behavior Support

Student Achievement Model (SAM):

SAM is a systematic behavior teaching model. The goal of Pathways is to teach replacement behaviors for inappropriate behavior. Students must be taught socially acceptable methods of handling conflict and upset. At Pathways, the teaching of social skills and replacement behaviors for inappropriate behaviors is as important as teaching academic skills. Through SAM, appropriate and socially acceptable replacement skills are taught and reinforced. A couple of examples of socially acceptable replacement skills we teach are:

- 1) When a student is having a difficult time following directions, the staff will teach the student the steps to following directions -
 - Look at the person.
 - Say “Okay.”
 - Do it right away.
 - Check back if needed.
- 2) When a student is having a difficult time accepting “no” for an answer, the staff will teach the student the steps to accepting “no” –
 - Look at the person.
 - Say “Okay.”
 - Stay calm.
 - If you disagree, do so later.

You will hear references being made to the student point sheet, which is part of the SAM program. SAM consists of three levels: Foundations, Progress, and Transitions. All students enter the program on the Foundations level. In order to advance to the next level, students are expected to exhibit mastery of behavioral expectations prior to level movement. At each level, the expectations increase as consistent reinforcement and support strategically fades.

Foundations Level - Front of Point Sheet:

8:00-9:00 1st Period				9:00-10:00 2nd Period				10:00-11:00 3rd Period				Non-Classroom A.M.			
Social Skills	Points	SI	TC	Social Skills	Points	SI	TC	Social Skills	Points	SI	TC	Social Skills	Points	SI	TC
T1				T1				T1				T1			
T2				T2				T2				T2			
T3				T3				T3				T3			
Active Learning	Points	SI	TC	Active Learning	Points	SI	TC	Active Learning	Points	SI	TC	Active Learning	Points	SI	TC
F1				F1				F1				F1			
F2				F2				F2				F2			
Other Behaviors	Points	SI	TC	Other Behaviors	Points	SI	TC	Other Behaviors	Points	SI	TC	Other Behaviors	Points	SI	TC
Total (+)				Total (+)				Total (+)				Total (+)			
Rep. Skill	Points	SI	TC	Rep. Skill	Points	SI	TC	Rep. Skill	Points	SI	TC	Rep. Skill	Points	SI	TC
Total (-)				Total (-)				Total (-)				Total (-)			

SI (Staff's Initials)

TC (Teacher Code) - PC (Positive Correction) - SE (Setting Expectations)

All students begin on the Foundations Level. Students earn positive points for appropriate behavior and earn learning points (negative consequence with an opportunity to earn points back) for inappropriate behavior. At this level, students earn frequent positive feedback, at least every 10 minutes, for appropriate behavior. Foundations students are provided with a highly structured environment and constant adult supervision in order to teach the students basic skills. Students at this level earn 50,000-60,000 points a day in all areas, classroom and non-classroom, such as the hallway, cafeteria, gym, etc. Students have the choice to spend their points at the end of the day in the school store for tangible rewards, save their points for more expensive items, purchase bonds which are required for level advancement, or they can choose to bank their points.

Progress Level - Front of Point Sheet:

Progress Card

Name: _____ Points Negotiated: _____

Date: _____ Student's Initials: _____ Teacher's Initials: _____

Periods	Self-Monitoring																							
	1				2				3				4				5				6			
Basic Skills	S	T	M	T	S	T	M	T	S	T	M	T	S	T	M	T	S	T	M	T	S	T	M	T
	R	R	B	I	R	R	B	I	R	R	B	I	R	R	B	I	R	R	B	I	R	R	B	I
Follows Instructions																								
Accepts Feedback																								
Self-Control																								

Self-Monitoring
 (+) Excellent/Skill Used Effectively
 (O) Minor Problems/Self-Corrected
 (-) Major Problems/Assistance Required

Matching Bonus
 2 points- Perfect Match
 1 point- Mismatched by 1 Rating
 0 points- Mismatched by 2 Ratings

Students are able to advance to Progress Level by demonstrating their ability to follow directions at least 70% of the time, exhibit self-control at least 80% of the time, complete assignments at least 80% of the time, earn no Intensive Interventions (IIs) for 10 consecutive days, earn no more than 15,000 cumulative learning points (negative consequence) during the 10 days prior to advancement, complete a progress project, complete a “Reflection of My Progress” form, and receive an 80% or better on the “Expectations for Progress” assessment.

On Progress Level, expectations for the student slowly increase, consequences are less concrete (student doesn't require rewards such as snacks, toys, games, etc. as often), and staff strategically fades support (moves from continuous reinforcement to intermediate reinforcement), allowing the student to demonstrate his mastery of appropriate social/emotional skills on their own without constant support.

Transitions Level:

Students advance to Transitions Level by demonstrating 10 consecutive days with no Intensive Interventions (IIs), no major learning interactions, following directions at least 80% of the time, accepting feedback at least 80% of the time, exercising self-control at least 90% of the time, and completing assignments at least 90% of the time. To earn Transitions status, the student must complete a Transitions service project, complete a “Reflection of Progress” form, and earn an 80% or better on the “Transitions

Assessment.” A Transition student consistently completes his work, demonstrates the basic behavior skills at mastery level, works through conflicts successfully without teacher involvement, uses self-control strategies independently and consistently, attends school consistently, and accurately monitors his own performance.

How can parents support?

Your support of the behavior and academic programs at Pathways is paramount in changing your child’s emotional health. As a parent/guardian, you should discuss daily school activities with your child. One very valuable resource for you is the daily conference sheet that all students on Foundations and Progress levels should bring home each day. This sheet will give you a snapshot of your child’s day, as well as let you know how your child met any or all of the PBIS expectations each day. Please ask your child for this documentation each day, review and discuss it with him, and check for any messages from the school. The classroom teachers and intervention staff use conference sheets to provide feedback on your child’s behavioral progress. Please sign and return conference sheets to your child’s teacher each day. Communication is the key to a healthy relationship with your child and the school.

PBIS



One model that Pathways Educational Program utilizes to shape, mold, and change behavior is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

What is School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports?

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is a general term that refers to the application of positive interventions and system changes to achieve socially important behavior change. It is based on a problem-solving model and aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports). For a complete definition and more information, visit

<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Positive-Behavioral-Interventions-and-Support.aspx>

PBIS fits into Georgia's Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS): Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions as a Tier I, a universal approach which determines the set of social skills/behaviors that all students are expected to display. The curriculum consists of specific school-wide expectations which are taught to students and reinforced in every setting. Progress monitoring by school-based PBIS teams guide the application of interventions through the Response to Intervention (RTI) model in a consistent and systematic manner.

What are the GOALS of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports?

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports is not a new intervention package. It is an application of a behaviorally-based system approach to enhancing the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the fit between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. The focus is on creating and sustaining school environments that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, academic, work, etc.) for all students by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant while making desired behavior more functional. In addition, the use of culturally appropriate interventions is emphasized.

Who is INVOLVED in the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports Process?

School-wide PBIS requires a collaborative team consisting of:

- Administrators
- Teachers
- Support personnel, such as graduation coaches, counselors, school improvement facilitators, etc.
- Special education personnel, such as behavior specialists, lead teachers, interventionists, etc.

Pathways PBIS Expectations:

Pathways students R.I.S.E. U.P. (Respect for Individuals, Self, and the Environment - Uniting Pathways)

When a student exhibits appropriate behavior that demonstrates respect for individuals (others), self, or the environment he is recognized immediately for positive behavior by receiving verbal affirmation and earning points on the daily point sheet for this positive behavior. The staff issuing the positive reinforcement will tie a specific SAM skill that was exhibited appropriately to the PBIS expectation exhibited and will verbally explain this to the student. If a student exhibits exceptional respect and growth, the student can earn a Golden Ticket.

Pictured below is a sample of our PBIS matrix. The matrix outlines the behavioral expectations in each setting and how respect is demonstrated for individuals (others), self, and the environment.

R.I.S.E. U.P.
SHOWING RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS, SELF AND ENVIRONMENT
~UNITING PATHWAYS~

Showing Respect for:	ARRIVAL + DISMISSAL	HALLWAY	CLASSROOM	BATHROOM	CAFETERIA	GYM	ASSEMBLY	LIBRARY
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your hands & feet to yourself Use kind words Use kind actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in your lane Keep your hands and feet to yourself Hold the door for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise your hand to speak Use kind words Keep hands, feet, & objects to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the privacy of others Report any problems to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit with feet under table Use an indoor voice Stay in your own space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter and exit quietly Use kind words Use kind actions Keep hands, feet, & equipment to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter & exit quietly Walk at all times Use kind words & actions Use appropriate applause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return material on time Use a quiet voice
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk promptly to your assigned area Stay with your assigned teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greet others Set a good example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete your work Participate Follow instructions Listen to your teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go Flush Wash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat your food only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes and ears on the teacher Follow directions Participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes & ears on the speaker Participate Sit appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use time wisely Stay on task Follow directions
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep up with your possessions Walk on sidewalks only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hallways clear & clean Enjoy displays on walls with eyes only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep materials in your area Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put all trash in trash can Keep water in sink Turn off water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave a clean table, chair, & floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of the equipment Put equipment in proper place Put all trash in trash can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your area clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put things in their proper place Take care of books

Posters outlining the PBIS expectations are posted around the school, as well as in each area with specific behavioral expectations for that area. Pictured below is an example of the “Classroom” expectations.

R.I.S.E. U.P.
Showing Respect for Individuals, Self, and Environment
~Uniting Pathways~

RESPECT FOR:

INDIVIDUALS

- RAISE HANDS TO SPEAK
- USE KIND WORDS
- KEEP HANDS, FEET, & OBJECTS TO SELF

SELF

- COMPLETE YOUR WORK
- PARTICIPATE
- FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS
- LISTEN TO YOUR TEACHER

ENVIRONMENT

- KEEP MATERIALS IN YOUR AREA
- CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF

**C
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M**

 **Pathways Educational Program**

Golden Ticket:

Golden Tickets are earned by a student who exhibits exceptional respect for individuals, self, and/or environment. The student is immediately recognized for his positive behavior and earns a Golden Ticket. Golden Tickets afford the student the opportunity to independently walk to the office of an administrator or other designated staff to share his accomplishment. The student is expected to be able to tell the administrator or designee what he did to earn the Golden Ticket and which expectation he exhibited. If he is unable to explain why he earned the Golden Ticket and which expectation he met, he will be asked to return to the person who issued the ticket for a reminder. He then will return to the administrator or designee and explain why he got the ticket and the expectation he exhibited. When a student earns a Golden Ticket, he has the opportunity to choose a reward listed on the ticket. His name is entered in the Golden Risers monthly drawing for a bigger incentive. He can also obtain a copy of his ticket to take home to share with his parents. The original ticket is displayed on the hallway wall. Once each hallway is wrapped in Golden Tickets, a school-wide incentive is provided to celebrate these positive behaviors and school-wide progress.



Name: _____

Golden Ticket

Circle your choice of reward:

Snack or Drink

Free Fun Friday (as long as all other criteria is met)

15 minutes of Computer Time

1 Hour in Teacher Chair

Lunch with Adult of your Choice

Pathways Students R.I.S.E. U.P. We show:

Respect for Individuals

Respect for Self

Respect for the Environment

-Uniting Pathways

Teacher's Signature: _____

Parent Bucks:

Pathways values parent/guardian support and is thankful for each contact. When we work together, positive changes can be made in the progress of our students. To demonstrate our gratitude, staff members document contacts with parents/guardians by completing Parent Buck slips. Parents/Guardians receive Parent Bucks for answering the phone when the school calls, for attending school events, for attending conferences, IEP meetings, etc. These Bucks are entered into a monthly drawing. The parent/guardian whose name is pulled receives a gift to show our appreciation of their involvement and support.

Parent Bucks

Student: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent of the Month for _____



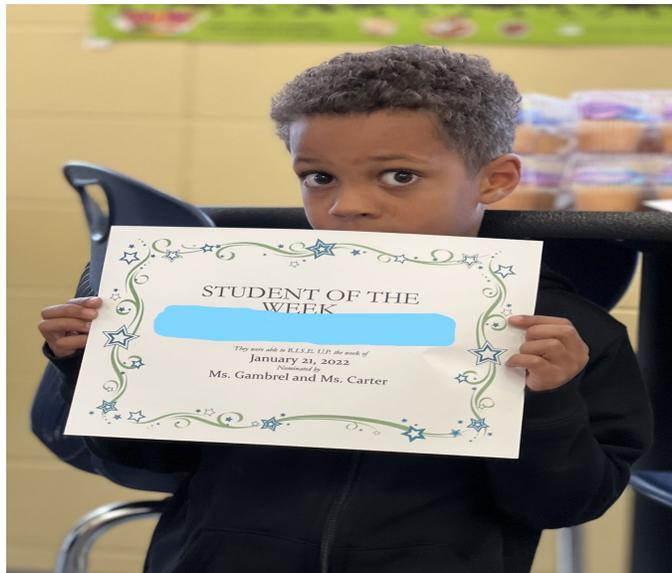
Pathways parents/guardians
RISE UP by showing Respect
for Individuals, Self, and the
Environment.

~Uniting Pathways~

Student of the Week, Student of the Month, i-Ready, Drumming, Attendance, Artist of the Month, and Sportsmanship Award:

As an added incentive, students are nominated by staff to be named “Student of the Week.” Recipients of this award will be announced each Friday at 10:30 in the cafeteria just before lunch. Students are chosen for this award by showing Respect for Individuals, Self, and the Environment - Uniting Pathways, in other words, meeting PBIS expectations for that week. All students who are nominated are recognized, but the staff votes to choose one student as the top winner for the “Student of the Week.”

At the end of each month, one student will be selected to receive the award for “Student of the Month.” Again, selection for this award ties back to the PBIS expectations for showing Respect for Individuals, Self, and the Environment - Uniting Pathways.



Recognition will be given to students who have met their goal for i-Ready on the last Friday of each month. Students are expected to participate in 45 minutes weekly of i-Ready in the areas of Math and Reading.

Attendance awards will be announced on the last Friday of each month. These awards are given to students who have been at school every day for the current month. To be counted present for the full day, students must not leave before 11:30.

The Drumming award will be given to one student monthly for showing exceptional drumming skills and participation for the month.

On the last Friday of each month, a Sportsmanship Award will be given to one student. This student will be chosen by Coach Wilhem and will be awarded to the student that has shown exceptional sportsmanship by displaying the PBIS expectations during P.E. that month.

An Artist of the month will be selected each month, and awarded with one-on-one private art lessons during their lunch period. Should the student choose not to take advantage of this opportunity, another student will be given the opportunity for the month.

Winners will be posted on our weekly scroll in the front office and pictured on our school Facebook and web pages.

Mindset:

Students who attend Pathways Educational Program may have significant behavior problems, which could prove to be harmful to themselves or others. For this reason, staff members are trained in the risk management program titled Mindset. The Mindset method focuses on communication techniques to de-escalate crisis situations and also teaches restraint techniques to safely and effectively manage physical aggression. The use of Mindset restraint techniques is always a last resort. If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact an administrator for more details. *The seclusion or restraint of students is addressed in the board policies section at the back of this handbook.*

LSCI:

Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) is a brain-based, trauma-informed, relationship-building verbal strategy that turns crisis situations into learning opportunities for young people who exhibit challenging behaviors. LSCI provides educators, counselors, social workers, psychologists, child & youth care workers, parents, and other caring adults with a systematic, 6-stage process to move from stress and conflict to insight and long-term behavioral change. Staff members at Pathways Educational Program are trained in LSCI.

Specialized Therapies

Every student served at Pathways is a unique individual with unique challenges. Every type of therapy does not work with every student. In an effort to provide each student with therapy that meets his needs, we offer a variety of therapies. Every student is provided with each type of therapy and will respond differently based on his uniqueness. It is our hope that at least one of these therapies is a good fit for each student. The students are required to respectfully attend each therapy but are not required to participate. It is our hope that over time each student will become more participative and benefit equally from each type of therapy provided.

Social Skills: Every student receives social skills instruction daily for one hour. For individuals with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties, social skills are as important or more important than an academic subject. At the end of this handbook is a calendar with the focus area being studied by the school for that week.

Art Therapy:

Art therapy is provided once per week as a class with Mrs. Lindajo Haythorne, certified art therapist. Mrs. Lindajo is a retired art teacher who is highly skilled in providing therapeutic art support. Through her class, students explore feelings through a variety of art mediums. The Artist of the month will be given private art lessons for the month.



Drum Therapy:

Pathways teacher, Ms. Taylor Smith, is training to become a certified African Drum Therapist. We have purchased enough African drums for each class to participate in drum therapy with Ms. Smith. Most students will participate in drum therapy once or twice per week.

Yoga Therapy:

Yoga is provided weekly by Katherine Hanson. Katherine Hanson is a Registered Trauma-Informed Yoga Teacher and Registered Children's Yoga Teacher, holding both a certification in trauma-focused somatic care and several Yoga Alliance certifications, and is a member of the International Association of Yoga Therapists. Ms. Hanson also serves as a partner educator with Yoga Ed, an international yoga education company that provides yoga training and classes to help reduce anxiety and improve well-being in children and adults. During her sessions with Pathways students, she utilizes evidence-based lesson plans to provide students with mind-body resources to assist in relieving stress, improving resiliency, and enhancing social-emotional learning. She is passionate about working with students to give them the keys to their own health and wellness by cultivating mindfulness and joy through movement.

Therapeutic Horseback Riding:

Therapeutic Horseback riding lessons are offered monthly through Hands and Hearts for Horses. Hands and Hearts for Horses is a Premiere Accredited therapeutic horseback riding center through PATH Intl. that provides unique therapeutic services to individuals with a variety of special needs. Our clients often have limited access to specialized physical activities and limited resources. The populations we serve include, but are not limited to, individuals with autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger syndrome), Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and traumatic brain injuries. Therapeutic riding is documented to help improve gross and fine motor skills, cognitive abilities, and general well-being. Hands and Hearts for Horses is conducted off-campus. Students may be denied the opportunity to go off campus if their behavior warrants it.

Individual Counseling:

Each student will receive individual counseling sessions with our counselor. The number of sessions each student receives is based on the specific needs of the student and can change throughout the year based on the child's unique circumstances. All students are seen at least once a month for a "check-in" session with their counselor.

Family and Individual Counseling:

Christine M. Renaud, Ph.D. is a Child, Adolescent & Family Psychologist who has been practicing in Thomasville for over 25 years. She specializes in Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Family and Individual Counseling, Grief Therapy, and is a certified Trauma therapist. She has experience working in the areas of child sexual and physical abuse, depression, anxiety, mood disorders, ADHD, divorce, adjustment issues, and school-related difficulties.

Georgia Apex Project (GAP):

GAP counselors are housed on our campus. GAP services are provided as an additional service with parent permission. Information regarding GAP services is provided through our school counselor. The Georgia Apex Program (Apex), funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), strives to build capacity and increase access to mental health services for school-aged youth, Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade, throughout the state. Apex recognizes schools as a natural environment for identification and intervention and aims to reduce the number of youth with unmet mental health needs. The program promotes collaboration between community mental health providers and schools to provide school-based services and supports, including training for school staff, in hopes of facilitating the right care at the right time for children, young adults, and families.

Curriculum

Pathways follows the Georgia Department of Education's Georgia Standards of Excellence. Pathways staff use pacing guides and curriculum for teaching standards supplied by the Thomas County School System. Students will participate in standardized testing as they would in the regular education setting with testing accommodations outlined by the student's IEP.

Elementary School:

Ms. Krysti Gambrel is certified in Early Childhood, Special Education General Curriculum, Language Arts, Math, Reading, Science, and Social studies. Ms. Gambrel is qualified in all content areas and offers direct instruction, cooperative learning and all lessons are student centered. Ms. Gambrel is excited to begin her 11th year at Pathways.

Middle School:

Middle school teachers are required to be certified in the subject area in which they teach. Fifth through eighth grade students will begin their day with their homeroom teacher and remain with that teacher for Social Skills. Students will change classes for math, science, social studies, and language arts instruction. Ms. Taylor Smith is certified in middle grades social studies and language arts. Mrs. Amy Mercer is certified in middle grades science and math.

High School:

High school students are provided direct instruction in all high school math courses by Ms. Nicole Peppers, certified high school math teacher. For all other high school subjects, high school students will be instructed using the virtual teaching tool, Odysseyware, and supported by Ms. Peppers, Ms. Holly Smith, and the high school support teachers. Information pertaining to Odysseyware is explained below.

Odysseyware:

Odysseyware is an online curriculum with dynamic, engaging lessons and interactive features designed for students in grades 3-12. Odysseyware has an easy-to-use learning management system and includes over 300 standards-aligned courses, enriching electives, including CTAE courses, and AP and test preparation courses. Odysseyware offers several courses designed to meet specific state standards. Pathways utilizes Odysseyware to guide instruction in the subject matter for which we do not have a certified teacher. Students are not expected to be totally self-sufficient using this virtual teaching tool. Teachers are available to support students with the program through small-group or individual assistance.

Pathways will utilize supplemental computer programs to aid in instruction. Listed below are a couple of programs that our students will use at least weekly.

- ***i-Ready:*** A single K–12 adaptive computerized diagnostic for reading and mathematics that pinpoints students' needs down to the sub-skill level. Ongoing progress monitoring allows teachers to monitor growth and/or areas requiring remediation. Students are required to spend 45 minutes per week on i-Ready reading and 45 minutes per week on i-Ready math.
- ***Flocabulary:*** Offers engaging lessons for every subject area. With Flocabulary, every lesson is an opportunity to bring the curriculum to life and reinforce core knowledge and skills. Flocabulary maps content and standards across the curriculum. We help students build vocabulary, develop literacy skills, and deepen content knowledge through an engaging and culturally-responsive platform.

Discipline Policy

Pathways Educational Program has a desire to ensure that all students receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE). In order to ensure that all students receive the best educational experience, it is imperative that a school-wide discipline policy is established and enforced. The purpose of these disciplinary procedures is to ensure that all students and parents are aware of the actions that violate the school rules and the consequences of these violations. The school-wide discipline policy is a framework to guide the Pathways administration in determining disciplinary actions; however, each situation will be evaluated individually and actions will be based on the severity of the offense and the student's disability and needs. Every infraction may not be addressed here. Pathways reserves the right to modify this policy as circumstances arise that impede the safety and welfare of its students and staff. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the discipline policy outlined below, please feel free to contact the school administration.

Please note: When the school notifies the parent that a student must be picked up, it is the responsibility of the parent to pick the student up OR to make arrangements for another person to pick up the student. If someone other than the parent is picking up the student, the parent must notify the school who is picking up the student and inform that person that he will need to provide an ID when arriving.

Level 1 Offenses:

Consequences are handled by the classroom staff and may include one or more of the following:

- Parent/guardian notification
- Parent conference
- Rearrange seating or classroom arrangement
- Use of SAM – learning points issued on point sheet and positive points issued for corrective actions
- Social skills instruction to teach replacement behaviors

Level 2 Offenses:

Consequences are handled by the classroom staff, crisis interventionist, behavior specialist, **and/or** school administrators and may include one or more of the following:

- Parent/guardian notification REQUIRED
- Intensive Intervention REQUIRED
- Notification of school resource officer (SRO)
- Class change
- Confiscation of item
- In-school suspension
- Loss of privileges
- SAM level reduction
- Restitution
- Supervised out-of-classroom time out
- Social skills instruction
- Bus suspension
- Behavior contract
- Treatment team meeting
- Lunch detention

Level 3 Offenses:

Consequences are handled by school administrators and may include:

- Parent/guardian notification REQUIRED
- Notification of school resource officer (SRO) REQUIRED
- Intensive Intervention (REQUIRED)
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- SAM level reduction
- Restitution
- Placement change
- Bus suspension/expulsion
- Tribunal

Offense	Consequence
Verbal assault of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel; use of profane, vulgar, slang, suggestive, and/or obscene words or gestures directed towards a staff member.	Level 1, 2, or 3
Verbal assault of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel through any form of electronic communication or social media.	Level 3
Physical assault or battery of teacher(s), administrator(s), and other school personnel on school property or off school property if school-related. This includes touching, striking, pushing, or threatening bodily or psychological harm to any school system personnel.	Level 3
Disrespectful conduct toward teachers, administrators, and other school personnel; rude and disrespectful behavior.	Level 1
Insubordination: Refusal to carry out instructions of staff members on any school campus or school activity.	Level 1
Verbal assault of or aggressive behavior toward other students.	Level 1 – Verbal, physical aggression with no contact Level 2 – Physical aggression with minimal contact Level 3 – Physical aggression resulting in injury to another student

Threatening or intimidating another student that includes a pattern of bullying, social media posts, and racial slurs.	Level 3
Physical assault or battery of another student; aggressive physical contact; fighting	Level 3
Disrespectful conduct to another student. This includes any type of provocation, harassment, or other antagonistic behavior.	Level 1
Alcohol possession of, use of, under the influence of, or sale of alcohol on school property or while attending a school function.	Level 3
Possession of pornographic material in any form including electronic.	Level 2 or 3
Leaving campus	Level 2 or 3
Dress code violation	Level 1
Failure to follow the Internet Acceptable Use Policy	Level 1, 2, or 3
<u>Sexual harassment/misconduct</u> (Sexual misconduct which may include molesting another student, indecent exposure, rape, consensual sex acts, or any other overt sexual act on school property, during school functions, or under school supervision. Sexual harassment may include sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions, pressure for dates, leering, touching, pinching, and commenting about a person's body, sending suggestive, vulgar, or sexually explicit communications, drawing offensive pictures, or making obscene gestures.)	Level 2 or 3
<u>Drugs</u> (a) Distribution of, sale of, or attempting to sell on school property, or while attending a school function. Distribution of any prescription medication to any student or sharing any prescription medication with another student will be considered a violation of this rule and will result in the notification of law enforcement officials and disciplinary action.	Level 3
(b) Possession of, use of, being under the influence of, drugs or possessing drug paraphernalia on school property or while attending a school function.	Level 3

<p>(c) Possession of prescription drugs, including medical marijuana and/or CBD oil, or over-the-counter drugs.</p>	<p>Level 2 or 3</p>
<p><u>Tobacco or Vapes</u> Possession and/or use of tobacco or a tobacco alternative in any form are prohibited on campus, on school buses, and at school activities or functions. Cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, lighters, matches, and smokeless tobacco will be confiscated.</p>	<p>Level 2 or 3</p>
<p><u>Communication/Electronic Devices</u> Students shall not use, display, or turn on cellular phones or any other electronic devices during class time unless it is directly supervised by a teacher for a class activity. Any electronic device (including the battery) used without permission during class time will be confiscated. External speakers are prohibited.</p>	<p>Level 1 or 2</p>
<p><u>Weapons</u> (a) It is the policy of the Board of Education that a student shall not possess, use, handle or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon on property or in a building owned or leased by a school district, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation provided by the school district. Weapons may include, but are not limited to: a) Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.</p>	<p>Level 3 Students who possess any weapon described in (a) in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of one calendar year expulsion. The superintendent shall have the authority either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing to reduce the mandated one-year expulsion under circumstances where the one-year expulsion appears excessive to the superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment. Finally, in any tribunal decision appealed to the board of education, the board may reduce the mandated punishment but shall consider whether the superintendent and/or tribunal considered a reduction and any rationale in denying such a reduction.</p>
<p>(b) Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapons, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to</p>	<p>Level 3 b) 10 days OSS; notification of parents and law officials if the law is violated; possible recommendation for a tribunal. A student who uses or threatens to use a weapon on a student or employee will be suspended for a formal hearing. Punishment by the state is a fine of not more than \$10,000; imprisonment for not less</p>

<p>swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nunchuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or taser. Such terms shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.</p>	<p>than two nor more than ten years, or both. (O.C.G.A. 15-11-37)</p>
<p><u>Bomb Threats</u> A bomb threat is defined as transmitting in any manner a false alarm to the effect that a bomb or other explosive of any nature is concealed on school property creating a potentially dangerous situation.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>
<p><u>Terrorist Threats</u> Terroristic threats are defined as the following: (a) A student threatens to commit any crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize another or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror. (b) A student threatens to commit a crime of violence with the purpose to cause evacuation of a school or building or otherwise to cause serious public inconvenience or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such evacuation or inconvenience.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>
<p><u>Property</u> (a) Willful and malicious destruction, defacement, and/or vandalism of, and/or threat to destroy school or private property of school system employees. Includes such actions as the use of threats of bombs, explosives, setting fires, and the deliberate and serious destruction of school or private property. Private property will include, but not be limited to, vehicles, building structures, and grounds.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>
<p>(b) Less serious offenses, such as sitting on air conditioners or garbage cans, may also cause damage to school property and may result in charges for damages and/or disciplinary action.</p>	<p>Level 1 or 2</p>
<p><u>Theft</u> Acts of theft by taking school property or private property (including items on or in a teacher's desk or in a classroom). Theft by conversion. Theft of lost or</p>	<p>Level 3</p>

<p>mislaid properties. Theft by receiving stolen property.</p>	
<p><u>Disturbances</u> (c) A terroristic threat against another student; school-wide threat or intimidation</p>	<p>Level 2 or 3</p>
<p><u>Bus Misbehavior</u> Conduct on Bus and/or at Bus Stop (a) Misbehavior</p>	<p>Level 1, 2, or 3</p>
<p>(b) Vandalism</p>	<p>Level 2 or 3</p>
<p><u>False Safety Reports</u> No student shall make false calls to emergency services or report false fire alarms which create a potentially dangerous interruption to the normal school operation and both the physical and emotional well-being of students and staff. (a) False call to emergency services (b) False fire alarm</p>	<p>Level 1, 2, or 3</p>
<p><u>Off-Campus Offenses</u> Students shall be disciplined for engaging in off-campus conduct that affects the safety and welfare of the school, staff, students, and/or property at the school. Off-campus misconduct for which a student shall be disciplined includes, but is not limited to, any off-campus conduct that is: (a) Prohibited by the Georgia or United States criminal code; (b) Punishable as a misdemeanor or felony if committed by an adult; and/or (c) Conduct for which a student has been arrested, indicted, or adjudicated to have committed or convicted.</p>	<p>Level 2 or 3</p>
<p><u>Gang Related Activity</u> The Thomas County Board of Education establishes this policy to eliminate or prevent the influence and activities of gangs in schools. For this policy a “gang” is defined as any group or association, whether formal or informal, which encourages, solicits, promotes, urges, counsels, furthers, advocates, condones, assists, causes, advises, procures, or abets any illegal or disruptive activity or behavior of any kind, whether on school campuses, during school-related events, or in the community. A</p>	<p>Level 3</p>

<p>gang member is defined as an individual who, as a representative of/on behalf of, or participates in any of the activities associated with gangs. Gangs which initiate, advocate, or promote activities which threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property are harmful to the education process. The use of hand signals, graffiti, or the presence of any apparel, tattoos, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute indicates or implies membership or affiliation with such a group, disrupts the school environment. Such behaviors are contrary to educational objectives and promote an atmosphere where unlawful acts or violations of school regulations may occur.</p> <p>No student will be allowed to wear, display, or carry any type of clothing, apparel, tattoos, article, or manner of grooming which indicates or implies membership/affiliation with a gang or gang activities.</p> <p>No student will be allowed to exhibit behavior or gestures which symbolize gang membership, or cause and/or participate in activities which intimidate or seek to cause bodily harm or affect the attendance of another student.</p>	
<p><u>Failure to Follow the Internet Acceptable Use Policy</u></p>	<p>Level 1, 2, or 3 depending on the nature of the offense</p>

Students charged with felonies

O.C.G.A. 20-2-768 (2010) Expulsion or suspension of students for felonies; alternative education system; policy

- (a) Each local board of education is authorized to refuse to readmit or enroll any student who has been suspended or expelled for being convicted of, being adjudicated to have committed, being indicted for, or having information filed for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act under Code Section 15-11-28 which would be a felony if committed by an adult. If refused readmission or enrollment, the student or the student’s parent or legal guardian has the right to request a hearing pursuant to the procedures provided for in Code Section 20-2-754.
- (b) A hearing officer, tribunal, panel, superintendent, or local board of education shall be authorized to place a student denied enrollment in a local school system under subsection (a) of this Code section in an alternative educational system as appropriate and in the best interest of the student and the education of other students within the school system.
- (c) It is the policy of this state that it is preferable to reassign disruptive students to alternative educational settings rather than to suspend or expel such students from school.

Dress Code

Pathways adheres to the Thomas County Schools dress code policy which is designed to encourage appropriate and socially acceptable modes of dress. Students who attend Pathways part-day and their home-school campus one period or more will be expected to follow the dress code for that school as well as Pathways.

All students shall be modestly dressed and groomed so as not to unreasonably distract the attention of others or cause disruption or interference with the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Student Dress Code: (Not allowed)

Hoodies are not permitted at all
Make-up (Pre-K – 4th grade)
Body piercing, other than pierced ears
Tank tops
See-through clothing
Shirts, pants, or shorts with vulgar or inappropriate messages
Shorts/pants with writing on the seat
Bare midriffs
Oversized pants
Bare feet
Slippers
Missing or untied laces in shoes designed for laces
Short shorts and skirts
Uncleanliness
Bandanas
Dark lens glasses and hats (including hoodies) inside the building
Chains hanging from pants, belt loops, book bags, purses, or wallets
Jeans or pants with tears or holes two inches above the knee
Backpacks or book bags will NOT be allowed

If a student is determined to be in violation of the dress code, the parent will be notified and asked to bring a change of clothes for the student. If parents are not able to bring the change of clothes, the staff will attempt to secure a suitable set of clothes from the clothes closet. For middle and high school students, a pair of scrubs will be provided until the end of the school day.

The principal or designee shall have the final say in determining if an item is gang-related. All guidelines are subject to the interpretation of the administration.

Parent Dress Code:

All parents and adults visiting the campus should dress in a manner appropriate for our program and follow the same guidelines that are expected of students. Do not wear sleep attire or clothing that exposes undergarments or private body parts. Low-cut tops and extremely short skirts or shorts are not appropriate for the school environment. Clothing that advertises alcohol or drugs is not allowed on campus. Any parent dressed inappropriately will be asked to leave campus.

Field Trips



Participation in field trips is a privilege afforded to Transitions students only. Monthly Transitions activities are planned that may be on or off-campus. These trips are part of the educational and therapeutic process in the Pathways program. Parents will be asked to sign a field trip permission form provided in the beginning-of-year packet. This permission form allows students to attend field trips without additional written consent from the parent. Parents will receive written notice of all

off-campus trips planned for the student at least two days prior to the trip. Teachers may also follow up with emails or Remind 101 messages to notify parents of the trip. Parents will need to provide written notice or a phone call to the school at least two days prior to the trip to withdraw permission for the student to attend.

Students exhibiting behaviors that are unsafe prior to or on the day of instructional trips may be required to remain on campus to ensure safety. Pathways staff will notify parents/guardians when a student's participation is rescinded.

Medication

The school nurse and/or designee will administer basic care services and medications when needed with parental consent. Permission forms will be provided at the beginning of the school term or upon enrollment. If parents/guardians do not return permission forms, medication will NOT be administered. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that all required forms are completed and returned to the school.



All medications dispensed by the school nurse require parent permission. DO NOT send medication to school with your child. **Medication must be delivered to the school by a parent or guardian in the original pharmaceutical containers, clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the times for dosage.** Many pharmacists will provide a second bottle to divide medications with the school when the medication is refilled. Notify the school nurse and/or the school social worker of any medication changes throughout the school year and any corresponding doctor's appointments if your child is administered prescription medications by the school nurse. Parents are encouraged to provide the schools with duplicate medication and supplies in the event a student fails to take their medication before coming to school.

A new medical information card should be on file with the nurse every year and updated when any changes occur. This card provides information about your child's medical history and personal contact information. FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Protection Act) guidelines are followed, and your private information will not be given out without your permission. A medical record is kept on your child throughout his/her placement at Pathways Educational Program and follows him/her to the next grade level. **It is vital to always have up-to-date phone numbers on file where a parent, relative, or friend can be reached at all times.** If your phone number changes, please inform your child's teacher and/or school counselor. The nurse is not authorized to override or adjust medication dosages or times of administration without a physician's written approval.

Pathways students have access to a registered nurse. The nurse will dispense prescribed medicine during the school day based on physician's orders. Students who become sick or injured are referred to the school nurse who will evaluate their condition. If the nurse determines that the child needs to go home, the student's parent or legal guardian will be contacted to make the necessary arrangements. In case of an emergency and a parent cannot be reached, an ambulance will be called, and your child will be transported to the hospital emergency room. The cost of the ambulance will be the parent's responsibility.

Pathways Thomas County Site Nurse – Melissa "Shae" Lee, RN (413-1610)

Nutrition Program

**"Building Healthy Bodies....
Ready to Learn."**

Thomas County Schools Nutrition Program

"Our mission is to be a partner in the educational process by providing quality meals and nutrition education opportunities for students that promote healthy children, READY to LEARN."

The school nutrition program strives to instill healthy habits in all of our students along with promoting good health and academic success. Through good nutrition and healthy habits, every child in Thomas County Schools will be challenged, prepared and successful. We provide free breakfast and lunch to help your children get the nutrition they need to learn, grow and develop. After school snacks are provided for after school tutorial and enrichment programs. Nutrition goals of the Thomas County School Nutrition Program must be in compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture. Menus must adhere to strict guidelines issued by USDA. The menus must meet USDA nutrition goals when averaged over a school week. Each meal planned must provide the required (USDA) number of food components and food items to meet the nutrient standards for the age/grade group served. (Reference requirements below) Your child's monthly menus are posted on the Thomas County School's website, www.thomas.k12.ga.us.

Lunch Boxes from Home: We request that lunch boxes contain the food components provided below that meet the nutrition standards that the School Nutrition Program is required to offer. If all components are not provided, students will be **encouraged**, but **not required** to get a meal from the cafeteria at no cost to you in addition to their meal from home.

- ½ cup of fruit; fresh or canned with no sugar added
- ¾ cup of vegetable; preferably dark green or red/orange
- 1 - 2 ounces of grain; preferably 100% whole grain
- 1 - 2 ounces of meat/meat alternate
- 1 cup of milk or water

For Pre-K through 4th graders; Maximum average of calories 650, less than 10% of calories from saturated fat, and less than or equal to 1230 mg of sodium per total meal.

The school nutrition program participates in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) which allows ALL students in Thomas County Schools to eat breakfast and lunch at **NO COST** to the student. Student meals will continue to be of the highest quality and will provide the necessary nutrients that enable students to be ready for learning.

Adult meal prices are \$3.75 for lunch and \$2.75 for breakfast. **Students must have a complete meal before purchasing any extra items/a la carte items. There will be no charging of extra items/a la carte items by students or adults.**

Food/Beverages brought in the cafeteria during the school day: Our local board policy prohibits the sale of non-nutritional foods and beverages during the school day in all areas of the school campus. With this in mind and in order to encourage better nutrition and to develop healthy eating habits, faculty, students, or parents **are not allowed** to bring food to school from outside restaurants anytime during the school day.

Of course, lunches from home sent with students in lunch boxes or plain bags are permissible. Healthy food choices are encouraged when parents bring food for school celebrations.

Parent Involvement

IEP Meetings:

Each student will have at least one Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting per year. Parent participation in IEP meetings is required. Pathways staff will make every effort to accommodate the parent's schedule when setting up these meetings. If a situation arises that the parent cannot attend, participating via teleconference may be provided.

BASC-3:

Parents and students are asked to complete one Behavior Assessment System for Children Third Edition (BASC-3) per year. The BASC-3 provides a picture of a child's behavior by applying a triangulation method for gathering information. BASC-3 uses a comprehensive set of rating scales and forms to provide a complete picture of a child's or adolescent's behavior and emotions. Results from the BASC-3 rating are included in the child's IEP. Parent input is highly encouraged.

SDQ:

Students are assessed twice per year using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief emotional and behavioral screening questionnaire for children and young people. The tool can capture the perspective of children and young people, their parents, and teachers. Parent participation is highly encouraged. Results from the SDQ are included in the child's IEP.

GARS-3:

Gilliam Autism Rating Scale Third Edition (GARS-3) is one of the most widely used instruments for the assessment of autism spectrum disorder in the world. The GARS-3 assists teachers, parents, and clinicians in identifying autism in individuals and estimating its severity. Students identified with Autism eligibility are rated annually using the GARS-3. Results from this screening are included in the student's IEP.

Hospitalization Re-entry Meetings:

If a student is hospitalized for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the school counselor at Pathways to inform the school of the hospitalization. Upon the student's release from the hospital, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. The Pathways counselor will set up a re-entry meeting with a school administrator and the counselor to discuss any changes to the child's treatment plan before the student can return to school. It is often not in the best interest of the student to return to school the day that he is released from the hospital. Often medication has changed and the

student needs to adjust to the new medication before returning to school. Each situation is different and all information will be considered before the child returns to school. Again, the school counselor will work to accommodate the parent's schedule when setting up these meetings. If a situation arises that the parent cannot attend, participating via teleconference may be provided.

Parent Conferences:

Parents may also request a conference with the Pathways staff. Please be aware that teachers cannot be pulled from the classroom at a moment's notice. It may not always be possible for administrators and school counselors to have an immediate meeting. Please notify the teacher, counselor, or administrator if you wish to schedule a conference and the meeting will be set up for the first available appointment.

Student-Led Conferences:

Pathways will host one student-led conference for each student. At this conference, the student will share his academic and behavioral progress. The dates for the conferences are as follows:

Elementary; October 7th
Middle School; January 2nd
High School; March 10th

All others have an option of meeting with their child and teachers on May 23rd. You will be asked to sign up for one 30-minute time slot. Please make plans to attend this conference with your child where you will receive important information from your child about his academic progress.

The Pathways program follows the Thomas County schedule of providing information related to your child's progress. You will be provided with academic, IEP, and behavioral progress reports every 4 weeks (midterm reports) and 9 weeks (summative report card).

Parent Communication:

Daily communication will be provided on student behavior for Foundations and Progress level students. Please look for daily parent communication sheets coming home with your student. We encourage you to indicate any concerns on the communication sheets. The Pathways Facebook parent page will be updated regularly to keep you informed of upcoming events and to share with you positive happenings at Pathways. Please follow us on Facebook – Pathways Educational Program.

Multiple parent engagement events will be hosted. Check your parent newsletters and school calendar for information.

You may reach teachers by calling the school at 225-3910 and leaving a message with the receptionist. Teachers may also be reached through school email. Teachers will send out contact information with their email addresses. Contact information will also be posted on the Pathways Educational Program web page. Please note that teachers may not see an email during the school day due to teaching responsibilities or not being present that day. If you need to make a change in transportation, call the school receptionist to make this change. Never rely on email to make transportation changes.

In addition to email, teachers will share how to contact them through Remind. Please sign up for this valuable communication tool.

Personal Items

Students are discouraged from bringing valuable personal items to school; for example, large amounts of cash, expensive jewelry, cell phones, laptops, or anything that would cost a substantial amount of money to replace if stolen, lost, or damaged. CD Players, iPods, MP3 Players, and anything of this sort are not allowed on campus **UNLESS THE STUDENT IS ON OUR *TRANSITIONS LEVEL***. If these items are brought to school by Foundations and Progress students, they will be confiscated. On the first offense, the teacher will return the item at the end of the day. If items are confiscated on a second offense, the item will be held until a parent/guardian comes to the school to retrieve the item. **Students are solely responsible for any items brought to school. *Pathways will NOT replace any items that are stolen, lost, or damaged.***

Students are prohibited from soliciting or selling items of any kind at school. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student who violates this rule.

Phones

Cell phones are not allowed during the instructional day. Upon entry to any school building, cell phones are to be immediately handed to staff. As an incentive, cell phones are allowed at lunch on designated days by progress students, which is typically one day per week. Transitions students are allowed to have their phones at lunch each day. These privileges can be revoked if students are misbehaving with the cell phone.

Students are not allowed to keep phones in their pockets. Lack of compliance with this expectation will result in confiscation of the phone to be released to the parent/guardian only and phone privileges revoked.

Parents and students are expected to plan accordingly for each school day. Please do not text your child during the school day as he will not have access to his phone while at school. Students will only be allowed to use the office phones for emergency purposes. Students will not be excused from class to receive personal phone calls. In the case of an emergency, please call the office for assistance.

Teachers will be asked to respond to phone calls or text messages during planning times.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Your child will receive a midterm progress report after four weeks and a report card every nine weeks. Teachers and/or parents/guardians may request a parent conference during the midterm progress period or at any time throughout the year if a child is struggling academically and/or behaviorally. If your child is transitioning back to his regular school, he will also receive a report card from that school.

Strategic Plan

Each year, Pathways participates in an internal review and an external audit conducted by the Georgia Department of Education using the GNETS strategic plan. The GNETS strategic plan includes six focus areas: Program Leadership and Accountability, Behavior Support and Therapeutic Services, Instructional and Academic Support, Program Funding and Fiscal Management, Integration of Services and Capacity Building, and Facilities Management. Each of the focus areas has specific goals that each GNETS program will work to obtain. Many components of this strategic plan address program practices that are based on improvements from audit findings, program evaluation, best practices across all GNETS programs, and

research-based initiatives. Guidance on the development of the strategic plan was obtained from referenced articles and state personnel knowledgeable about program improvement and best practices for working with students struggling with behavioral and emotional concerns. Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Georgia Network of Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) were the three collaborating agencies as well as other stakeholders within the state of Georgia who provided input and contributions across each section. Field experts such as GNETS directors, special education directors, fiscal agents for GNETS, school district superintendents, and others responded to surveys to obtain greater insight for general improvement strategies of GNETS.

GNETS directors and their staff are responsible for implementing the action items within the strategic plan to ensure that collaborative integrated services are planned and provided for students receiving services through the GNETS program. GNETS staff will also collaborate with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure that students have a civil right to be reintegrated/included with same-age peers without disabilities to obtain academic and social-emotional competencies in general education environments when deemed appropriate.

The strategic plan and its embedded self-assessment are intended to:

- facilitate a self-assessment for GNETS to evaluate the current status of program practices;
- initiate discussion among program leaders and stakeholders to identify priority needs for improvement;
- validate areas of strength in the implementation of best practices across each component; and
- analyze results and other program data to determine the need for professional learning and resources to drive improvement.

The goal of Pathways is to use the strategic plan to strengthen services to students and families.

Student Information

Parents are asked to review their students' contact information annually. This information will be included in the student's beginning-of-year packet. Please review it carefully, make any changes, and sign it. Pathways can only contact persons listed on the information sheet that parents have provided. These contacts are entered into Infinite Campus. If there is someone that you do not want to pick up your child, please list these on the sheet. Pathways will make every effort to contact the parent(s) first. If we are unable to get the parent(s), then we will move to the next contact listed on the student's information. If there is a custody issue, the custodial parent will need to provide a copy of the custody agreement for the student's file.

Please note: When the school notifies the parent that a student must be picked up, it is the responsibility of the parent to pick the student up OR to make arrangements for another person to pick the student up. If someone other than the parent is picking up the student, the parent must notify the school who is picking the student up and inform that person that he will need to provide an ID to pick the student up.

Textbooks, Chromebooks, and School Property

Textbooks, Chromebooks, and other school property are intended for the use of the student, and a certain amount of wear and tear is expected. Students will be expected to pay for lost or damaged textbooks, Chromebooks, or other school property. Restitution will be expected to offset the expense of repair. In

the event that your child damages school property, you will receive notification of the cost of the property. Call the administrator for restitution details and concerns.

Transportation

Students will **NOT** be permitted to ride a different bus or to get off at a different place other than the one designated by the bus route. Students **MUST** ride transportation designated by the student's IEP. For example, if the student's IEP states that he/she is to receive special transportation, then the student is not permitted to ride a regular bus. If there is a change in transportation for your child, you may contact the receptionist who will deliver the message prior to student release. If there is a change of address, please notify the county transportation director responsible for busing or the student may be required to be a pick-up.

Grady County Transportation Office: (229) 377-2124

Thomas County Schools Transportation Office: (229) 227-3187

Thomasville City Schools Transportation Office: (229) 225-2600 ext. 243

Pelham City Transportation Office: (229) 294-8715 ext. 110

Mitchell County Schools Transportation Office: (229) 321-7002

The Pathways Social Worker or any Administrator may assist if parents/guardians have difficulty contacting the above offices.

Pathways will not be responsible for bus changes. Only those persons designated as emergency contacts will be allowed to pick the student up from school. Students must follow the bus rules and regulations for their county.

Under **NO** circumstances are students to be transported by staff members in their personal vehicles. If a situation arises that interferes with bus transportation (behavior, sickness, etc.), **PARENTS MUST PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION.**

Please provide current phone numbers where you may be contacted in an emergency. Please notify the school and bus garage of any address/phone number changes.

Visitation

School visits are encouraged. ALL visitors **must** report to the front office upon entering the campus. Instruction time is protected at Pathways. Parents are encouraged to schedule conferences with their child's teacher after 2:30. Meetings may also be scheduled with the school social worker or administration as needed. Parent involvement activities will be planned throughout the school year and parents are encouraged to attend. ***Individual classroom observation must be approved by the center administrator. Due to confidentiality, visitors may be limited if one or more students are experiencing an emotional crisis.***

Parent Resources

Outpatient Emotional and Behavioral Health Services

Agency	Phone	Address
Georgia Pines CSB	229-225-4335	1102 Smith Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Vashti Center	229-225-4634	1815 E Clay Street Thomasville GA 31792
The Psychological Center	229-226-0741	200 Gordon Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Mosaic Psychological Center	229-233-8009	229 W Remington Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Archbold Medical Center	229-228-2000	Gordon Ave. at Mimosa Dr. Thomasville GA 31792
Thomasville Family Counseling Center, Dr. Christine Renaud Ph.D.	229-551-9300	221 West Hansell Street Thomasville GA 31799
South Georgia Autism Center Dr. Montserrat Graves, Ph.D.	(229) 221-3442	319 N Stevens St, Thomasville, GA 31792
Thomas County Health Department	229-226-4241	484 Smith Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Heritage Foundation	229-227-0471	226 S Crawford St. Thomasville GA 31792
Psychiatric Center	229-226-7060	1913 Smith Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities	229-225-5099	400 S Pinetree Blvd. Thomasville GA 31792
Step N Stones Therapy Services	229-227-1433	506 Gordon Avenue Thomasville GA 31792

Short Term Inpatient Emotional and Behavioral Health Services

Agency	Phone	Address
Georgia Pines Behavioral	229-225-3917	525 Cassidy Rd.

Health Crisis Center		Thomasville GA 31792
Archbold Northside Inpatient Services	229-228-8100	401 Old Albany Rd. Thomasville GA 31792
Greenleaf Behavioral Health Hospital	229-506-7977	2209 Pineview Rd. Valdosta GA 31602
Donalsonville Hospital	229-524-5217	102 Hospital Circle Donalsonville GA 39845
Saint Simons by the Sea	912-638-1999	2927 Demere Rd. Saint Simons Island GA 31522
Coastal Harbor	912-354-3911	1154 Cornell Ave. Savannah GA 31406

Long Term Inpatient Mental Health and Behavioral Services		
Agency	Phone	Address
Youth Villages/Inner Harbor	770-852-6300	4885 Dorsett Shoals Rd. Douglasville GA 30135
Coastal Harbor Treatment	912-354-3911	1154 Cornell Ave. Savannah GA 31406
Hillside Atlanta	404-875-4551	690 Courtenay Dr. NE Atlanta GA 30306

Children and Family Services		
Agency	Phone	Address
Backpack Buddies	229-228-9765	P.O. Box 665 Thomasville GA 31799
CASA Kids Program	229-225-4338	P.O. Box 1034 Thomasville GA 31799
Halcyon Home for Battered Women	229-226-6682	604 E. Clay St. Thomasville GA 31792
Salvation Army	229-546-3248	514 N. Madison St. Thomasville GA 31792
Right From the Start	229-225-3921	902 Cairo Rd.

Medicaid Outreach Program		Thomasville GA 31792
Thomas County DFCS Abuse Hotline	229-228-3842 877-423-4453	460 Smith Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Social Security Administration	229-491-1886	1916 Smith Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
Thomas County Family Connection	229-227-3125	460 Smith Ave. Thomasville GA 31792
The Treehouse Advocacy Center of Thomas County	229-977-1639	510 Gordon Ave. Thomasville GA 31792

Employment Services		
Agency	Phone	Address
Georgia Vocational Rehab Agency	229-225-4045	403 N. Broad St. Thomasville GA 31792
Easter Seals	229-379-3053	419 N Crawford St. Thomasville GA 31792
Goodwill Industries	229-558-9020	15072 Hwy 19 S. Thomasville GA 31757
America Works	229-599-5627	305 E. Jefferson St. Thomasville GA 31792

Medical		
Agency	Phone	Address
Primary Care of Southwest School-Based Health Center	229-227-2936	4681 US Hwy 84 Bypass Thomasville, GA 31792
Indigo Family Health Dr. Geer	229-236-4361	235 West Jackson Street Thomasville, GA 31792
Pediatric Center Thomasville	229-226-7544	509 Gordon Ave. Thomasville, GA 31792
Pediatric Center Cairo	229-377-8560	980 4th St. SE Cairo, GA 39828
Thomasville Family Medicine	229-225-4130	951 S. Broad St. Thomasville, GA 31792

Dental		
Agency	Phone	Address
Thomasville Pediatric Dentistry	229-236-2286	215 Constitution Dr. Thomasville, GA 31792
Dr. David Howington	229-985-8504	8 Longleaf Office Park Moultrie, GA 31768
A Confident Smile	229-227-1447	303 W Hansell St. Thomasville, GA 31792

BOARD POLICIES

Thomas County Schools

Comments And Concerns

The Thomas County School System has a complaint procedure that is described in detail on the system's website: <http://www.thomas.k12.ga.us/> under the Federal Programs link and in the Parent/Student/Teacher Handbooks. In the event that you have a complaint, contact the school your child attends and seek assistance from the teacher or administration as an initial point of contact. If you are unable to resolve your concern, you are invited to contact the superintendent at the Thomas County School Board of Education. If you are still unsatisfied, you may contact the Georgia Department of Education via their website: www.gadoe.org

Training And Monitoring Procedures For Assessments

All faculty members involved with the administration or supervision of testing participate in training sessions to orient them to their duties and responsibilities concerning testing. The system test coordinator provides orientation and training to each school test coordinator in August. Following this training, each school test coordinator conducts the initial training session for the school faculty. Test examiners and test proctors receive copies of their roles which delineate the "must do" activities and "must not do" activities. Signed copies of this information are collected and sent in after school officials train all staff. The system test coordinator provides a detailed orientation and training session prior to each standardized test administration. School test coordinators are prompted to review state training webinar sessions as appropriate. Sign-in sheets and agendas serve as documentation of system training sessions for each testing program. Sessions specify district requirements for security and timelines for the return of materials. School test coordinators are responsible for conducting training sessions with their staff members prior to the administration of any standardized test content of this training will specify state regulations for test administration as well as school procedures and daily schedules for the duration of the testing window. School test coordinators will document staff participation in school-based training sessions prior to the test administration period. School test coordinators stay in contact with the system test coordinator on an as-needed basis throughout the test administration period. School test coordinators are responsible for reporting irregularities promptly. The system test coordinator will make periodic site visits to observe testing conditions, routines, and processes. The system test coordinator will report any observations to the principal and or the superintendent in order to ensure corrective actions are implemented if needed.

A system-wide calendar of Assessments is included at the end of this handbook.

Fraud And Ethics Policy

To ensure the reporting of suspicion of fraudulent activity, the Thomas County school superintendent and board of education ensure employees, clients, and providers have confidential channels to report suspicious activities. Fraud: A false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds from federal grants or other sources. The Thomas County School District thoroughly and expeditiously investigates any reported cases of suspected fraud to determine if

disciplinary, financial recovery, and/or criminal action should be taken. All reports of suspected fraud must be handled under strict confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be given information. Informants may remain anonymous, but should be encouraged to cooperate with the investigators, and should provide as much detail and evidence of the alleged fraudulent act as possible.

Procedures and Responsibilities:

1. Anyone suspecting fraud concerning federal or other programs should report their concerns to the superintendent at 229-225-4380. In the event the allegation of fraud involves the superintendent, an employee may report his or her suspicions directly to the chairman of the Thomas County Board of Education. Contact information for the Thomas County board chairman may be found on the school system’s website.

2. Any employee of the Thomas County Board of Education (temporary staff, full-time staff, and/or contractors) who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity must report this information within the next business day to the superintendent or chairman of the Thomas County Board of Education at 229-225-4380. Employees have a responsibility to report suspected fraud. All reports can be made in confidence.

3. The Thomas County School District shall conduct investigations of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors as necessary.

4. If necessary, employees will be contacted for additional information.

5. Periodic communication through meetings should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

Equal Opportunities Statement

It shall be the policy of the Thomas County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, creed, or disability in educational programs and activities, in employment or recruitment for employment, admission to facilities, or in any related policies, practices or benefits.

Absences And Excuses Policy

Notification of Provisions of Georgia’s “Compulsory Student Attendance Law”

(O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1)

Georgia law requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 to be enrolled in and attend school. However, if a child is under 6 and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he is subject to the compulsory attendance law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-150(C)).

A student is considered truant if he misses more than five unexcused absences during the school year. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, a parent/guardian shall be held responsible for the child’s failure to report to school. Potential consequences for parents and/or student include a referral to the District Attorney’s office, misdemeanor charges with a fine of not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00 for each offense, imprisonment for up to 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction may be imposed. Each day’s unexcused absence from school, after the initial five unexcused days, shall constitute a separate offense.

Any applicant who has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for ten consecutive days and is younger than 18 years of age must be enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school.

Definitions:

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

Student Attendance Protocol: Procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance as well as school climate and appropriately addressing the issue with parents and guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for policies relating to tardiness.

Student Attendance Committee: A committee established by the chief judge of the superior court of each county for the purpose of ensuring compulsory school attendance, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school, and to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this State.

Excused Absences:

A student may be temporarily excused from school:

1. Who are personally ill and attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
2. When in their immediate family there is a serious illness or death, which would reasonably necessitate absence from school.
3. On special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith.
4. When mandated by order of governmental agencies (pre-induction physical examination for services in armed forces or court order).
5. A student may be excused from school when prevented from such attendance due to conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to his/her health or safety.

When a child is absent from school, the parent will furnish the school with a written excuse within three school days of the absence. The school will require students to present appropriate medical documentation for absences due to illness upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence after accepting a parent excuse five times within a semester.

With proper verification, a student may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-31.

Students who miss an excessive amount of class time (as defined by school rules) may be required to participate in make-up activities as described by the individual schools. The principals shall work with the superintendent to develop rules for implementing this policy.

Unexcused Absences:

The Thomas County School System will notify the parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five unexcused absences. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or another person who has charge of the student, the school system shall send written notice via first-class mail.

The Thomas County School System will provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students aged ten or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of a written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local policy.

- **Excessive Unexcused Absences:**

The following provisions apply to consecutive and non-consecutive unexcused absences during one academic year.

- **After Three Unexcused Absences:** The attendance office or the principal's designee will contact the parent/guardian by telephone, letter, email, parental conference, or any other means of communication deemed necessary. All contacts made will be documented.
- **After Five Unexcused Absences:** The attendance office or principal's designee will notify the parent/guardian by mail, **and** by any other means of communication deemed necessary. The mailed letter and/or contact will serve as the required notification that outlines the penalty and consequences of the student's unexcused absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. All contacts made will be documented.
- **After Seven Unexcused Absences:** The attendance office or principal's designee will notify the parent/guardian by mail, **and** by any other means of communication deemed necessary. The Counselor/Parent Coordinator will meet or make contact with the parent/guardian and the student. The parent/guardian and the student will be informed of the consequences of excessive unexcused absences. Strategies will be discussed to help improve the student's attendance. An attendance plan and contract will be signed and implemented. The Counselor/Parent Coordinator will continue to monitor the student's attendance. The parent/guardian and the student will be contacted for non-compliance of the plan and contract. All contacts made will be documented.
- **After Ten Unexcused Absences:** A mandatory attendance meeting will be scheduled between the parent/guardian, the student, and an administrator. A plan that contains specific strategies to help improve the student's attendance will be created and signed. The parent and the student will also be reminded of the consequences for continued unexcused absences. The student's attendance will continue to be monitored. The parent/guardian and the student will be contacted for non-compliance of the plan and contract. All contacts made will be documented.
- **After Thirteen Unexcused Absences:** The parent/guardian and/or student may be referred to the Thomas County School System's truant officer if the student continues to accrue unexcused absences.

After the student has been referred to the truant officer, the school will continue to monitor the student's attendance and continue to use school-based interventions to help prevent continued unexcused absences. The school will also continue to inform the parent/guardian, the student, and the truant officer of any continued unexcused absences by any means of communication deemed necessary. All contacts will be documented.

Based upon the determination of the truant officer, the parent/guardian and/or student may be referred to the Community Based Risk Reduction Team (CBRRT).

Community-Based Risk Reduction Team:

The Thomas County Board of Education has adopted the Community-Based Risk Reduction Team (CBRRT) as a sub-committee of the Thomas County Schools/Thomasville City Schools Student Attendance Protocol

Committee. The CBRRT was created in an effort to help improve school attendance and to provide early community intervention for students who are at risk of becoming delinquent, unruly, or deprived. The CBRRT includes representatives from the following community agencies: the District Attorney's Office, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Family and Children Services, GA Pines Mental Health, the Vashti Center, the Thomas County Sheriff's Department, the Thomasville Police Department, the Thomas County School System, and the Thomasville City School System.

Upon encountering chronic absences and/or tardies, along with other matters which may constitute educational deprivation, the Thomas County School System's designee may refer a student to the CBRRT. The team of school and community agency representatives will hold a scheduled mandatory meeting for the parent/legal guardian to attend. The student is also mandated to attend the CBRRT meeting if he/she is in grades 4th-12th. The meeting will be held in the Thomas County Judicial Center located at 325 N. Madison St in Thomasville, GA, and the parent/legal guardian will receive prior notification of the meeting's scheduled date and time.

The CBRRT will prepare a multi-agency intervention plan with the parent and student that will address factors which may be negatively impacting the student's education. If the parent and/or student fail(s) to attend the mandatory CBRRT meeting, or if the parent and/or student continue(s) to be non-compliant, then the CBRRT may recommend that the District Attorney's Office proceed with an educational deprivation petition in the Thomas County Juvenile Court or criminal prosecution in the Thomas County State Court for the parent/legal guardian and/or prosecution in the Thomas County Juvenile Court or any other court having jurisdiction for the student.

Withdrawals:

The Thomas County School Board authorizes the schools to withdraw a student who:

1. has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences;
2. is not subject to compulsory school attendance;
3. is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
4. is subject to compulsory attendance if the local superintendent or designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

Students shall be withdrawn retroactively to the first day of the consecutive absences.

Asbestos Management Plan

A written Asbestos Management Plan is available that documents inspection and surveillance activities, known and presumed asbestos-containing materials in the building, records of asbestos-related building material disturbances and response activities, and post-response documentation. The Asbestos Management Plan is located in the main school office and at the Thomas County Board of Education and is available for review by parents, legal guardians, teachers and other school personnel, representatives of EPA, representatives of the State, and the public. The designated person for the Thomas County School System's AHERA program is Dr. Dusty Kornegay, and he can be contacted by telephone at 229-584-9134, or via email at dkornegay@tcjackets.net.

Bullying

The Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so,
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
 - a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
 - b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
 - d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or school-related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. **The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not the electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at a student or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the student' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Electronic communication includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric, or photo-optical system.**

Procedures may be developed at each school encouraging a teacher or other school employee, student, parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in the person's name, at the person's option, to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity. Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying is encouraged to immediately report it to the school principal. Any report will be appropriately investigated by the administration based on the nature of the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether bullying has occurred, whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented, and what other steps should be taken. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will also be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with school procedures.

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

Students and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the student/parent handbooks.

Child Abuse/Neglect

All employees of the Board of Education, as well as persons who attend to a child pursuant to their duties as a volunteer for the school system, who have reason or cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, shall notify the principal or the school system's designee, who shall report such abuse immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases for Thomas County, Georgia.

Under no circumstances shall the principal or designee to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification, or make any other change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.

HB 1321 – False Accusations Against An Educator

The Georgia Legislature enacted a law, which became effective July 1, 2008, addressing falsified, omitted, or erroneous reports of inappropriate behavior by educators towards students. The following procedure will be followed:

1. Students will provide a written statement of complaint to the school principal.
2. The school principal will notify the parent/guardian and the superintendent the day the written statement is received.
3. The school principal and the school resource officer will begin to investigate the accusation the day the written statement is received, keeping the teacher, parent/guardian, the superintendent, and law enforcement apprised of all developments.
4. A ruling will be determined within three working days of the receipt of the student's written complaint.
5. If the allegation is substantiated, school system procedures will take place for the discipline of the educator and the reporting to the Professional Standards Commission.
6. If the allegation is deemed unsubstantiated, the student will be suspended for a minimum of five days and can be expelled if deemed necessary by school and system officials. In addition, court-ordered community service or any other court sanction may occur for students over ten years of age. Students under ten years of age can be suspended for up to ten days.

Grading Policy

The following grading practices unduly impact the reported accuracy of academic achievement and, therefore, will not be used in Thomas County Schools:

- Extra credit/ penalty for non-academic purposes (i.e. contributing to food drives, participating in fundraisers, or dress-up days, returning school-related forms, attending school functions, etc.)
- Extra credit or make-up assignments that are not directly related to the state curriculum
- Extra credit/ penalty for spelling, handwriting, or not following directions *unless* directly related to the state curriculum (i.e. using wrong writing utensils, having no name on a paper, being unprepared, etc.)
- Extra credit/penalty for disciplinary issues (i.e. dress code, sleeping, tardiness, etc.)

Please note that since the examples listed are not exhaustive, any questions with regard to grading should be addressed with a school administrator.

Homeless Student Policy

To the extent practical and as required by federal law through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Thomas County School System will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children who experience one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings;
7. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples;
8. Unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Homeless children and unaccompanied youth will be identified through three main sources:

1. School personnel will be trained to inquire about homelessness upon enrollment and withdrawal of students. School personnel will notify the homeless liaison of any student determined to be homeless.
2. School staff will be trained on the identification of children in the class who may be experiencing homelessness and appropriate procedures to follow.
3. Partnerships will be created between community agencies and the school system to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness. Outreach material will be provided to partner agencies by the homeless liaison to provide public notice of the rights of homeless students.

Each homeless student has the right to remain at his or her school of origin, to the extent feasible, or to attend school in the attendance area in which he or she is currently residing. Students identified as homeless have the right to immediate enrollment in school.

Homeless students are also entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If transportation is requested by the parent/guardian, the school shall notify the district liaison.

If a dispute arises over any issue related to the rights of any homeless student, then the student shall be immediately enrolled and provided all services until the dispute is resolved in accordance with federal law. The school must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and inform him/her of his/her right to appeal with the district homeless liaison. The liaison shall ensure enrollment and appropriate services until the dispute is resolved. All records of disputes shall be kept. The state-level appeals process will also be provided following the district-level appeal.

Homeless students shall be provided comparable services to other students including the following: transportation, Title I, education services where they meet eligibility criteria, vocational and technical education program, gifted and talented program, and school nutrition. Upon being identified as homeless, students automatically qualify for free school meals. Title I services should also be made available to all homeless students regardless of the school of enrollment's Title I status.

The district's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. The district's liaison will also review and seek revisions to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

For any concerns regarding the rights of homeless students, please contact the Thomas County School District's Homeless Liaison at 225-4380.

Parents' Right To Know

Teacher & Paraprofessional Qualifications

In accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, the Thomas County School District will provide, upon request, certain information on the professional qualifications of classroom teachers and paraprofessionals (ESSA Section 1112(e)(1)(A)). Parents may request the following information:

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

If you desire information concerning the qualifications of your child's teacher(s), please contact the principal at your child's school.

Non-Professionally Qualified Teachers

Each Thomas County School will provide a student's parent or guardian a timely notice that his or her student has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who has NOT met subject or grade level requirements for professional qualifications (ESSA Section 1112(e)(1)(A)).

Student Achievement

Each Thomas County School will provide parents with information on their child's level of achievement on each of the state academic assessments (ESSA Section 1111(2)(B)(x)).

Parent Resources Title I

The following schools are classified as Title I Schools: Hand-in-Hand Primary, Garrison-Pilcher Elementary, Cross Creek Elementary, Thomas County Middle, The Renaissance Center for Academic and Career Development, and Bishop Hall Charter School. Each of the previously listed schools qualify as Title I schools based on the number of students meeting federal poverty guidelines. Title I schools are required to use research-based teaching strategies and programs to improve student achievement. Staff must be professionally qualified and must be involved in ongoing staff development. School staff studies data gathered from student assessments, parent surveys, and staff surveys to guide the school's Improvement Plan. Title I Family Engagement Plans are distributed electronically to every parent at the beginning of the school year. The plan will also be attached to the school's web page. A parent advisory panel meets twice a year to discuss school accomplishments and areas for improvement. Each Title I school has a parent resource room that houses information pertaining to child health, discipline, development, and other topics relevant to the ages of the students at that school. Additionally, a variety of parent books are available for check-out in the media center. If you need information that we do not have, please ask the media specialist. In most situations, we are able to secure resources for you to checkout. Copies of our Title I Plans are available for parent review in the school office or online via school websites. Please contact your school's Parent Involvement Coordinator if you need assistance.

Parent Volunteering

Parent participation is encouraged at each of our schools (ESSA Section 1116(d)(2)(C)). We encourage parents to participate in their student's school life. An orientation for volunteers is held in the fall of each school year. If you are interested in volunteering in your child's school, please contact the Parent Involvement Coordinator at that school. He or she will be more than happy to schedule times that are convenient for you that will not disrupt class schedules.

Parent and Family Engagement

Each Title I school will have an annual parent workshop to build parent capacity to support their children. Topics may include academic support, homework help, obtaining school information, behavior management, digital citizenship, standardized test data, or college and career planning. We welcome your input for the planning and evaluation of these events. We will survey participants at the conclusion of each workshop to evaluate workshop quality, obtain feedback, and gather suggestions.

Comments and Concerns

Thomas County Schools has a complaint procedure that is described in detail on our website: www.tcjackets.net. To access this description, hover over the "Departments" icon, and select the "Federal Programs" link. The complaint procedure is also outlined in our Parent/Student/Teacher Handbooks. In the event that you have a complaint, we wish you to contact the school your child attends and seek assistance from the teacher or administration as an initial point of contact. If you are unable to resolve your concern, you are invited to contact the Superintendent at the Thomas County Board of Education. If you are still unsatisfied, you may contact the Georgia Department of Education via: <http://programcomplaint.doe.k12.ga.us/everestwebportal/webform.asp>.

Title I School and District Contact information:

Hand-In-Hand Primary Principal, Dee Gaines (229) 225-3908	Garrison-Pilcher Elementary Principal, Amy Tyson (229) 225-4387
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Cross Creek Elementary
Principal, Ashley Lane
(229) 225-3900

Thomas County Middle School
Principal, Clay Stanaland
(229) 225-4394

Bishop Hall Charter School
Principal, Dr. Verna Wiggins
(229) 225-3197

Renaissance Center for Academic and Career Development
Principal, Todd Creech
(229) 227-3222

Questions:

For additional information, you may contact Dr. Bob Dechman, Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs by calling (229) 225-4380, or via email at bdechman@tcjackets.net.

Seclusion Or Restraint Of Students

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and staff are safe in school and that students who may have a behavior crisis are free from inappropriate use of physical restraint or seclusion. Thomas County Schools authorizes staff members to use physical restraint in limited situations. As part of the emergency procedures in place in our schools, any student who poses an imminent risk of injury to himself or others may be physically restrained by school staff in accordance with Thomas County Board of Education policy. Restraint may be used only under the circumstances specified in this policy. For a complete explanation of this policy, please go to the web address below.

[https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicy/policy.aspx?PC=JGF\(2\)&Sch=4154&S=4154&RevNo=1.08&C=J&Z=P](https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicy/policy.aspx?PC=JGF(2)&Sch=4154&S=4154&RevNo=1.08&C=J&Z=P)

Informing Parents and Guardians:

As part of the emergency procedures in place in our schools, any student who poses an imminent risk of injury to himself or others may be physically restrained by school staff in accordance with Thomas County Board of Education policies. This restraint could occur along with other emergency actions such as contacting law enforcement. Significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to law enforcement. Within a reasonable time, not to exceed one school day, parents or guardians will be informed in writing when any of these actions occur.

Student Enrollment Policy

Accepting Students from Other Systems:

Students residing within the corporate limits of Thomasville or in Georgia counties other than Thomas County shall be allowed to attend the Thomas County School System upon

1. applying to the Board of Education for admission and providing all school records, including discipline, grades, and test scores; and
2. acceptance by the superintendent after review of records and acceptance by principal based on space available.

No student who is under suspension or expulsion from another school system will be accepted for enrollment in the Thomas County School System.

Accepting Students from Out of State:

Students from out of state will have to apply and provide all records. Upon acceptance, parents will be required to pay an annual tuition fee per child determined by the finance director and superintendent based on the average FTE cost for that school year.

Continuing Enrollment of Non-Resident Students:

The Thomas County Board of Education reserves the right to withdraw and rescind its permission for a nonresident student to be enrolled in and attend Thomas County Schools. Such withdrawal and rescission may be done without cause or reason.

Student Code Of Conduct

It is the policy of the Thomas County Board of Education that each school within this system shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment and which will comply with the state law and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15. Each code of conduct shall include at a minimum, the requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-4-8-.15 and shall include: student standards of behavior, student support processes, progressive discipline processes, and parental involvement processes.

The student codes of conduct will be distributed to each student and the parents or guardians and shall be available in each school and classroom. All student codes of conduct shall have evidence of parental involvement in their development and updating, which may occur through school councils.

The superintendent or designee shall develop procedures to carry out the provisions of this policy. In addition, the principals shall provide notification to students and parents of this prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring the inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks.

Teacher Authority To Remove Student From Classroom

It is the policy of the Board of Education that the superintendent and each school principal shall fully support the authority of teachers to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to Georgia law as cited in § 20-2-738 and § 20-2-751.5(d).

A teacher shall have the authority to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. Any teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior which violates the student code of conduct and repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the student in his/her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn shall file a report of such behavior with the principal or designee. The principal and teacher shall thereafter follow the procedures established in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-737-738.

The superintendent and/or designee shall ensure that procedures are disseminated as necessary for implementation of this policy and applicable state laws.

Discipline

In accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-752, the Board of Education authorizes the superintendent or a designee to establish disciplinary hearing panels comprised of system administrators to hear disciplinary cases which may result in such action that may include, but is not limited to expulsion, long-term suspension, short-term suspension, or placement in an alternative educational setting. At the superintendent's discretion, an impartial hearing officer from outside the district may be hired to hear a disciplinary case. No principal and or

administrator shall serve on a hearing tribunal for a charge against a student(s) enrolled at that principal's or administrator's school. The superintendent or designee shall set the time for the hearing.

1. This policy shall apply whenever a student of the Thomas County School System is charged with any one or more of the following disciplinary offenses:
 - (a) Where a student has committed an alleged assault or battery upon a teacher, other school official, or employee if such teacher or other school official or employee so requests; or
 - (b) Where a student has violated any school or system rule or engaged in any other act of misconduct or insubordination for which the student's principal recommends a suspension or expulsion longer than ten school days.
2. Any instance specified in paragraph 1 is declared to be a violation of school policy and the school behavior code and subversive to the good order and discipline in the schools.
3. The provisions of sub-section (b) of O.C.G.A., 20-2-754 which relates to opportunity for a hearing; notice; counsel; subpoenas; record; and enforcement powers, shall apply to all proceedings under this policy. When a procedure under this policy is administered, the superintendent, or designee, shall send a written notice to the student and his/her parents, or other person standing in loco parentis, either in person, School Resource Officer, or by United States mail, directed to their last known address, which notice shall include the following:
 - (a) A copy of the rule and a description of the act(s) the student allegedly violated;
 - (b) A short and plain statement of the matters asserted;
 - (c) The maximum penalty which may be administered for this alleged misconduct;
 - (d) A tentative time and place for the hearing;
 - (e) A copy of this policy;
 - (f) A statement that the student has a right to a hearing before a long-term suspension, short-term suspension, or expulsion, or other punishment can be invoked. A student may waive a hearing if the student and the student's parents (or in loco parentis) agree in writing prior to or at the time of the hearing to forego the hearing and admit to the charge or charges made and agree to the discipline determined to be administered by the hearing tribunal. A waiver is offered at the discretion of the principal of the school where the violation occurred.; and
 - (g) A statement that the student is entitled to a compulsory process for witnesses upon request to the superintendent, or designee, and that the student is entitled to be represented by legal counsel of the student's choice and expense.
4. The school system shall ensure that a verbatim electronic or written record of the hearing is made. Any verbatim electronic or written record of the hearing shall be made available to all parties. The hearing tribunal, school administrator, school system's attorney, or student or his parents or their legal representative, may question witnesses about any matters logically relevant to the charge against the student and the proper disposition of the matter. The hearing tribunal has authority to limit unproductively long or irrelevant questioning. Witnesses may include the person filing the complaint and the student. Objections to the sufficiency of the notice and all other procedural and other objections shall be waived unless written notice thereof is filed with the hearing tribunal at or prior to the commencement of the hearing. The hearing may be postponed until all such defects have been removed and cured. A continuance will be allowed to provide sufficient time for the school to contact their school board attorney to represent the school in the event legal counsel has been secured by the defense.
5. When two or more students are charged with having violated the same rule and have acted in concert, and the facts are basically the same for all such students, a single hearing may be conducted if the hearing tribunal believes that the following conditions exist:
 - (a) A single hearing will not likely result in confusion, and
 - (b) No student will have his/her interest substantially prejudiced by a group hearing. If, during the

hearing, the tribunal finds that a student's interest will be substantially prejudiced by the group hearing, a separate hearing for that student may be ordered.

6. The hearing tribunal shall determine what, if any, disciplinary action shall be taken. Such action may include, but is not limited to, expulsion, long-term suspension, or short-term suspension. Any action taken by the tribunal shall be subject to modification by the local school board on appeal. The hearing tribunal shall conduct the hearing, and after receiving all evidence, render a decision based solely on the evidence received at the hearing. The decision shall be in writing and shall be given to all parties within ten (10) days of the close of the record.
7. Any decision by such hearing tribunal may be appealed to the local Board of Education by filing a written notice of appeal within twenty (20) days from the date the decision is rendered. Such notice shall be given by filing the same with the superintendent, or designee.
8. Any disciplinary action imposed by a tribunal may be suspended by the superintendent pending the outcome of an appeal to the local Board of Education.
9. After an appeal has been filed, the local Board of Education shall review the record and shall render a decision in writing. That decision shall be based solely on the record and shall be given to all parties within ten (10) days from the date it receives the notice of appeal. The board may take any action it determines appropriate, and any decision of the board shall be final. All parties shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel at any such appeal and during all subsequent proceedings.
10. The provisions of subsections (b) through (f) of O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160, which relate to appeals to the State Board of Education and thereafter for appeals to the Superior Court, shall apply to all proceedings under this policy.
11. Every disciplinary tribunal appointed under this policy shall, in addition to any other requirements imposed by rules and regulations which may have been promulgated pursuant to the O.C.G.A. 20-2-752, ensure that the provisions set forth in O.C.G.A. 20-2-754, are complied with in connection with any procedure hereunder.

Conduct Off School Grounds

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct even if such misconduct occurs off school property and during non-school time. Students may be disciplined for conduct off-campus which could result in the student being charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Such discipline may be imposed:

1. if the incident was initiated in the school building or on school grounds;
2. if the incident occurred or was initiated off school grounds and on non-school time and if after the occurrence there was a reasonable likelihood that return of the student would produce a disruptive effect on the school's educational program or threaten the health, safety, or welfare of students or endanger school property.

Examples of the type of off-school-property misconduct which may result in such discipline include but are not limited to:

1. use, possession, sale, or distribution of dangerous weapons, including but not limited to knives or guns;
2. use, possession, sale, or distribution of controlled substances; or
3. use of physical force against another person

A hearing tribunal may impose discipline if it is determined that a student's:

1. use, possession, or sale of controlled substances in the community has a reasonable likelihood of endangering the safety of students or employees because of the possibility of sales in the school
2. use of weapons or violent conduct in the community presents a reasonable likelihood of repeating itself in the school environment; or
3. misconduct in the community has a reasonable likelihood of being continued or repeated in school or of bringing retaliation or revenge into the school for such misconduct off school grounds.

Any student charged with or convicted of the commission of any serious state or federal crime may be denied the right to attend classes by the superintendent when the superintendent determines that the continued presence of the student in the school will have a substantial disruptive effect on the school community. Such denial may be continued until the superintendent determines the presence of the student will no longer have a disruptive effect. Any student so denied the right to attend school may request a hearing pursuant to the procedures provided for in O.C.G. A. 20-2-754.

The intent of Thomas County School Board policy JD-R is not to punish students or to expose them to "double jeopardy," but rather to ensure the safety of other students, school staff, and school property, and to avoid disruption of the school program.

School administrators must act when there is reasonable cause to believe that a student is guilty of misconduct which is covered by this policy. In the case of criminal misconduct, a decision cannot be delayed until the student has been judged innocent or guilty by a court, a process which often takes months.

When a school principal receives information from any source (students, parents, school staff, law enforcement officers, news media, etc.) indicating that a student is guilty of misconduct which is covered by this policy, he will make every reasonable effort to determine the truth of the allegation. Action will be taken if the principal has reasonable cause to believe that the misconduct has occurred.

Judgments will be made by the principal or designee as to:

1. whether the student's misconduct off school grounds results in a reasonable likelihood that the student's return to the regular educational program would produce a disruptive effect or threaten the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff or endanger school property; and
2. the appropriate disciplinary action.

In making these judgments, the administrator should consider the welfare of the offending student and, insofar as possible, impose discipline which is corrective rather than punitive.

As with any disciplinary action, the student and/or his/her parents have the right to be heard, to appeal the decision of an assistant principal to the principal, the decision of the principal to the superintendent, and the decision of the superintendent to the Thomas County Board of Education. The hearing at the first level is to be held as soon as practical after the alleged misbehavior becomes known to school officials.

Reporting Requirements:

Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student possesses a weapon as defined in paragraph 1, is involved in an assault using a weapon as defined in paragraph 2, or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus must report such violations to the principal or assistant principal of the school. If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that such a report is valid, he must immediately make an oral report to

the superintendent and the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney. The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his child's involvement in any activity involving weapons. Students will be given a copy of the code of conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to weapons and possible disciplinary actions.

Internet Acceptable Use

The use of the internet under the supervision of Pathways Educational Program is a student privilege, not a right. Pathways students are expected to follow the school policies and procedures regarding acceptable internet usage. Violation of policies may result in internet restrictions. Pathways Educational Program supports resources that will enhance the learning environment with directed guidance from the faculty and staff. However, it is impossible to control all materials on a global network and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information.

Pathways students and staff utilize the internet systems through Thomas County Schools. Teachers are responsible for training students in the proper use of the internet in the classroom. Teachers will provide supervision of internet usage. Pathways Educational Program, however, cannot prevent the possibility that some users may access material that is not consistent with the educational mission, goals, and policies of the Thomas County School System, since internet access may be obtained apart from the school setting. Internet filtering systems are in place through the school systems where Pathways centers are housed to protect students. The filtering system blocks unacceptable sites that fall into the following categories: violence, pornography, drugs, chat, free email, hate/discrimination, etc.

Thomas County School's Guidelines:

Technology equipment, the internet, and digital learning tools provide vast, diverse, and unique resources that can be used to transform learning. Our goal in providing these resources to teachers, staff, and students is to provide a unique and personalized learning experience in the Thomas County School System. By promoting quality instruction while using digital tools, educational excellence can be achieved.

In our schools, student access to and use of the internet will be under teacher direction and monitored as any other classroom activity. The use of technology equipment and digital tools in the Thomas County School System is a privilege that requires all users to act responsibly. All users are accountable for any violations of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, Thomas County Schools has an internet filtering system in place to protect the students in our schools. The filtering system blocks unacceptable sites that fall into the following categories: violence, pornography, drugs, chat, free email, hate/discrimination, etc.

However, it is impossible to control all materials on a global network and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information. The school system cannot completely prevent the possibility that some users may access material that is not consistent with the educational mission, goals, and policies of the school system. Violations of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy can result in disciplinary action.

It is the belief of the board that the internet's advantages far outweigh its disadvantages. The Thomas County Board of Education views information gathered from the internet in the same manner as reference materials identified by the schools. Specifically, the system supports resources that will enhance the learning environment with directed guidance from the faculty and staff. Exploration of resources, by both teachers and students, within the confines of this Acceptable Use Policy, is encouraged.

All students in Thomas County Schools will receive age-appropriate instruction regarding safe and appropriate online behavior including, but not limited to, electronic interactions with others on social networking sites and in chat rooms; behaviors that may constitute cyberbullying; and how to respond when subjected to cyberbullying. The Common Sense Media Digital Citizenship Curriculum will be taught in all schools.

Guidelines for Internet Usage:

- Internet use must be in support of education and research consistent with classroom curriculum.
- The use of the internet must be consistent with the rules appropriate to any network being used or accessed.
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material is prohibited. This also includes accessing pirated music, movies, and television shows through our network.
- Threatening or obscene materials are prohibited.
- Distribution of material protected by trade secret is prohibited.
- Product advertisement and political lobbying are prohibited.
- Commercial activities are not acceptable.
- Non-instructional games are prohibited on school computers.
- Staff and students shall not download software from home or unauthorized programs from the internet.
- The use of proxy sites and/or VPN services to access internet sites which are blocked by Thomas County Schools is prohibited.
- Nothing should be posted on the internet that would be inappropriate for parents, teachers, students, etc. to read. The internet is a public forum. Any blog post or social networking post, including photographs, which are posted on the internet are there permanently. Any post that is deleted may be cached in a search engine, school system server, or internet archive and cause embarrassment years later. Internet posts that are a violation of this Acceptable Use Policy could result in disciplinary action.
- Faculty, staff, and students should refrain from the use of personal social networking sites including, but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or Tumblr, during working hours.
- Faculty and staff should not post pictures of students or school activities to their personal social networking sites.

Privileges:

- Access to the internet is not a right, but a privilege.
- Unacceptable and/or inappropriate usage will result in cancellation of network and/or Google account. The administration will deem what is inappropriate use and the administration's decision is final.
- The administration reserves the right to regulate any particular use of these computing resources.
- An administrator, faculty member, or staff member may request the denial, revocation, or suspension of a specific user's account.
- Students are issued devices at Thomas County Schools upon signing and returning a required parent and student agreement letter. Students are required to adhere to all policies set forth in the agreement notice and the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Appropriate Digital Citizenship:

- Use of profanity, vulgarities, or other inappropriate language is prohibited.
- Users should not reveal their or anyone else's personal information including, but not limited to, home address, phone number, credit card number, social security number, or student identification number.
- The network should not be used in a way that would disrupt the use of the network by others. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Students should not use personal or school-issued devices or accounts in a way that would threaten, harass, abuse, intimidate, or embarrass others.
- The use of websites or other types of electronic communication to circulate gossip and rumors about staff or students is prohibited.
- The use of cameras, camera phones, or other camera devices to take or exchange threatening or potentially embarrassing photographs of staff or students is prohibited.

Security:

- Security problems should be reported to the system administrator immediately.
- Account passwords should be kept confidential.
- Users should only use the network via the account assigned to them.
- Users must not interfere with or disrupt network users, services, traffic, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to the distribution of unsolicited advertising, downloading and/or streaming music or videos that slow the network, propagation of computer viruses, and using a network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via a network.
- Attempts to log on as another user or login to any accounts belonging to another user will result in cancellation of privileges.
- Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access.

Vandalism/Harassment:

- Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the internet, or other networks. This includes, but is not limited to, creating and/or uploading computer viruses.
- Vandalism also includes the attempt to harm or destroy computer hardware and unauthorized installation of software.
- Students should carefully handle all technology equipment, including, but not limited to, iPads, Chromebooks, desktop computers, and all specialty equipment in labs or other specialized areas. For example, Chromebooks should be handled with two hands, should not be picked up by the screen, keys should remain intact, and all items should be removed from the Chromebook before the screen is closed.
- Users should report damages to the technology department in their buildings and not attempt to make the repairs themselves.
- Vandalism and/or harassment will result in the cancellation or revocation of the offender's privileges and disciplinary action will result.

Google for Education, Email, and Other Electronic Communication:

- Google for Education accounts are provided for all employees and students in grades 2-12. Google for Education accounts include Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets, Google Classroom, etc. as a part of the tcjackets or bhknights domain.
- Google for Education accounts are provided for professional and academic purposes. These accounts should not be used for personal gain, personal business activities, or to solicit for non-school system business. Broadcasting of unsolicited messages is prohibited.

- All users, including students, should not use school-issued email accounts to sign up for personal accounts on websites, including, but not limited to, social media and gaming websites.
- All school-related business should be sent via the email account provided by Thomas County Schools. Personal email accounts should not be used for school-related business.
- All electronic communication created, sent, or received via the Thomas County Schools email system is the property of Thomas County Schools. Employees and students shall not have any expectation of privacy regarding this information. The board reserves the right, as deemed necessary, to access, read, review, monitor, and copy all messages and files on its computer system without notice. Thomas County Schools reserves the right to disclose text, video, audio, or image files to law enforcement agencies without employee or student consent.
- Student-related messages should be guarded and protected in compliance with FERPA in order to protect the privacy of students. Employees must abide by copyright laws, ethics rules, and applicable state and federal laws.
- Email messages should only contain professional and appropriate language. Employees and students shall not send abusive, harassing, intimidating, threatening, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive messages.
- Thomas County Schools has a SPAM filter in place to prevent inappropriate email messages, viruses, malware, etc. However, this does not guarantee that this type of email message will not make it through and those who make use of electronic communication will occasionally receive messages that are found offensive or annoying. When this happens, the employee should delete the messages. The Thomas County School System is not responsible for the items employees or students may view via links to other web pages if the employee chooses to open and read these messages.
- Student Google accounts are monitored for inappropriate usage through Gagggle.net and filtered through Go Guardian. Inappropriate use of Google accounts is reported to school and system administrators and handled as a disciplinary violation.
- The use of school-issued Google accounts on personal/home devices will install extensions and/or apps for monitoring purposes for that account. School-issued student accounts are monitored on home and personal devices when students are logged in, including on home and personal devices. Students should log out of school-issued Google accounts when not in use.

Electronic or Mobile Devices:

- Students in all schools have access to either iPads, Chromebooks, or desktop computers. However, the use of personal mobile devices may be necessary in some situations.
- The use of mobile devices will only be allowed in specific areas or classes per the direction of school staff.
- Devices are to be used only for school-related or school-approved activities. Games are not allowed.
- Teachers and staff reserve the right to check devices for inappropriate use or inappropriate material.
- The Thomas County School System is not responsible for lost or damaged devices.
- Cell phones and all device cameras are to be turned off and not used during any testing or examination period. During the testing session, cell phones/camera phones are to be stored in a case, book bag, knapsack, or purse, and may not be placed on the table, desktop, or individual's lap. Staff members have the right to confiscate devices during testing.
- Students should not use their own data connection in order to access the internet during the school day. Students shall access the internet via Thomas County Schools' wireless network while on school grounds in order to ensure their internet connection is filtered through Thomas County Schools' filtering system as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act. Teachers and staff reserve the right to check an electronic or mobile device for proper connection. Students who do not follow this guideline could potentially lose the right to use their own electronic or mobile devices while at school.

- Students may only access the internet during class sessions for instructor-authorized, class-related purposes. It should be noted that the school controls the internet connectivity in classrooms and may elect to “turn-off” the wireless network during class time or restrict student passwords for wireless connections.
- Electronic or mobile devices should not be used to video or take pictures of disruptive behavior such as fights or other class/school disruptions. The sharing or posting of such videos or pictures or any other inappropriate videos or pictures is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. This activity is a violation of privacy under FERPA and, depending upon the severity, may be reported to law enforcement.
- Students who use their personal devices to access their Google for Education accounts should realize that account activity is monitored through Gaggle.net. Inappropriate usage or violations of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy are still applicable.

Disclaimers:

The Thomas County School System makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The Thomas County School System will not be responsible for any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data, non-deliveries, misdeliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions. The use of any information obtained via the internet is at your own risk. The system will not be responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the internet connection.

FERPA

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

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

The Board of Education designates the following information as “directory information.” Unless a parent or eligible student makes a timely request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated as directory information for the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request

- a. Student name and address;
- b. Student date and place of birth;
- c. Student participation in official school activities and sports;
- d. Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
- e. Dates of attendance at schools within the school district;
- f. Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
- g. Photograph; and
- h. Grade level.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Thomas County Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain a parent/guardian’s written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student’s education records. However, the school may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” at the discretion of the school unless the principal or designee has been notified in writing by August 31 of each school year by the parent/guardian or eligible student that some or all

of this information shall not be designated as directory information. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from the student's education records in certain school publications. Directory information includes student name, address, year of birth, enrollment, dates of attendance, grade level, degrees and awards received, date of graduation, photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and height and weight of members of interscholastic athletic teams.

Mandated Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education:

Section 8025 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that school systems provide, upon a request made by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education, access to the name, address, and telephone listing of each secondary school student. A parent of a secondary school student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, may submit a written request to the school, that the student's name, address, and telephone listing not be released to a military recruiter or an institution of higher education without prior written consent of the parent.

Student Reporting Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct:

1. Any student (*or parent or friend of a student*) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.
2. Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or another employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours, who shall then promptly forward said report to the office designated below. *If the principal is the person accused of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.*
3. Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report ***immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney and to the office designated below:***

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Listed below are definitions for "sexual abuse" and "sexual misconduct"

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5. **"Sexual misconduct"** includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showed or displayed sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.

3. Wrote sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spread sexual rumors (i.e. said a student was gay or a lesbian).
5. Spied on a student as they dressed, showered, or used the restroom at school.
6. Flashed or “moonied” student.
7. Touched, excessively hugged, or grabbed a student in a sexual way.
8. Forced a student to kiss him or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talked or asked about a student’s developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
10. Talked repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Made fun of a student’s body parts.
12. Called student sexual names.

Testing Calendar Goes here

Calendar goes here