



Student Code of Conduct

Academic Year: 2023-2024

STUDENT BEHAVIOR CODE

It is the purpose of the Stephens County Board of Education to operate each school in a manner that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend the schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, the Stephens County Board of Education has adopted standards for student behavior during school hours, at school-related functions, on school buses, and at school bus stops designed to create the expectation that students will behave themselves in such a way as to facilitate a learning environment for themselves and other students, respect each other and all school system employees, obey student behavior policies adopted by the local board of education, and obey student behavior rules established by individual schools within the Stephens County School System.

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

As stated above, the SCSS Student Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

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

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

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

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

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

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL

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

AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER

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

Each teacher shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. §20-2-737 which requires the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct. Such report shall be filed with the principal or designee on the school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardian may contact the principal or designee.

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

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Progressive discipline processes are designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior, that the previous discipline history of the student and other relevant factors will be taken into account; and that all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed; 160-4-8-.15 Parental involvement processes are designed to create the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers, and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. Local boards of education shall provide opportunities for parental involvement in developing and updating student codes of conduct.

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student, and other relevant factors.

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

The following disciplinary actions may be imposed for any violation of this Code of Conduct as defined in the Stephens County Board of Education policy:

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

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

Parents or students may elect not to contest whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved also by the disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer in accordance with local board policy.

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

School officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Student book bags, school lockers, desks, and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Cell phones/multimedia/electronic devices taken from students due to possession and/or use in violation of school rules are subject to having their contents searched. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags or lockers. Metal detectors and drug- or weapon-sniffing dogs may be utilized at or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

STUDENT CONDUCT

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The following uniform Student Disciplinary Code has been developed to foster consistent discipline in the Stephens County School System. Principals and teachers may only develop individual rules and

disciplinary practices which supplement this Code. This Code applies to all students enrolled in the Stephens County School System except for those rules which specifically limit the application to specific grade levels.

II. STUDENT OFFENSES

No student shall, while on school grounds, off school grounds at a school activity, function or event, or en route to and from school by bus or other transportation provided by the school system, at school bus stops, or while in any vehicle used in connection with a school function or activity, violate any of the following rules of any of the schools within the Stephens County School System. Note, this list is not all-inclusive and a student committing an act of misconduct not listed will be subject to the discretionary authority of the principal or designee.

Rule 1: Occupying Property with Intent to Deprive Other's Use

A student shall not occupy any school building, gymnasium, school grounds, properties, or any part thereof with intent to deprive others of its use, or where the effect thereof is to deprive others of its use.

Rule 2: Blocking Entrances, Exits, or Corridors

A student shall not block the entrance or exit of any school building or property or corridor or room thereof so as to deprive others of access thereof.

Rule 3: Damage or Destruction of School Facilities: Setting Fires

A student shall not set fire to or otherwise damage or destroy any school building or property.

Rule 4: Activating False Alarms

A student shall not falsely activate any alarm system, including but not limited to fire and security systems, or call 911 without good reason to do so.

Rule 5: Terroristic Threats

A student shall not make any bomb threats or terroristic threats that may cause the discontinuance or interruption of school, or a school activity, function, or event.

Rule 6: Weapons

A student shall not possess, discharge, display, or otherwise use any firearms, explosives, or other weapons as provided for in O.C.G.A. §16-11-127.1.

Rule 7: Blocking Traffic

A student shall not, except under the direction of the school principal, block normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a school campus or adjacent grounds.

Rule 8: Disruption of School Activity

A student shall not in any manner, by the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or any other conduct, cause or attempt to cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school, or engage in any such conduct for the purpose of causing the disruption or obstruction of any such lawful mission, process, or function.

Rule 9: Refusal to Identify Self

A student shall not refuse to identify himself/herself upon request of any teacher, principal, superintendent, school bus driver, or other authorized personnel.

Rule 10: Theft of School Property

A student shall not steal or attempt to steal school property.

Rule 11: Theft or Damage of Private or Personal Property

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property or steal or attempt to steal private property. This includes willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school or to the personal property of any person legitimately at the school as well as marking, defacing, or destroying school property or the property of another student.

Rule 12: Physical and Verbal Assault

A student shall not physically or verbally assault a teacher, other school officials, school employees, those persons attending a school-related function, another student, or any persons. Verbal assault includes threatening violence against teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. Physical assault includes battery of teachers, administrators, or other school personnel. This includes verbal assault of other students, including threatening violence or sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; 160-4-8-.15 and sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 or physical assault or battery of other students.

Rule 13: Battery on Students and Non-School Employees

A student shall not commit battery upon another student or any other non-school employee, including those persons attending a school-related function.

Rule 14: Drugs and Alcohol

Unlawful use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol: A student shall not possess, sell, use, distribute, attempt to distribute, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, inhalant, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana of any kind, drug paraphernalia, or any substance set out or controlled under and by virtue of the Georgia Controlled Substances Act. A student shall not possess, sell, use, distribute, or attempt to distribute any substance under the pretense that it is an alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana of any kind, or any substance set out or controlled under and by virtue of the Georgia Controlled Substances Act. Use of an over-the-counter drug as an over-the-counter drug and following the directions of the same shall not be a violation of this rule. In those cases, in which it is necessary for a student to take medicine at school, a student shall follow the regulations established by the school. No student shall be in possession of any drugs or medicines without the approval of an administrator or the school nurse. The use of prescription medication as prescribed by a doctor and in compliance with the regulations established for medications at school shall not be a violation of this rule. Under no circumstances should students distribute or sell or attempt to distribute or sell prescription drugs.

Rule 15: Failure to Obey

A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable directions or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, counselors, media specialists, school bus drivers, or other authorized school personnel.

Rule 16: Excessive Tardiness and Truancy

A student shall not miss or be tardy for class or required activities during school hours unless permission has been granted by the school administration.

Rule 17: Tobacco

A student shall not use, possess, distribute, or sell tobacco or tobacco products.

Rule 18: Profane, Vulgar, or Obscene Words or Gestures

A student shall not use, speak, utter, or write profane, vulgar, obscene, disrespectful, or inflammatory words, language, or drawings or make such gestures. This includes disrespectful conduct including the use of vulgar or profane language towards teachers, administrators, other school personnel, persons attending school-related functions, or other students.

Rule 19: Pornographic Materials

A student shall not possess, sell, use, view, or transmit pornographic or obscene materials, literature, or electronic media.

Rule 20: Criminal Violations

A student shall not commit any crime (felony or misdemeanor) as defined by the laws of Georgia, nor violate any City, County, State, or Federal law while under the jurisdiction of the Stephens County School System.

Rule 21: Inappropriate Displays of Public Affection and/or Sexual Misconduct

A student shall not engage in or encourage others to engage in any kind of amorous kissing or sexual activity with or without the consent of the other individual involved. A student shall not expose one's intimate body parts.

Rule 22: Trespassing

A student shall not trespass nor unlawfully enter onto school property or into school facilities.

Rule 23: Electronic/Communications Devices

A student shall not use, possess, or carry a pocket pager, beeper, cellular telephone, radio, compact disc (CD) player, tape player, video game, or other electronic device except for health or other unusual reasons approved by the school administration. A student is prohibited from using any electronic device in a manner that might interfere with school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Rule 24: Gambling

A student shall not engage in gambling or participate in games of chance for money or property.

Rule 25: Academic Dishonesty

A student shall not use the work of another student or person for academic purposes unless authorized or engage in the unauthorized use of notes or materials for the completion of an assignment or test.

Rule 26: Encouraging Violation of Rules

A student shall not urge, encourage, or counsel other students to violate any of the preceding rules. This includes inciting, advising, or counseling others to engage in prohibited acts.

Rule 27: Bullying

A student shall not bully any person.

Rule 28: Threat, Harassment, Intimidation

A student shall not threaten, verbally or written, expressed or implied, to cause bodily injury to any student, teacher, school official, school employee, or any person attending a school-related function. A student shall not harass or intimidate any student, teacher, school official, school employee, or any person attending a school-related function.

Rule 29: Physical Violence

A student shall not inflict physical violence upon a student, teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee.

Rule 30: Prohibited Items on the Bus

A student shall not use mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Rule 31: Falsifying reports of Alleged Inappropriate Behavior by Teacher or School Personnel

A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.

Rule 32: Conduct Subversive to Good Order

A student shall not perform any other act, on or off campus, which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools. This rule includes any off-campus behavior of a student, which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Rule 33: Repeated Violations/Willful Misbehavior:

Willful and persistent violation of student codes of conduct: Students may not willfully, and repeatedly violate school rules and state or federal laws. Students who chronically disrupt the school environment or repeatedly violate school rules may be charged with repeated violations of school rules for expected behavior.

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

Rule 34: Electronic Smoking Device:

Students may not be in possession (intentional or unintentional) of any device used to deliver nicotine or any other substance intended for human consumption that may be used by a person to simulate smoking through inhalation of vapor or aerosol from the device.

III. DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary infractions and recommended responses to them are divided into four (4) levels. Each level governs progressively more serious behavior. It is the responsibility of the principal or his or her designee to determine the level of the offense and the appropriate discipline.

A. LEVEL I

Level I offenses are acts of misconduct that interfere with orderly classroom procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, approved transportation, or a student's learning process.

Level I offenses should be handled first by the teacher or staff member involved in the incident. When the teacher or staff member involved determines that additional action is necessary because of repeat violations or other concerns, the student may be referred to the principal or his or her designee for appropriate disciplinary action. The principal or designee, after review of the student's explanation, consultation with the school personnel involved, and further investigation (when needed), will determine the appropriate disciplinary action, consistent with this Code.

Level I offenses include but are not limited to abusive language, cheating, defiance, disorderly conduct, classroom disruption, threat, harassment, intimidation, and rude and/or disrespectful behavior.

Disciplinary responses that may be taken in response to Level I offenses include, but are not limited to verbal reprimand, parental contact, withdrawal of privileges, behavior contract, after-school detention, opportunity room, in-school suspension, and warning of referral to Level II.

The principal/designee may also utilize or inform parents/guardians of student support services that may help address behavioral problems. Behavior support processes are designed to consider, as appropriate in light of the severity of the behavioral problem, support services that may be available through the school, school system, other public entities, or community organizations that may help the student address behavioral problems; This rule neither mandates nor prohibits the use of student support teams as part of the student support process. The principal/designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the student's parents regarding the offense and discipline.

B. LEVEL II

Level II offenses are intermediate acts of misconduct which may include repeated acts of misconduct and acts directed against persons or property, but which do not seriously endanger the health and safety of others.

Level II offenses must be reported to the principal or designee. The principal or designee, after review of the student's explanation, consultation with the school personnel involved, and further investigation (when needed), will determine the appropriate disciplinary action, consistent with this Code.

Level II offenses include, but are not limited to repeated Level I offenses, abusive language, defiance, destruction of property, disrespect of others, fighting, gambling, misconduct on the bus or at the bus stop, skipping class, stealing, theft, rude and/or disrespectful behavior, unauthorized possession and/or inappropriate use of electronic devices.

Disciplinary responses that may be taken in response to Level II offenses include but are not limited to verbal reprimand, parental contact, schedule change, withdrawal of privileges, behavior contract, confiscation of unauthorized materials, restitution of damages, after-school detention, suspension from the bus, opportunity room, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, and warning of referral to Level III.

The principal/designee may also utilize or inform parents/guardians of student support services that may help address behavioral problems. The principal/designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the student's parents regarding the offense and discipline.

C. LEVEL III

Level III offenses are serious acts of misconduct. Level III offenses must be reported immediately to the principal or designee and may result in the immediate removal of the student from the classroom, school, or extracurricular activities.

Level III offenses include, but are not limited to repeated Level II offenses, abusive language to school personnel, verbal assault, physical assault, physical violence, bullying, destruction of property, vandalism, defiance, extortion, threats, fighting, harassment, intimidation, sexual harassment, tobacco possession or use, theft, trespassing, breaking and entering.

Disciplinary responses that may be taken in response to Level III offenses include but are not limited to parental contact, restitution of damages, after-school detention, suspension from the bus, opportunity room, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, referral to an alternative disciplinary program, referral to law enforcement, and warning of referral to Level IV.

The principal/designee may also utilize or inform parents/guardians of student support services that may help address behavioral problems. The principal/designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the student's parents regarding the offense and discipline.

D. LEVEL IV

Level IV offenses are the most serious acts of misconduct. Committing any of these acts will be sufficient grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion. Level IV offenses must be reported immediately to the principal or designee. Acts that are violations of the law must be reported to law enforcement.

Level IV offenses include, but are not limited to repeated Level III offenses, verbal assault, physical assault, physical violence, battery, aggravated battery, sexual battery, arson, firearms, weapons, explosives, homicide, kidnapping, robbery, breaking and entering, alcohol, drugs, destruction of property, threats, sexual harassment, sex offenses, serious misconduct on the bus or at the bus stop, theft, trespassing, inciting, leading, or participating in acts that substantially disrupt orderly conduct at a school or school function, possession, use, sale, or distribution of stolen property, violation of criminal law.

Disciplinary responses that may be taken in response to level IV offenses range from parental contact, restitution of damages, long-term suspension from the bus, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, and/or recommendations for disciplinary tribunal, alternative disciplinary program, long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion.

The principal/designee may also utilize or inform parents/guardians of student support services that may help address behavioral problems. The principal/designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the student's parents regarding the offense and discipline.

- Violence

Violence in schools or on school buses will not be tolerated. When a student has committed an alleged assault, and/or act of physical violence upon a teacher, other school official, or school employee, the student shall be referred to a Student Disciplinary Tribunal with a recommendation for long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion.

Verbal assault, physical assault, and/or any act of physical violence (as defined in Section V, Physical violence, subsection 1) upon a teacher, school bus driver, other school official, or school employee is prohibited and is a Level IV offense and requires a minimum suspension of 90 days on the first offense.

Physical violence (as defined in Section V, Physical violence, subsection 2) is prohibited and requires permanent expulsion on the first offense. However, the Stephens County Board of Education may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for the period of expulsion. Further, upon the recommendation of a disciplinary tribunal, the Stephens County Board of Education may permit a student in grades kindergarten through eight to re-enroll in the regular program for grades nine through twelve. The Stephens County Board of Education may permit a student in kindergarten through grade five to re-enroll in the regular school system program. In addition, any student who is found by a disciplinary tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence against a school employee (as defined in Section V, “Physical violence,” subsection 2) shall be referred to juvenile court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior.

In addition to these penalties, the parent/guardian of any student found to have engaged in physical assault, and/or battery of another person on a school bus must meet with a school administrator to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such a contract shall provide for progressive, age-appropriate discipline for student misconduct on the bus.

- Weapons

Possession of a weapon at school is prohibited and a violation of the Weapons Policy, JCDAE, is a Level IV offense. When a student has allegedly violated the weapons policy and long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion is recommended or required, the student shall be referred to a Student Disciplinary Tribunal with a recommendation for long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion.

- Drugs

The possession, sale, transfer, distribution, attempted distribution, or use of illegal drugs is wrong and harmful. The possession, sale, transfer, distribution, or use of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia is prohibited and is a Level IV offense.

Likewise, the possession, sale, transfer, distribution, attempted distribution, or use of substances represented to be or thought to be by the buyer or receiver of illegal drugs is prohibited and is a Level IV offense. Being under the influence of illegal drugs is prohibited and is a Level IV offense. The use of a legal substance to attain a mood-altering effect and the possession or use of any equipment or device used for preparing or taking drugs are prohibited and are Level IV offenses. The sale and/or distribution of or the attempt to sell and/or distribute prescription drugs is prohibited and is a Level IV offense. When a student has allegedly violated one of these prohibitions concerning illegal or prescription drugs and long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion is recommended or required, the student shall be referred to a Student Disciplinary Tribunal with a recommendation for long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion. A violation of any prohibition concerning illegal drugs, possession of a controlled substance out of the original container, or a violation of the prohibition concerning the sale and/or distribution of prescription drugs requires a minimum suspension of 90 days on the first offense and referral to a Student Disciplinary Tribunal with a recommendation for expulsion or permanent expulsion for any further offenses.

- Alcohol

The possession, sale, transfer, distribution, or use of alcohol is wrong and harmful. The possession, sale, transfer, distribution, or use of alcohol is prohibited and is a Level IV offense. Likewise, the possession,

sale, transfer, distribution, or use of alcohol represented to be or thought to be by the buyer or receiver of alcohol is prohibited and is a Level IV offense. A violation of any prohibition concerning alcohol requires a 10-day suspension on the first offense and referral to a Student Disciplinary Tribunal with a recommendation for long-term suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion for any further offenses.

- Bullying

No student shall bully any person as defined in Section V. If a student in grades 6-12 is found by a tribunal to have violated this policy for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to the Alternative School. In addition, the parent/guardian of any student found to have engaged in bullying on a school bus must meet with a school administrator to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such contract shall provide for progressive, age-appropriate discipline for student misconduct on the bus.

- Truancy

There are guidelines and consequences resulting from failure to comply with compulsory attendance as required under O.C.G.A § 20-2-690.1. The following are the consequences and penalties for unexcused absences as contained in the Student Attendance Protocol developed by the Student Attendance Protocol Committee:

- Parents must attend an Attendance Support Team meeting at the school if summoned for such a meeting.
- Charges may be filed against parents if the child misses over 10 days of school.
- Judges may invoke the following consequences for parents:
 1. \$25- \$100 fine for each offense
 2. Imprisonment for up to 30 days for each offense
 3. Community Service
 4. Any combination of the above
- Students over age 10 must attend an Attendance Support Team meeting at the school if referred for such a meeting.
- Students having excessive absences may be required to attend and successfully complete the summer school program and/or be retained.
- Students aged 15 and older may be denied their driver's permit or license.
- Juvenile charges may be filed against any student missing 10 or more days of school.
- Judges may invoke the following consequences for students:
 1. Up to 24 months probation
 2. Must have all passing grades in all subjects
 3. Must have no future discipline problems at school
 4. Denial or suspension of driver's license
 5. Community Service

Serious Criminal Acts May Include But Are Not Limited to the Following:

1. Sale or distribution of drugs or alcohol. Possession or use of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, or coming to school under the influence of (including over-the-counter drugs or materials portrayed as controlled substances)
2. Assault or Battery on a teacher, staff member, or student
3. Sexual Assault or Battery
4. Engaging in Sexual Activity
5. Weapon Possession
6. Inciting a Riot
7. Assault with a Weapon

8. Extortion
9. Terroristic Threats
10. Other serious legal or school violations and/or criminal acts

Consequences (pending individual history)

1st Offense: 10 days OSS Pending Tribunal

*The administration reserves the right to accelerate or alter consequences based on the context, nature, and/or severity of the incident.

IV. VICTIM REPORTS

Victims of certain alleged student misconduct may file a written complaint with the Stephens County Board of Education through the school administration, describing the alleged incident and the injury or damage sustained. A student disciplinary hearing will be held following:

- a. Any alleged violation of the student code of conduct where the principal recommends a suspension or expulsion of longer than 10 school days.
- b. An alleged assault or battery by a student upon any teacher, other school official, or school employee, if such teacher or other school official or employee so requests.

V. DEFINITIONS

"Abusive Language" -means swearing, cursing, or using profane, vulgar, and/or obscene words.

"Aggravated Battery"-means the intentional or knowing commitment of an act that causes great bodily harm or permanent disfigurement or the use of a deadly weapon.

"Alcohol"- means all alcoholic beverages, including, but not limited to, beer, wine/wine coolers, and liquor.

"Arson" -means setting or attempting to set a fire.

"Battery" - means intentionally making physical contact of an insulting provoking nature with the person of a student or a non-school employee; intentionally causing physical harm to a student or non-school employee; or causing or attempting to cause injury or behaving in such a way as to cause physical injury to a student or non-school employee.

"Breaking and Entering/Burglary"- means the unlawful entry into a building or other structure or vehicle with the intent to commit a felony or theft.

"Bullying"- means an act that occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school-related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, which 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.

"Cheating" -means willful or deliberate unauthorized use of the work of another person for academic purposes or inappropriate use of notes or other materials in the completion of an academic assignment or test.

"Classroom Disruptions" - *See Disorderly Conduct*

"Corporal Punishment" -means a paddling administered following the guidelines of Policy JDA.

"Defiance" -means not following the directions of staff, failing to observe rules, or openly challenging the authority of a school official.

"Detention"-means remaining after school or attending school on Saturday as an alternative to suspension for violation of certain offenses.

"Disorderly Conduct/Classroom Disruption"- means any act which disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, behavior substantially disrupting the orderly learning environment, or behavior that poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students and/or staff.

"Drugs" -means controlled substances excluding alcohol, but including, but not limited to, drugs which require a physician's prescription, and drugs which are classified as "designer drugs".

"Drug Paraphernalia"-means equipment or a device used for preparing or taking drugs.

"Expulsion" -means the removal of a student from school beyond the current school semester.

"Fighting" -means mutual participation in an altercation.

"Firearms/Explosives" - *See Policy JCDAE*

"Gambling"- means any participation in games (or activities) of chance for money and/or other things of value.

"Harassment/Intimidation" -means using unwelcome remarks or acts to annoy, demean, or ridicule another; forcing another to do something; or preventing another from doing something by threatening, bullying, or making the person afraid.

"Homicide" - means the murder and non-negligent manslaughter killing of one human being by another or killing a person through negligence.

"In-school Suspension" -means the temporary removal of a student from the regular school program and placement in an alternative program, under the direction of school district personnel. School administrators may assign a student to in-school suspension for a maximum of ten consecutive school days. While assigned to in-school suspension, a student will have all regular school privileges and extracurricular activities withdrawn during the period of in-school suspension. There shall be no interruption of services a student may be receiving from a counselor, psychologist, or social worker while serving an in-school suspension.

"Kidnapping"- means the unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian.

"Long-term Suspension" -means the removal of a student from school for more than ten days. A long-term suspension may only be assigned by a Student Disciplinary Tribunal or the Board of Education.

"Parental Contact" -means the notification to the parent (s) or legal guardian (s) of a disciplinary problem his/her child is having, explaining possible disciplinary actions to be taken to resolve the matter, allowing the parent(s) or legal guardians to have input into how the matter might be resolved, and requesting help from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in resolving the matter.

"Physical Assault"- means an intentional threat by act to do violence to another person, coupled with an apparent ability to do so, while creating a well-founded fear in the other person that such violence is imminent without subjecting him or her to physical attack.

"Physical Violence" - means (1) intentionally making physical contact of an insulting and provoking nature with the person of a school employee or (2) intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to a school employee unless the student caused such physical harms in self-defense as provided in Georgia law.

"Permanent Expulsion" -means the permanent removal of a student from the Stephens County School System.

"Probation" -means the trial period of time during which a student committing further disciplinary offenses is subject to further disciplinary action that might be more severe than otherwise.

"Restitution" -means the restoration or full payment for damaged or stolen property.

"Sex offenses"- means inappropriate sexual behavior or conduct without force or threat of force including, but not limited to, sexual conduct, inappropriate bodily contact, indecent exposure, and the possession or distribution of pornographic materials.

"Sexual Battery" -means any sexual act directed against another person, forcibly and/or against the victim's will or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

"Sexual Harassment - See *Policy JCAC*

"Skipping Class" -means the unexcused absence(s) from the class period(s) or for the school day(s).

"Short-term Suspension" -means the removal of a student from school for ten (10) days or less. A short-term suspension may only be assigned by a school administrator, a Student Disciplinary Tribunal, or the Board of Education.

"Stealing" - See *Theft*

"Student Disciplinary Tribunal"-means, unless otherwise established by the Board of Education, the tribunal designated in Policy JCEB to hear and render decisions concerning certain student disciplinary matters.

"Student Support Services"- means all resources that may be used to help students with behavioral problems. These resources include but are not limited to parent/teacher conferences, parent/administrator conferences, referrals to Student Support Team, individual and/or group counseling sessions, referrals to the SUPER program, referrals to Mentoring program, opportunity rooms, peer mediation sessions, tribunal intervention counseling program, DARE program referrals, and Crossroads Alternative School referrals. Also, these resources may include programs available through Family Connections.

"Tardy" -means being late for school or class.

"Theft/Larceny" -means the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession, or constructive possession, of another person.

"Threat" - means a verbal or nonverbal expression of an intention to inflict pain, injury, evil, or punishment on another person or an intention to damage, destroy, vandalize, or steal another person's property.

"Trespassing" means to enter or remain on school property without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry, including students under suspension or expulsion.

"Vandalism"- means the willful and/or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property without the consent of the owner or person having custody or control of the property including, but not limited to graffiti.

"Verbal assault"- means an intentional threat by word to do violence to another person, coupled with an apparent ability to do so, while creating a well-founded fear in the other person that such violence is imminent without subjecting him or her to physical attack.

"Weapons" - See *Policy JCDAE*

VI. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

1. Local boards of education shall provide for the distribution of student codes of conduct to each student upon enrollment and to the parents and guardians of each student and may solicit the signatures of students and parents or guardians in acknowledgment of the receipt of such student codes of conduct.
2. Student codes of conduct shall be available in each school and classroom.

3. Local boards of education shall provide for disciplinary actions against students who violate student codes of conduct.
4. Local board policies relating to student codes of conduct shall provide that each local superintendent shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738, including establishing and disseminating procedures.
5. It is the preferred policy of the board that disruptive students are placed in alternative education settings in lieu of being suspended or expelled.
6. Local board policies shall require the filing of a report by a teacher documenting a student's violation of the student code of conduct which repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior. The report shall be filed with the principal or principal's designee, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or principal's designee shall, within one day of receiving such report, send to the student's parents or guardians a copy of the report, and information regarding how the principal or principal's designee may be contacted.
7. The principal or the principal's designee shall send written notification to the teacher and to the student's parents or guardians of the student support services being utilized or the disciplinary action taken within one school day and shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm receipt of such written notification by the student's 160-4-8-.15 parents or guardians. Written notification shall include information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or principal's designee.
 - o Each local board of education shall approve Tribunal Training Provider(s).
8. Each local board of education shall make available to all Qualified Student Discipline Hearing Officers and Disciplinary Tribunal or Panel Members the initial and ongoing tribunal training course prior to the individual(s) serving in such capacity. The local board of education shall ensure initially trained student discipline hearing officers and disciplinary tribunal or panel members undergo continuing education so as to continue to serve in such capacity.
9. Each local board of education shall observe Georgia law in developing and implementing disciplinary hearings held by a disciplinary hearing officer, disciplinary panel, or disciplinary tribunal pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751 through § 20-2-759 including the ability to honor disciplinary orders of private schools and other public schools/school systems pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2.
10. Students under suspension or expulsion may be allowed to make up any academic work. Stephens County School System may not recognize or grant academic credit for work completed by the student through any home study program or through any non-accredited private school during a suspension or expulsion. This applies to all offenses listed in this policy. Students under suspension or expulsion are not allowed on the school campus or at any school functions or events.
11. Students are to notify a school administrator or staff member when illegal or suspected illegal items, dangerous items, or other items prohibited from school are found in the school building, on the school campus, or on the school bus. Students are not to pick up or handle these items.
12. Due to the immaturity of elementary students (grades kindergarten through five), school administrators may use discretion in applying the aforementioned policy.
13. School administrators and/or designees have the authority to conduct reasonable searches of students, their possessions, their lockers, and their automobiles while on school property, or property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, or at any school-related event held away from the school campus. Strip searches are not allowed. The school administrator is required to have reasonable suspicion prior to conducting a search but shall have

the right without notice or suspicion to search desks, lockers, and/or automobiles. If the student and/or his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) refuse to allow a search, a law enforcement official(s) will be contacted immediately, and the matter turned over to them.

14. A student is deemed to be in possession of an item(s) when such item(s) is found on the person of the student, in his/her possessions.
15. Students found guilty of being accessories to any violation of this Code are subject to the same penalties as the students who are actively involved in committing such offenses.
16. Students and parents will be provided a copy of the rules and regulations as contained in this Policy through each school's student and parent handbook which will be given to the student upon initial enrollment in school and annually thereafter. The student and parent handbook will also be available in each school and classroom. It will be the responsibility of the student to know and adhere to the contents of these rules and regulations. Students and parents are encouraged to ask faculty and staff members for any clarification of this Code.
17. A teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behaviors that repeatedly or substantially interfere with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in his or her class or with the student's classmates' ability to learn and that violate this Code shall file a report describing the behavior to the principal/designee. The report may not exceed one page and must be filed within one school day of the most recent occurrence of the behavior. The principal/designee shall send a copy of the report to the student's parent/guardian with information regarding how the parent/guardian may contact the principal/designee. If the principal/designee takes disciplinary action against or utilizes student support services with the student, the principal/designee shall send written notification of the action to the teacher and the student's parent/guardian within one school day. The written notification to the parent/guardian shall include information regarding how the student's parent/guardian may contact the principal. The principal/designee shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that the written notification has been received by the student's parent or guardian.
18. Nothing in this Policy shall infringe upon any right provided to students with individualized education programs or plans pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

VII. OFF-CAMPUS OFFENSES

Students shall be disciplined for engaging in off-campus conduct that could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process. Off-campus misconduct for which a student shall be disciplined includes but is not limited to, any off-campus conduct that is prohibited by the Georgia or United States criminal codes, is punishable as a felony, or would be punishable as a felony if committed by an adult, and for which a student has been arrested, indicted, adjudicated to have committed, or convicted.

VIII. STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

State legislation has deemed that parental involvement processes shall be designed to create the expectation that parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely concerns about and actions in response to student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. Thus, the Stephens County Board of Education encourages parents/guardians to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

IX. CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

As required by state statute, a listing of all clubs and organizations within the school systems can be found on the district policy website as an exhibit for policy JCD. This listing includes the name of the club or organization, the mission or purpose of the club or organization, the name of the club's or organization's faculty advisor, and a description of past or planned activities. Any parent/guardian who wishes to decline participation for his/her child to participate in a club or organization should indicate this on the form provided with the distribution of this Student Conduct policy.

INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES OF STUDENTS:

Interrogations

The principal of each school, or the authorized representative, possesses the authority to conduct reasonable interrogations of students in order to properly investigate and punish student misconduct.

Searches

The system endeavors to provide a safe and secure environment for all students. The Board authorizes reasonable searches of students directed to that end by authorized school officials. Searches based on reasonable suspicion may proceed without hindrance or delay, but they shall be conducted in a manner that ensures that students are not arbitrarily stripped of personal privacy.

The principal of each school, or an authorized representative, possesses the authority to conduct an inspection of students' school lockers or articles carried upon their persons. Such search shall be based on reasonable suspicion of the presence of deleterious items. Examples of deleterious items will include but are not limited to, secreted noisemakers, water guns, contraband drugs, a handgun, or other dangerous weapons.

Principals of each school where lockers are issued shall ensure that at the time lockers are made available to students, it is clearly specified in writing that lockers are subject to inspection and search by school officials. Each school shall maintain duplicate keys or records of all locker combinations, and avoid any practices, which lead students to believe the lockers are under their exclusive control.

In the event, a search of a student's person, personal possessions, or locker reveals the student is concealing material, the possession of which is prohibited by federal, State, or local law, local law enforcement authorities shall be notified so that they may take appropriate action.

Strip searches are prohibited.

It is the policy of the schools to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in the interest of the larger welfare of all citizens. At the same time, schools have the responsibility to parents/guardians for the welfare of the students while they are in the care of the school. To carry out this responsibility school officials should observe the following:

- A student in school may not be interrogated by any authority without the knowledge of the school official.
- Any interrogation must be done in private with an official school representative present.
- A student may not be released to the custody of persons other than the parent or legal guardian unless placed under arrest by legal authority.
- If a student is removed from the school by legal authority, parents/guardians should be notified of this action by school officials as soon as possible.

STUDENT HEARING PROCEDURE

For the purpose of conducting certain student discipline hearings, as defined below, rendering a decision and imposing punishment, the Board of Education hereby adopts the following procedures:

1. The Superintendent shall convene a hearing in the following cases:
 - 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.
 - 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. The Board of Education hereby designates its administrative staff to serve as members of hearing tribunals. When the principal of a school or his or her designee refers a student to the Superintendent or his or her designee for a hearing as described in paragraph 1, the Superintendent or his staff shall choose three of these members to serve as the hearing tribunal. No member of the hearing tribunal shall be a member of the staff at the school which the student attends.
3. Whenever a principal or his or her designee refers a student discipline matter to the Superintendent or his or her designee, the Superintendent or his or her designee shall send a letter by regular or certified mail to the student and his or her parents or guardians containing a statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted and charges against the student, a list of potential witnesses, a statement setting forth the right of the student to present evidence, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by legal counsel. The hearing must be held no later than ten school days after the beginning of the suspension unless the school system and parents or guardians mutually agree to an extension.
4. The school principal or his or her designee shall be responsible for presenting evidence in support of the charges against the student and all parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses on any and all issues. Any teacher who is called as a witness by the school system shall be given notice no later than three days prior to the hearing. The hearing tribunal shall have made a verbatim electronic or written record of the hearing. This record shall be available to all parties but the cost of transcribing such record shall be borne by the party requesting the transcript.
5. The hearing tribunal shall render a decision finding whether the student committed the offense and, if so, the appropriate punishment. The decision of the hearing tribunal shall be based solely on the evidence received at the hearing, including any evidence presented by either party relevant to the appropriate punishment to be imposed. The hearing tribunal shall render a decision in writing within ten days of the close of the record and shall furnish a copy of the decision to the student, his or her parents or legal guardians, the principal or his or her designee and the Superintendent. The decision of the hearing tribunal shall be final and shall constitute the decision of the Board of Education unless either party should appeal the decision to the Board of Education. In any case where the tribunal finds that the student has committed an act of physical violence as that term is used in O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.6, any recommendation of the tribunal as to when and whether the student may return to school in accordance with the code section shall constitute the decision of the Board of Education unless there should be an appeal of the decision to the Board.
6. In the event a student or his/her parent does not wish to contest the charge(s) of violation(s) of the discipline rules of the school's code of conduct for which a tribunal has been requested, the student and parent may voluntarily accept the consequences prescribed by the school by signing a Waiver of Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing form. Such waiver shall specify the rule violation, the date and description of the incident, the prescribed consequences, and an agreement to waive the opportunity to participate in a tribunal hearing, present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and be

represented by an attorney. The decision to waive the tribunal shall be final and cannot be appealed by the school or family. The waiver must be signed by the student, a parent, a school administrator, and a district-level administrator from the Superintendent's office, who shall act as a hearing officer with the authority to approve the disciplinary consequences set forth in the waiver.

7. Any party may appeal against the decision of the hearing tribunal to the Board of Education by filing with the Superintendent a written notice of appeal within twenty days from the date the decision is rendered. Such notice of appeal shall set forth the decision of the hearing tribunal and the basis of the appeal. Any decision of the hearing tribunal not appealed in this manner shall be final. The Superintendent may suspend the disciplinary action imposed by the hearing tribunal pending the outcome of the appeal.
8. The Board of Education shall review the record of the hearing before the hearing tribunal, the decision of the hearing tribunal, and the notice of appeal and shall render its decision in writing within ten days from the date it receives the notice of appeal. The decision of the Board of Education shall be based solely on the record before the hearing tribunal and the Board shall not consider any other evidence in ruling on the appeal. The Board may find the facts to be different than those found by the hearing tribunal and the Board may change the punishment, in accordance with state law. Any decision of the local Board may be appealed to the State Board of Education by filing an appeal, in writing, within thirty (30) days after the local Board renders its decision.
9. Any student subject to a disciplinary hearing who withdraws from the school system prior to the hearing must appear before a Disciplinary Hearing Tribunal to determine the student's eligibility to return to the school system in the event the student ever seeks to return to the system. Alternatively, the school district may, in its discretion, proceed with the tribunal in accordance with Board policy despite the student's withdrawal from school.

WEAPONS

The presence of weapons on school property is detrimental to the welfare and safety of the students and school personnel and is a violation of State law. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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 weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to 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.

Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of a 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. Students who possess other weapons or hazardous objects as described in paragraph 2 will be subject to discipline as specified in the student code of conduct.

Students with Disabilities

A. **45-Day Interim.** Any student with a disability cognizable under IDEA, 20 USC 1400 et seq., who is determined to have brought a weapon to school may be placed in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days, as determined and ordered by a special education committee qualified to make special education decisions under 20 USC 1401 (a) (20). nevertheless, or the guardian requests a due process hearing under IDEA, the student shall nevertheless remain in the alternative educational setting above referred to during the pendency of any proceeding conducted in connection therewith unless the parents and duly authorized school system representative agree otherwise.

B. **Students Whose Disability is Unrelated to Misbehavior.** Any student with a disability whose behavior is unrelated to the disability shall be subject to the one-year expulsion requirement the same as a student without such disability, except to the extent that such expulsion is inconsistent with the Department of Education's final guidance concerning state and local responsibilities under the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, as amended; provided, in any event, some educational services shall be provided to such suspended student.

Reporting

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/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney. The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any activity involving weapons.

BULLYING

The Stephens County 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 in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, 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 that occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school-related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying that 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 students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. 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, photo-electronic, 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. Each local board of education shall adopt policies, applicable to students in grades 6 through 12 that prohibit bullying of a student by another student and shall require such prohibition to be included in the student code of conduct in that school system. Local board policies shall require that, upon a finding that a student in grades 6 through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such 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.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE-Appropriate Use of Electronic Information Resources

Electronic information resources such as the Internet, World Wide Web, electronic mail (email), Local Area Networks (LAN), Wide Area Networks (WAN), network services, and computers are provided to help achieve the instructional goals of the Stephens County School System. Any activities involving the use of these resources that do not support these instructional goals are forbidden and should be avoided.

When using electronic information resources, students are expected to apply the Student Code of Conduct just as they would in any other instructional activity.

The use of electronic information resources including the Internet is a privilege and not a right and continued use is subject to the user's adherence to the letter and spirit of this policy.

Student Expectations in the Use of Electronic Information Resources

- a. Students shall not access material that is obscene, pornographic, child pornography, harmful to minors, or otherwise inappropriate, as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000, for educational uses.
- b. Students shall not use school resources to engage in hacking or attempts to otherwise compromise system security.
- c. Students shall not allow other students the use of passwords or other credentials at any time.
- d. Students shall not engage in any illegal activities on the Internet.
- e. Students shall only use electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications for school-related purposes.
- f. Students shall not disclose personal information, such as name, school, address, and telephone number, outside of the school network.
- g. Students shall notify school personnel if they become aware of any violation of this policy.
- h. Students shall notify school system personnel if they accidentally violate any portion of this policy.

Any violation of school policy and rules may result in the loss of school-provided access to electronic information resources. Additional disciplinary action may be determined in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Staff Expectations in the Use of Electronic Information Resources

- a. Staff shall not use these resources to access material that is obscene, pornographic, or child pornography.
- b. Staff shall not use school resources to engage in hacking or attempts to otherwise compromise system security.

- c. Staff shall not allow others the use of their passwords or other credentials except when necessary for the purpose of maintaining or servicing these resources.
- d. Staff will provide for students age-appropriate instruction regarding safe and appropriate behavior on social networking sites, chat rooms, and other Internet services, behaviors that may constitute cyberbullying, and how to respond when subjected to cyberbullying.

Expectations for staff and students in the use of Electronic Information Resources

- a. Use of these resources to lobby for votes is forbidden.
- b. Use of these resources for commercial advertising is forbidden.
- c. All copyright laws will be observed at all times.
- d. Use of these resources for sending and receiving large numbers of personal messages is prohibited.
- e. All users should recognize that email and Internet use is not private.
- f. Wasteful use of these resources is forbidden.

Any violation of school policy may result in loss of school-provided access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined in keeping with existing procedures and practices. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies and the Professional Standards Commission may be involved.

Acceptable Use Contract

Families should be aware that some materials accessible via the Internet might contain content that is illegal, offensive, defamatory, or inaccurate. The Stephens County School System respects the rights of families to decide whether or not to allow a child Internet access. Only those students who return a signed Acceptable Use Contract including parental permission will be allowed access to the Internet.

For elementary school students, this contract shall be signed/renewed at the beginning of each school year.

This contract shall be signed/renewed upon entering middle school and shall remain in force as long as the student is in middle school.

This contract shall be signed/renewed upon entering high school and shall remain in force as long as the student is in high school.

Enforcement of policy

- a. The Stephens County School System uses a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access to inappropriate material, as described above, including Internet sites that are not in accordance with the policy of the Stephens County School System. However, given the Internet’s global nature, it is impossible to control all materials that students or staff may discover. The Stephens County School System disclaims responsibility for inappropriate material students or staff may access on the Internet while using the Stephens County School System’s electronic information services.
- b. The technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access may be disabled by a Stephens County School System staff member for bona fide research purposes by an adult.

- c. A Stephens County School System staff member may override the technology platform measure that blocks or filters Internet access for a student to access a site with legitimate educational value that is wrongly blocked by the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access.
- d. Stephens County School System staff will monitor students' use of the Internet, through either direct supervision or by monitoring Internet use history to ensure enforcement of this policy.
- e. Internet activities may be monitored and/or recorded and reviewed for the purpose of enforcing this policy.
- f. All users of electronic information resources must agree to and sign an Appropriate Use Contract.

Board of Education Policies

The Stephens County Board of Education policies noted in this Student Code of Conduct may be amended by the Stephens County Board of Education. The school-specific procedures noted in this Student Code of Conduct may be amended by the School Administration. See Board Policy: JCDA Student Code of Conduct

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

Positive behavior intervention and support is an essential part of our School-wide Discipline Program and align with the vision, mission, and motto of the school. Teachers, parents, and administrators will work together to provide incentives that reward positive student behaviors and consequences which are in line with Board of Education policy to deter negative student behaviors. Students participate in a school-wide ticket/reward system, character education curriculum, and a series of self-reflection/behavior monitoring interventions.

School Bus Regulations:

The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus. If necessary, the bus driver will assign students to specific seats. Bus drivers will communicate with parents concerning problems via a disciplinary form. Problems of a serious nature must be reported promptly to an administrator. Consequences for bus discipline referrals range from parental contact to loss of bus transportation privilege. **If a student is denied transportation by bus, the requirement to attend school does not change.** All students must follow the bus rules in order to continue riding the bus to and from school. Failure to abide by these rules will result in the bus-riding privilege being taken away for various amounts of time. Additional consequences may be assigned as needed. Parents and students must understand and respect the fact that riding a bus is not a right—it is a privilege. Parents should contact the school administrator with concerns regarding the bus or driver. Parents should contact the school administrator with any concerns regarding the bus or driver.

Student Bus Responsibility

- o Be ready to board the bus upon its arrival.
- o Students must be in sight—the driver will not wait.
- o Stay away from danger zones around the bus.
- o Do not push or shove when boarding the bus.
- o Secure dangling jacket strings, book bag straps, or loose-fitting clothing that might get caught on bus equipment.
- o Take seats promptly and remain seated, facing the front, while the bus is moving.
- o Keep the center aisle clear. Keep feet out of the aisle.

- o Misbehavior of any kind will not be tolerated.
- o Do not put arms, head, hands, or feet out of windows.
- o Bus seats are designed to seat three people. Do not save seats.
- o Bus will stop at designated stops only.
- o Students are not allowed to change buses without prior written approval from an administrator.
- o Food, gum, and drinks are not allowed on buses.
- o Radios and recreational equipment are not allowed on buses.
- o Glass containers, balloons, and live animals may not be transported on the bus.
- o **Students making any change from their regular transportation home must present a note from their parent by 7:45 a.m.** If a student is getting off the bus with another student, both students must present notes to Student Services. If a note is not presented, the student will go home on the regular bus that he/she normally rides. **Approved bus notes must be picked up at lunch at the Student Services desk.**
- o It shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public school bus stop as designated by the Board of Education.

Students shall receive instructions on safe riding practices while on the bus and emergency evacuation procedures on an annual basis.

Student Dress Code:

The faculty depends on the good judgment of our parents and the sensitivity of our students not to wear clothing that may cause disruption in the learning process. Parents or students who have specific questions about an item's appropriateness should consult the local school administration.

Stephens County School System is the workplace for our students. Therefore, proper **modest** attire is the expected norm for students at our schools. To establish positive and productive attitudes, the following guidelines are provided for modest and appropriate dress.

- Shorts and skirts should be modest and appropriate in length. Shorts and skirts must reach extended fingers when placed at the student's side. If fingertips are touching skin when extended, this will be considered a dress code violation. Athletic shorts may be worn as long as they are secured at the waist and are no shorter than 6 inches above the knee. Leggings may be worn as long as they are covered by a garment that meets the dress code. Words or graphics cannot be on the seat of the pants, skirts, or shorts.
- Clothing with open holes above extended fingertips will not be allowed. Frayed areas on apparel will be considered holes and must also meet dress code requirements.
- Students may not wear pajamas or biker shorts/spandex to school.
- Pants with elastic waistbands may be worn as long as all other dress code conditions are met (students are modestly and appropriately covered). All pants must be worn around the waist securely. If a distraction to instruction occurs, parents will be contacted.
- Sleeveless shirts must have at least **three-inch** shoulder straps cut high in the front and back. No tank tops, tube tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, mesh, or see-through garments may be worn. Low-cut shirts are not allowed. The midriff must be covered at all times. No undergarments should be visible.
- Shoes must be worn at all times and tied, buckled, or worn as the manufacturer intended. Bedroom slippers are not allowed.

- Hats, caps, bandanas, or sunglasses may not be worn inside the building. Head coverings may not be worn inside the building except for religious attire. Headbands may be worn in P.E. as the manufacturer intended. Picks and combs may not be worn in the hair.
- Clothing or ornamentation that displays advocating, promoting, or advertising alcohol, tobacco, or other substances illegal for minors is prohibited. Obscene, sexually suggestive, or sexual phrases, designs, markings, or profanities are prohibited. Clothing or ornamentation that displays advocating, promoting, or suggesting illegal activity is also prohibited.
- Clothing shall be worn with appropriate undergarments, which must be covered entirely.
- Jewelry that projects violence or sexual innuendo is prohibited.

Repeated violations of this dress code will be considered defiant behavior, and a referral to an administrator will be made. Additionally, any clothing, ornamentation, jewelry, or manner of dress or appearance that causes a distraction or disruption in the learning process or interference with instruction is prohibited and appropriate action will be taken.