

Social Circle City Schools



PK-5 STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

Mission

The mission of Social Circle City Schools is to empower students with an excellent and equitable education.

Vision

Social Circle City Schools ensures that every child we serve has access to the knowledge and skills needed to become mindful, productive, and empowered citizens.

The mission of Social Circle City Schools will be accomplished through a commitment to live and work by the following core values that capture the beliefs of the learning organization:

Climate: The purposeful, supportive, flexible, and healthy environment necessary for learning, engagement, innovation, and positive relationships.

Tradition: The cohesive community, rich history, and culture that fuels our mission.

Leadership: The structure that fosters a focused, encouraging, student-centered climate with high expectations for everyone.

Accountability: The expectation that continuous improvement will guide students and staff members to produce excellence in academics, arts, and athletics.

Dr. Carrie Becher
Superintendent

147 Alcova Drive
Social Circle, GA 30025
Telephone: (770) 464-2731

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

John Callahan - john.callahan@socialcircleschools.org ----- Board Member/Chair
Amber McKibben - amber.mckibben@socialcircleschools.org ----- Board Member/District 1
Rico Jackson - rico.jackson@socialcircleschools.org ----- Board Member/District 2
Steve Trantham - steve.trantham@socialcircleschools.org ----- Board Member/District 3
Sabrina Sanford-Flint - sabrina.sanford-flint@socialcircleschools.org ----- Board Member/Vice-Chair/District 4
Randy Carithers - randy.carithers@socialcircleschools.org ----- Advisory Board Member/Zone 5
Lowana Bell - lowana.bell@socialcircleschools.org ----- Advisory Board Member/Zone 5

Superintendent's Welcome

Congratulations and welcome to the Social Circle City Schools, where we empower students with an excellent and equitable education! You are joining an outstanding group of excellent educators and skilled staff who are committed to achieving the highest level of education and well-being for each of our students. Because of our dedicated employees, Social Circle City Schools is one of the most desirable school districts in Georgia. We are excited you are here and welcome you to 'The Circle.'

ACADEMICS

District Improvement Plan

The mission of the Social Circle City Schools will be accomplished through a commitment to live and work by the following core values that capture the beliefs of the learning organization:

Climate: The purposeful, supportive, flexible, and healthy environment necessary for learning, engagement, innovation, and positive relationships.

Tradition: The cohesive community, rich history, and culture that fuels our mission.

Leadership: The structure that fosters a focused, encouraging, student-centered climate with high expectations for everyone.

Accountability: The expectation that continuous improvement will guide students and staff members to produce excellence in academics, arts, and athletics.

Goal Areas:

1. Student Achievement, Readiness, & Engagement
2. Safety & Culture of Well-Being
3. Quality Staff & Professional Growth
4. Family & Community Engagement
5. Systems & Operation Effectiveness

The Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)

The Georgia Standards of Excellence provide a framework for the knowledge and skills needed for student success in college or the workforce. The standards were developed in collaboration with K-12 teachers, post-secondary educators, business and industry leaders, parents, and other educational agencies. The standards are reviewed on a regular cycle to ensure the appropriate level of challenge and relevance. All content standards are available on GeorgiaStandards.Org.

Beginning the 2023-2024 school year, mathematics will be under the guidance of [Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards](#).

Statewide Summative Assessments

Summative assessments are an assessment *of* learning. It takes place at the end of an instructional period and measures student achievement or mastery of intended learning outcomes. Statewide summative assessment data is typically used to assess instructional programs, support the school and district improvement efforts, and inform policy decisions. Social Circle City Schools administers the following statewide summative assessments: [ACCESS for ELLs](#), [GAA 2.0](#), and [Georgia Milestones](#).

Formative Assessments

Formative assessment is an assessment *for* learning. While instruction is still occurring, it takes place to gather immediate feedback that identifies students' academic strengths and areas for growth, plan differentiated instruction, and support student learning. Three of the formative assessment tools used in the district are the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills 2.0 ([GKIDS 2.0](#)), Measures for Academic Progress ([MAP](#)), and [Edulastic](#).

Remote Learning Days

SCCS may conduct Remote Learning Days when school buildings must be closed due to inclement weather on a scheduled school day. On a called Remote Learning Day, teachers continue instruction via their online course pages and other digital resources, and students are expected to participate and complete instructional activities with these resources. Schools and teachers will communicate the specific expectations for completing and submitting activities and work. Any students who are unable to participate should work directly with their teachers on alternative activities and assignments.

Promotion/Retention

The Social Circle Board of Education authorizes each school to develop procedures or regulations that specify how the state-adopted assessments will be used in making decisions concerning the promotion, placement, or retention of students, as well as which local promotion criteria will be considered (policy IHE). Such procedures or regulations must be approved by the Superintendent or designee(s) and shall provide for the following:

1. Each teacher shall be responsible for determining through a variety of assessments whether a student appears to be on grade level or achieving at a level which, with accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction or interventions, would allow the student to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year.
2. Where the teacher believes the student is not performing at such level, the teacher must implement remediation efforts as set forth in regulations or procedures. The teacher must follow the SCCS MTSS process.
3. Prior to a student's retention, The school should initiate a discussion with the Assistant Superintendent. Approval for retention must be given by the Assistant Superintendent.
4. Prior to a student's retention, the student's parents must be notified of the possibility of retention and given the opportunity to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.
5. School-level promotion and retention decisions may be appealed to a district-level committee, whose decision shall be final.

Gifted Program

The purpose of the [Social Circle City Schools Gifted Program](#) is to provide students in grades kindergarten through twelve who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual, academic, creative, and artistic ability with differentiated services to address their exceptionalities.

The curricula for gifted students align the gifted education goals with the Georgia state standards. Curriculum objectives focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and meta-cognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation.

The goals of the Social Circle City School Gifted Program are:

- To help students become critical thinkers and problem solvers
- To guide students in developing and applying a growth mindset
- To provide opportunities for students to become self-directed learners
- To challenge students with a more rigorous curriculum

Special Education Services

Special education services means specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. These services are not a “one size fits all” approach. Special education is tailored to address the unique needs of students eligible to receive services.

Special education services and supports are provided at no cost to parents and include the related services a student needs to access their educational program. Students who qualify for special education services will have their needs addressed through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance

NOTICE TO PARENTS O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 requires the parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of a child or children to sign a statement indicating receipt of such a written statement of possible consequences and penalties; children who are age ten years or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. The law requires any person in this state who has control or charge of a child between the ages of six and sixteen to enroll and send that child to school, including public, private, or homeschooling. This law states that any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school notifies the parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense.

For a student to benefit from the educational opportunities provided by the school, attendance is paramount. A relationship between success at school and consistent attendance exists. Your knowledge and adherence to attendance policies and procedures will enable you to be successful and productive as a student. ***Attendance letters will be mailed at 5 days excused or unexcused and at 10 unexcused days.***

The Students shall be considered excused for the following reasons:

1. When personally ill and when 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 (examples: pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces or a court order).

5. Children may be excused from school attendance when prevented from such attendance due to conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.
6. Children who are serving as the pages of the Georgia General Assembly shall be credited as present by the school in which they are enrolled for days missed from school for this purpose.
7. A student may be granted an excused absence not to exceed one day in order to register to vote or to vote in a public election.
8. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.
9. A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, a portion of a day, or days missed from school as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692.2.
10. Any other absence not explicitly defined in this policy but deemed by the Superintendent or his/her designee to have merit based on circumstances may be counted as excused as long as make-up work for the absence is completed satisfactorily.
11. A student participating in activities or programs sponsored by 4-H in the same manner as an educational field trip shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, a portion of a day, or days missed from school.

All other absences will be considered unexcused.

- Students who are present for at least one-half of the instructional day shall be counted as present.
- The principal has the authority to require additional proof of the legitimacy of excessive requests for early checkouts.
- A letter written by a parent/guardian and/or licensed physician explaining the reasons for absences must be presented to school authorities within three (3) days of returning to school and shall be signed by the student's parent/guardian and/or licensed physician. The principal or designee will evaluate all excuses to determine if an absence is excused or unexcused. Failure to submit a note will result in the absence being marked as unexcused.
- The school system reserves the right to not accept parent notes as valid excuses when not received in a timely manner and has the authority to require additional proof of the legitimacy of the excuse. The school system also reserves the right to verify the accuracy of physicians' notes/excuses. It is the student's responsibility to bring a written excuse from a parent/guardian or medical or governmental authority upon returning to school within three days after an absence. It is the student's and/or the parent/legal guardian's responsibility, not the teacher's, to make arrangements for make-up work.
- Truant - Any student subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than ten days of unexcused absences.

Students who encounter long-term illness may be eligible for the Hospital Homebound program (HHB). Please contact the school social worker for more information.

Student Records

It is the policy (JR) of the Social Circle Board of Education that the School District shall comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act of Georgia (the Act). For the purposes of this policy, a "parent" is

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

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

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (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 student, except to the extent authorized by the 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’s name, address, and telephone number
- b. Student’s date and place of birth
- c. Students’ 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 district
- f. Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools
- g. Photograph
- h. Grade level

Privacy: Parents and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment affords parents and eligible students rights and protections regarding instructional materials used in educational programs, surveys administered to students, and the conduct of certain physical examinations. The rights and protections established by the PPRA include:

- Instructional Materials: The parent or eligible student has the right to inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student; and surveys.

- The parent or eligible student has the right to inspect any survey created by a third party prior to the administration or distribution of the survey and the right to opt the student out of participation in any such survey.
- In addition, before a student may be required to submit to a survey revealing “Protected Information,” the written consent of the parent or the consent of the eligible student is required.
- Finally, a minor student may not volunteer to submit to a survey revealing “Protected Information” without providing the parent of the student with prior written notice of the administration of the survey and an opportunity to opt out of the survey. “Protected Information” is information in the following categories:
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
 - Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family
 - Sex behavior and attitudes
 - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior
 - Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
 - Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
 - Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program)
 - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
 - Physical Examinations: Parents have the right to notice of any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law.

A parent or eligible student who believes his or her rights under PPRA may have been violated may contact the Director of Student Services at 770-464-2731 and may file a complaint by writing. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

Title I, Family and Community Engagement Plan

In support of enhancing student academic achievement, Social Circle City Schools, which is 100% highly qualified, has developed this parental engagement policy along with the faculty, leadership, PTO, Parent Advisory Council, School Council and all parents that establishes the district’s expectations for family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the Social Circle City Schools. This plan will describe Social Circle City Schools' (SCCS) commitment to engage families in the education of their children and to build the capacity of Social Circle City Schools to implement family engagement strategies and activities designed to achieve the district and student academic achievement goals.

When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and enjoy school more. Title I, Part A provides for substantive parental involvement at every level of the program, such as in the development and implementation of the district and school plan and in carrying out the district and school improvement provisions. Section 1010 of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) contains the primary Title I, Part A requirements for schools and school systems to engage parents in their children’s education. Consistent with Section 1010, the Social Circle City Schools will ensure that the required school-level parental engagement policies meet the requirements of

Section 1010(b) and each includes, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1010(d) of the ESSA.

Professional Qualifications for Teachers

(August 7, 2023) In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Social Circle City School District would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

Whether the student's teacher—

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

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher and/or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact the principal of your child's school:

- Social Circle Primary School: Dr. Maria Hargrove at (770)464-1411 or maria.hargrove@socialcircleschools.org
- Social Circle Elementary School: Dr. Maria Hargrove at (770)464-2664 or maria.hargrove@socialcircleschools.org
- Social Circle Middle School: Dr. Ryan Clark at (770)464-1932 or ryan.clark@socialcircleschools.org
- Social Circle High School: Mr. Tim Armstrong at (770)464-2611 or tim.armstrong@socialcircleschools.org

Policy JAA: Equal Educational Opportunities

The Social Circle City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national origin, sex or disability in any student program or activity. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all accompanying regulations.

Any student, applicant for admission, parent or guardian, or another person who believes he or she or any student has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined in policy JAA.

Harassment Statement

The School District prohibits discrimination based on sex and sexual harassment of employees by other employees, board members, students, volunteers, or others over whom the District has authority in any District education program or activity. Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District exercises substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs. The District shall respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent when it has actual knowledge of sexual harassment against a person in an education program or activity.

Policy JCAC Sexual Harassment of Students

The Social Circle City School District prohibits discrimination based on sex and sexual harassment of students by other students, employees, volunteers, or others over whom the District has authority in any District education program or activity. Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District exercises substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs. It is the intent of the Social Circle City School District to comply with the Title IX federal regulations concerning sexual harassment. To the extent that additional requirements are specified in federal law or regulations, the District shall comply with such requirements.

Reports or complaints made to the School District regarding alleged sexual harassment in violation of Title IX shall be processed in accordance with policy JCAC. In order to comply with Title IX, the Social Circle City Schools has designated Jennifer Chatham as the Title IX Coordinator. Mrs. Chatham should be contacted in reference to any grievances, questions, or complaints dealing specifically with Title IX. Normal channels of communication, from student to an administrator to Board of Education, are to be completed before the student grievance procedure is authorized.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

No one in the Social Circle City School system will discriminate in relation to race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, age, disability, or sex. This policy will prevail in all matters concerning employees, students, parents, the general citizenry, educational programs and services, and persons with whom the system does business.

Gender Equity in Sports Nondiscrimination Notification

Georgia State Law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Social Circle City Schools, the local school system, does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. The Sports Equity Coordinator for this school system is Mr. Craig Hargrove, 154 Alcova Drive, Social Circle, GA. 30025, 770-464-2611. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the Sports Equity Coordinator.

Medications (Board Policy - Descriptor Code: JGCD)

All medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter, may be administered only in accordance with the guidelines as outlined in JGCD-R (1). Any possession of prescription or over-the-counter medication by students not in accordance with these guidelines will be considered a violation of school district policies and punished accordingly.

Administrative Regulation (Board Policy - Descriptor Code: JGCD-R(1))

Taken from School Health Nurse Resource Manual, Georgia Department of Education:

1. All medications (*both prescription and over-the-counter*) must be taken directly to the clinic for safe storage.
2. All medications (*both prescription and over-the-counter*) must be brought to the school by the parent or guardian. Parents must fill out the *Authorization to Give Medications* form, which may be obtained in the school clinic or on the school website.
3. All medications must be in the original container. Prescription medications must include the full pharmacy label. Medications stored in envelopes, baggies, etc., will not be administered.

4. Parents should check with their physician regarding the need for medications to be administered during school hours.

Health and Immunization Records

Any student enrolling in a Georgia school for the first time must present a Georgia Health Certificate. This can be obtained from a private physician or the Health Department. All students must present a statement from the Health Department or a doctor indicating that all immunizations are up-to-date, or they will not be able to enter or remain in school. This includes eye, ear, and dental examination certificates. Ga. School Law, Title 20, Article 16, Part 3, 20-2-770 and 771.

Media Release

*****PLEASE COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD'S PRINCIPAL IMMEDIATELY IF YOU OBJECT TO YOUR CHILD'S PHOTOGRAPH BEING PUBLISHED.*****

The Social Circle City School System continually shares its successes with the community. In order to make our information as attractive and interesting as possible, we often include pictures of people involved in school functions along with textual information. Various types of student work (e.g., creative writing, artwork, slide presentations, multimedia projects) and student photographs (groups or individuals) are used in the following types of media:

- School/System-based website(s)/Social Media
- Local/School radio, television or cable broadcast
- Local/School newspapers or newsletters
- Local/National educational periodicals

The use of text information about a person or the use of a picture of a person generally will be restricted to just the minimum information needed to tell the story of the program to make it interesting and attractive. We will not publish home addresses, telephone numbers, personal email addresses, or materials protected by federal regulations.

Chain of Command

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to do their tasks more effectively.

Social Circle City School System does not recognize social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) as the primary means of communication in relation to student, parent, personnel, or school system issues. If you have a concern that you wish to be addressed, please contact the school and/or system personnel via email, phone, letter, or in person in an effort to resolve matters. Additionally, please follow the prescribed Chain of Command to address concerns.

Members of the Social Circle Board of Education have confidence in the professional staff and desire to support their actions in order that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaints. The Board advises the public that the proper steps and most effective way to resolve complaints involving instruction, discipline, transportation, or learning materials is to contact the individual at your student's school who is designated by position in the chart below to deal with such concerns. Any issues outside of this chart's listing should be addressed by the principal. The Board will consider hearing complaints when they cannot be resolved through the use of the channels below:

Discipline	Curriculum	Transportation
------------	------------	----------------

Teacher	Teacher	Assistant Principal
Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal	Principal
Principal	Principal	Transportation Director
Assistant Superintendent	Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Assistant Superintendent
Superintendent	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent
School Board	Superintendent	School Board
State Department of Education	School Board	State Department of Education
	State Department of Education	

The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration. Matters referred to the Board must be in writing, must include the address, contact phone numbers, and the signature of the complainant, and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

After reading such complaints, and if more information that might challenge or question the good name or character of an individual is needed, the Board shall consider this in Executive Session. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level or if the appropriate chain of command has not been attempted.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

School Nutrition Plan

As a partner in education, the School Nutrition Program contributes to a successful academic experience. It encourages a lifetime of healthy eating by providing each student with the affordable opportunity to consume meals that are nutritious, appealing, and served by caring professionals in a pleasant environment.

Schools	Meal Type	2023-2024
PS/ES	Breakfast	\$1.50
	Lunch	\$2.25
MS/HS	Breakfast	\$1.50
	Lunch	\$2.50
Schools	Meal Type	2023-2024
Staff/Visitors	Breakfast	\$2.50
	Lunch	\$4.00

Extra Entree		\$2.00
Extra Side		\$.50
Extra Milk		\$.50

- No charging is allowed for second meals.
- Payments to a student's account can be made online using your Parent Portal Account and clicking on Food Service. Click on this link for step-by-step instructions - [Food Service / Parent Portal Instructions](#).
- Refunds or Transfers between student accounts shall be processed through the Central Office by submitting a Refund and Transfer Request Form.
- Students are not allowed to have drinks in glass bottles at school at any time.

For assistance, please contact:

Melinda Marshall, Director of School Nutrition

melinda.marshall@socialcircleschools.org

770-464-4833

Impaired/Handicapped Access

The Social Circle City Schools district wishes to meet the needs of all of its students and families. If any member of your family needs assistance or has any questions regarding mobility-impaired issues or handicapped access, please contact the principal of your local school.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Social Circle City Schools - Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504

of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students. For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system's Section 504 Coordinator, Allison Clarke, at the following address:

Social Circle City Schools
147 Alcova Drive
Social Circle, Georgia 30025
770-464-2731

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504

Social Circle City Schools Section 504 Procedural Safeguards

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

2. Hearing Request: The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

- a. The name of the student.

- b. The address of the residence of the student.
- c. The name of the school the student is attending.
- d. The decision is the subject of the hearing.
- e. The requested reasons for review.
- f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
- g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

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

3. Mediation: The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary, and both the grievant and the school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

4. Hearing Procedures:

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
- b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
- c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e., A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant's testimony, and answer questions posed by the review official.
- f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
- g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.

- h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
- j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
- k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. The recipient shall retain all documentation related to the hearing.
- l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of the school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
- m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

5. Decision: The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing was concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

6. Review: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action, or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

Section 504 Safeguards FAQ

Under the Section 504 Resolution Agreement, each LEA must adopt and implement policies regarding student rights and procedural safeguards under Section 504 that are consistent with GaDOE's model rights and safeguards, provide written evidence to OCR that the LEA has adopted, and implemented Section 504 rights and safeguards, and notify parents and students of the rights and safeguards.

The following frequently asked questions are designed to help guide LEAs as they adopt and implement student rights and procedural safeguards under Section 504.

1. Where can I find GaDOE's model student rights and procedural safeguards under Section 504?

You may find GaDOE's model student rights and procedural safeguards under Section 504, as well as other information relevant to complying with the Section 504 Resolution Agreement, on GaDOE's website at the following link: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Student-Support-Teams/Pages/default.aspx>

2. Does my LEA need to adopt the exact same student rights and procedural safeguards as GaDOE?

No. Your LEA may adopt the model rights and safeguards as written, or it may modify the model rights and safeguards in a manner that is consistent with Section 504 law and regulations. If you wish to modify the model rights and safeguards, we encourage you to seek advice from your legal counsel regarding your proposed modifications.

3. Can my LEA adopt documents, such as eligibility forms or student placement guidance, in addition to the procedural safeguards?

Yes. Procedural safeguards and student rights must be in place under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. GaDOE encourages LEAs and schools to fulfill all obligations under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA in the manner it deems most appropriate, which may include adopting additional guidance or forms to assist decision-makers.

4. Has GaDOE adopted documents, such as eligibility forms or student placement guidance, in addition to the procedural safeguards?

GaDOE has adopted additional guidance and forms for implementing Section 504. The guidance will be posted on the GaDOE website.

5. What process does my LEA need to follow to adopt the student rights and procedural safeguards?

To adopt student rights and procedural safeguards, the LEA should utilize the same process as it would for any internal policy or procedure.

6. How does an LEA obtain a hearing officer for Section 504?

An LEA may utilize any process for obtaining a hearing officer for Section 504 that is consistent with its internal policies and procedures for obtaining professional services. This may include soliciting requests for proposals from qualified individuals, which in the context of hearing officers, typically includes law firms or other subject-area experts. GaDOE does not provide hearing officers for LEA hearings under Section 504.

7. How does an LEA notify parents and students that it has implemented the student rights and procedural safeguards?

At a minimum, the LEA must notify parents and students that it has implemented the student rights and procedural safeguards by including the student rights and procedural safeguards in its student handbooks and LEA website. The LEA must also furnish the student rights and procedural safeguards to those who request them.

8. In what written materials do the student rights, and procedural safeguards need to appear?

At a minimum, the LEA must include student rights and procedural safeguards in its student handbooks. LEAs are also encouraged to include student rights and procedural safeguards in other materials it deems appropriate, such as a Section 504 Handbook or Student Services Manual.

9. Do I need to print the entire student rights and procedural safeguards in our student handbooks?

Yes.

10. Do I need to post the entire student rights and procedural safeguards on our LEA's website? Yes.

Child Find

Social Circle City School district has an obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to identify, locate, and evaluate all students with disabilities or students suspected of having a disability residing in the district who are in need of special education and related services from ages 3 through 21 years of age. This includes students attending public, private, or home schools in Social Circle. If you have a child or know of a child, who has a disability or is suspected of having a disability, please contact the Director of Special Education at 770-464-2731.

Homeless Children and Youth

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, State educational agencies must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as other children and youth.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines "homeless children and youth" as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence." However, because the circumstances of homelessness vary with each situation, determining the extent to which the family or youth fits the definition must occur on a

case-by-case basis. The SCCS Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth must gather information from the family or youth and make the determination of eligibility. For more information, please call the Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth, System Social Worker, at 770-464-2611.

Character Education

In accordance with state law (code section 20-2-145) and state board of education policy, Social Circle City Schools district has created and implemented a character education program. Character education will be addressed during Advisement times and through the implementation of PBIS.

Bullying Policy

The Social Circle 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
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
 - 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 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 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 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 other 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.

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. **To Submit a Bullying/Harassment Report, visit:**

<http://www.socialcircleschools.com/departments/technology/bullying>

School Bus Safety Guidelines and Procedures

Students residing within the Social Circle City Schools' attendance area are provided the opportunity to utilize public transportation. School bus safety procedures (Safety, Order and Respect, S.O.A.R.) will be issued to students in compliance with SB291 and reviewed by the bus manager (driver). Failure to comply with all school bus safety procedures will initiate the enactment of appropriate consequences and/or removal from the bus. The opportunity to utilize public transportation is a privilege, not a right.

THE FOLLOWING BUS SAFETY RULES WILL BE ENFORCED

1. The school system and local school discipline rules are enforced on school buses.
2. Conversation should be with other students unless you must talk to the driver.
3. Distraction of the driver in any way may jeopardize the safety of students on the bus.
4. Playing musical instruments, radios, and tape/CD players is prohibited. If listening to music with earbuds, students must only have one earbud in the ear.
5. Seats are designed for three students. Seat saving will not be permitted.
6. The driver and principal have the authority to assign seats or seating orders.
7. Students and the driver share the responsibility of keeping the bus clean. Help keep the interior free of dirt and debris by placing trash in the proper container located at the front of the bus.
8. Students should stand on the curb or sidewalk while waiting for the bus. Always remain clear of the bus until it has completely stopped before attempting to load.
9. Take your seat promptly when boarding the bus.
10. State regulations require that bus windows be lowered no more than halfway. Students' body parts (arms, head, legs, etc.) should remain in the bus at all times.
11. When loading or unloading, students should pass at least 12 feet in front of the bus. Be sure to look both ways before crossing the road and always cross in front of the bus, never behind it. The driver will signal when it is safe to load or unload. Follow the driver's hand signals before crossing.
12. Students are to be transported to the school where they attend. The driver is not permitted to make unauthorized stops at stores or businesses.
13. Students shall not be permitted to change buses without written approval from the parent and consent of the principal. They should ride their regular assigned bus to and from school.
14. Students should remain quiet at all railroad crossings and must respect the driver's request for silence at any time.
15. No standing allowed. No student is allowed to ride in the step well or anywhere within the driver's seat area.
16. No pushing or shoving when loading or unloading is permitted. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
17. Students shall not carry drink bottles, cans, or glass containers onto the bus.

The Director of Transportation can be reached at 770-464-2731.

Important Bus Information:

In order to better maintain safety and management on the school bus to and from school, this serves as written notification of our bus discipline policy and procedures. The driver will do all he/she can do to handle mild misconduct on the bus by conferencing with the student and parent, assigning a seat, and providing verbal warnings and reminders. If misbehaving continues, the bus driver will complete a bus Discipline Referral, which will be given to the principal or assistant principal. The administrators will conference with the student and call the parents. This will serve as a written warning.

Chronic misbehavior, or incidents that jeopardize the safety of the student(s), will result in the following disciplinary action(s):

- 1st Referral: Warning/Conference
- 2nd Referral: One-day suspension from the bus (Primary & Elementary School Students), Three-day suspension from the bus (Middle & High School Students)
- 3rd Referral: Three-day suspension from the bus (Primary & Elementary School Students), Five-day suspension from the bus (Middle & High School Students)
- 4th Referral: Five-day suspension from the bus (Primary & Elementary School Students), Ten-day suspension from the bus (Middle & High School Students)
- 5th Referral: Ten-day suspension from the bus (Primary & Elementary School Students), Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year (Middle & High School Students)
- 6th Referral: Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year (Primary & Elementary School Students)

No courtesy rides or business drop-offs will be provided

****ALL OF THE ABOVE CONSEQUENCES MAY BE ADJUSTED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION***

We appreciate your support as we do all we can to assure a safe ride on our school buses.

Parent Information Regarding Safe Schools

The school district is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors. It works closely with national, state, and local safety personnel— police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, and public health— to ensure our schools are well prepared for an emergency.

School Resource Officers, or SROs, are police officers employed by the school system. These officers are housed at Social Circle Middle/High, and also an officer is assigned to Social Circle Primary and Elementary School. In addition to policing school campuses, these officers focus on educating students and staff on safety issues and working with school administrators on school safety plans.

Social Circle City Schools updates its district and school emergency operations plans annually. These plans are the guides to help staff and our public-safety partners respond swiftly should a crisis occur in our schools.

Emergency Preparation in Social Circle City Schools

As a parent, you can feel confident that when you send your children off to school that you are sending them to a safe, orderly place. Our schools are safe because our school communities work hard to ensure safety.

- Each year, school administrators review and make any necessary modifications to their school's Emergency Management Plans.
- Each school has key staff members with assigned roles and responsibilities to perform during an emergency. The school system's emergency response plan is modeled on the GEMA Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

- Every school conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.
- Students take an active role by following rules and reporting those who do not.

The Board considers the appropriate, sensitive, and timely response by school staff to crisis situations to be of utmost importance. Emergencies may occur at schools at any time. It is the objective of school personnel to respond in a way that will minimize the impact of the situation on students and staff.

Safe Schools Plans/Required Drills Policy

Each local school is charged with implementing the Safe Schools Plans developed by the district and conducting training for staff to familiarize them with the school emergency plans. Each school has a Safe School Team, which provides leadership in carrying out the plans. The team shall be composed of appropriate school personnel, such as principals, assistant principals, counselors, grade-level chairs, department heads, coaches, and selected teachers.

Each local school shall develop, periodically update, and implement specific plans for that particular campus. The District Safe Schools Plan shall include, but is not limited to, guidelines for actions to deal with the following specific hazards: injuries and illnesses, fires, thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, winter storms, hazardous materials, earthquakes, utility failures, bomb threats, civil disturbances, terroristic acts, and nuclear emergencies. The plans also require drills, as appropriate, for emergencies arising from these hazards. It also shall include provisions for communicating information on emergency preparedness procedures to staff and students appropriate for their grade level.

Everyone has a Role

Ensuring school safety is everyone's responsibility— staff, students, parents, and the entire community. Please report any safety concerns you may have to your school principal. In addition, ask your local school about its safety plan. One important role you can play in keeping schools safe is to tell someone about illegal behavior or concerns you may have.

Safety FAQ

As a parent, how can you prepare for a school emergency?

The number-one step that you can take to prepare for a school emergency is to provide accurate emergency contact information to your child's school and notify the school if your information changes.

What should I do during a school emergency?

During a crisis, your first response might be to pick up the phone to call the school. However, a high volume of calls may bog down the phone system. When a school emergency occurs, a parent can get important information by doing one or all of the following:

- Visit www.socialcircleschools.com or your local school website.
- If your school is affected, the district's notification system, Infinite CampusMessenger, will send out a notice. Check your messages. Monitor local television and radio for news alerts.

During an emergency, you will want to get important information and directions from school officials before going to the school. You can be confident that accurate and timely information will be released to parents, the public, and the news media during any emergency incident.

What is a lockdown?

During a hard lockdown, all school interior doors are locked, students are confined to their classrooms, and no entry or exit of the school is allowed. This takes place if there is a threat or possible threat inside the school.

During a soft lockdown, all exterior doors are locked. This takes place if the threat is outside of the school. In some cases, parents could be admitted into the school with proper identification.

- *How will I know if a school is in a hard lockdown?*

The main entrance will be locked.

- *If the school is in a soft lockdown, what type of identification will I need to enter the school and/or pick up my child?*

If it is deemed safe to allow others to enter the building, you or your designated emergency contact will need to show a proper form of identification, such as a driver's license or valid photo identification.

- *Who determines whether or not a school should be evacuated?*

In the event of an emergency at or near the school, school leaders follow the direction of law enforcement and emergency response agencies in determining whether or not to evacuate the facility.

- *What does shelter-in-place mean?*

Shelter-in-place means taking refuge in a small, interior room in the school, and remaining there until it is safe to release students. This is a precaution to keep our students safe from hazardous materials that may have been released into the atmosphere. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) This procedure is implemented if it is determined that evacuation or dismissal could possibly place students at risk.

- *If the school is evacuated, how will I be able to locate my child?*

Each school has a procedure for helping parents to reunite with their child during a school emergency. Parents will be directed to a specific location where they will be required to show proper identification. Remember, a student can generally only be released to an adult who is documented as an emergency contact. If you are a noncustodial parent, you must be listed on your child's emergency contact information as a guardian, and you will be required to show proper identification.

- *In regard to school emergencies, what should my child know?*

Important rules for students during a school emergency are:

- 1) Follow the directions given by the teacher or principal.
- 2) Before using a cell phone, make sure it is safe to do so.
- 3) Do not leave the school campus unless instructed to do so. In an evacuation situation or if school is dismissed early, follow the directions provided by the principal.

Student Support Processes

The Social Circle Board of Education provides a variety of resources that are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems. These resources include Multi-Tiered Support Services (MTSS), Student Support Teams (SST), Response to Intervention (RTI), attendance support teams, school counselors, and chronic disciplinary problem student plans. Teachers and administrators will also use Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct. PBIS is a research-based framework for preventing and improving problem behaviors in classrooms and schools. Rather than waiting for students to misbehave and incur punishment, PBIS uses a proactive approach to teach and model appropriate behaviors and reinforce positive expectations for behavior through affirmations and rewards. School-wide expectations and behaviors are taught as part of the PBIS curriculum. The PBIS framework is built on the assumption that successful student functioning in all environments requires a set of behavioral skills that are developed through instruction, reinforcement, and practice, just like reading, math, or science. School-wide PBIS provides useful strategies to improve not only prosocial behaviors but also improve academic skills, graduation rates, and attendance.

Responsible Use of Technology and Electronic Media for Students

It is the belief of the Social Circle City Schools' Board of Education that the use of technology for the purpose of information acquisition, retrieval, manipulation, distribution, and storage is an important part of preparing children to live in the 21st century. The Board further believes that a "technology-rich" classroom can significantly enhance both the teaching and learning process. This technology includes computer hardware, software, local and wide area networks, and access to the Internet. Due to the complex nature of these systems and the magnitude of information available via the Internet, the Social Circle City Schools' Board of Education believes guidelines regarding acceptable use are warranted in order to serve the educational needs of students.

It shall be the policy of the Social Circle City Schools' Board of Education that the school system shall have in continuous operation, with respect to any computers belonging to the school having access to the Internet:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000; and

2. Procedures or guidelines developed by the superintendent, administrators, and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measure to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in Section 1703(b)(1) and (2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:

- a. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matters on the Internet and the World Wide Web;
- b. Promote the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- c. Prevent unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unauthorized activities by minors online;
- d. Prevent the unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and
- e. Restrict minors' access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.

The district's technology resources are provided for educational purposes that promote and are consistent with the instructional goals of the Social Circle City School System. Use of computers and network resources outside the scope of this educational purpose is strictly prohibited. Students and employees accessing network services or any school computer shall comply with the district's acceptable use guidelines. The district reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose the contents of any user's files, activities, or communications.

It must also be understood that the Internet is a global, fluid community that remains largely unregulated. While it is an extremely valuable tool for educational research, there are sections that are not commensurate with community, school, or family standards. It is the belief of the Board that the Internet's advantages far outweigh its disadvantages. The Social Circle City Schools' Board of Education will, through its administrative staff, provide an Internet screening system that blocks access to a large percentage of inappropriate sites. It should not be assumed, however, that users are completely prevented from accessing inappropriate materials or from sending or receiving objectionable communications.

Additionally, access to the Internet and computer resources is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, users violating the Social Circle City Schools' Board of Education's acceptable use policy shall be subject to revocation of these privileges and potential disciplinary action.

Student Acceptable Use Guidelines

Please read the following carefully. Violations of the Acceptable Use Guidelines may cause students' access privileges to be revoked, and disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. Any student who utilizes the computer lab(s) or any computer equipment at the school must be aware of certain policies for the use of the equipment and/or facilities. Procedures are in place for the protection of students and equipment. Students will be held accountable for any violation of the following policies (as would be the case for any classroom disciplinary matter). A student and his/her parents will be responsible for damages and will be liable for costs incurred for service or repair.

Students are only allowed to utilize the computers and network to retrieve information and run specific software applications as directed by their teacher. Students are not permitted to go into the operating system to look around, run programs, or attempt to do anything they are not specifically authorized to do. Students bringing storage devices from outside the school must have them scanned for viruses by an authorized staff member prior to their use on a computer or the network.

Safety Issues:

1. Any online communication should always be at the direction and with the supervision of a teacher.
2. Never provide last name, address, telephone number, or school name online.
3. Never respond to, and always report to the teacher or parent, any messages that make you feel uncomfortable or that are from an unknown origin.
4. Never send a photo of yourself or anyone else.
5. Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you met online.
6. Never open attachments or files from unknown senders.

Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to the following:

- Accessing, sending, creating, or posting materials or communications that are:
 - Damaging to another person's reputation
 - Abusive
 - Obscene
 - Sexually oriented
 - Threatening or demeaning to another person's gender or race
 - Contrary to the school's policy on harassment
 - Harassing
 - Illegal
- Using the network for financial gain or advertising.
- Posting or plagiarizing work created by another person without their consent.
- Posting anonymous or forged electronic mail messages.
- Attempting to read, alter, delete, or copy the electronic mail messages of other system users.
- Giving out personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, driver's licenses or social security numbers, and bank card or checking account information.
- Using the school's computer hardware or network for any illegal activity, such as copying or downloading copyrighted software or violation of copyright laws.
- Loading or using games, public domain, shareware, or any other unauthorized program on any school's computer or computer system.
- Purposely infecting any school computer or network with a virus or program designed to damage, alter, destroy, or provide access to unauthorized data or information.
- Gaining access or attempting to access unauthorized or restricted network resources or the data and

documents of another person.

- Using or attempting to use the password or account of another person or utilizing a computer while logged on under another user's account.
- Using the school's computers or network while access privileges have been suspended.
- Using the school's computer hardware, network, or Internet link in a manner that is inconsistent with a teacher's directions and generally accepted network etiquette.
- Altering or attempting to alter the configuration of a computer, the operating system, or any of the software.
- Attempting to vandalize, disconnect or disassemble any network or computer component.
- Utilizing the computers and network to retrieve information or run software applications not assigned by their teacher.
- Providing another student with user account information or passwords.
- Connecting to or installing any computer hardware, components, or software that is not school system property to or in the district's technology resources without prior approval of the district technology supervisory personnel.

Parent Portal

Parents are encouraged to visit the Social Circle City Schools offices to request an **Infinite Campus** username and password in order to access your child's grades, attendance, online payments, and other important school information.

Guidance Services

Personal information that is shared with the school counselor will remain confidential unless the information that is shared requires that the counselor, by law, report the information to administration, social services, police, and/or other professionals that are deemed necessary and appropriate by law. Please note that the school counselor, as well as all other system-wide staff members, are, by law, Mandated Reporters.

Insurance

School insurance is made available to all students. We encourage all students involved in any school club or activity to purchase insurance. Peach-Care is available to families who qualify. For more information, call: 1-877-GAPEACH (877-427-3224) or email at www.ghp.ga.gov.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT

Student Code of Conduct

It is the purpose of the Social Circle Board of Education to operate each school in an orderly manner to provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend the schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, it is the policy of the Social Circle Board of Education that each school within this school district shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment and which will comply with state law and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15

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 the policies, regulations, and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct. Link to the [Discipline Matrix](#).

The rules contained in the Code of Conduct apply to students, both during and outside normal school hours, who are:

- On school system property
- Off school system property while attending a school activity, function, or event
- In route to or from school or school-related activities
- Off school system property if (a) the student's off-campus conduct could result in the students being charged with a criminal offense (or delinquent act) that would be a felony if committed by an adult and the off-campus conduct either makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to the educational environment or disrupts the school environment or (b) the student's off-campus expressive behavior (including, but not limited to, written communication, internet postings, communication through social media, cyber bullying [threats or harassment], or texting) could reasonably be expected to come to the attention of school officials and create a substantial risk to the safety of students, staff or others and/or a risk of substantial disruption to the school, program, or school environment.
- School bus stops

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 Option.

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.

As required by law, teachers or other school employees will report to the principal or his or her designee those students who have committed aggravated assault with a firearm, aggravated battery, sexual offenses, possession of a deadly weapon, and commission of drug offenses. Such students will be reported to the superintendent, local police authority, and the district attorney as required by O.C.G.A § 20-2-1184.

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. Parents and students are required to acknowledge receipt of the code of conduct.

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.

There may be instances when a primary or elementary school-aged student commits an offense that does not have a specific consequence listed for the age level in the code itself. Should that happen, the principal shall determine if the consequence(s) are appropriate based on the student's age and the behavioral infraction.

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

The principal or designee shall notify in writing the teacher and the student's parents or guardian of the discipline or student support services which have 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.

Parental Involvement

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

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

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

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

All students are general education students first, though some may receive additional services or support due to a disability. Special education and 504 regulations provide an "extra measure of due process" to assure a review of possible impacts of a student's disability in a discipline incident. Please check with the student's case manager, if a disciplinary issue arises.

Student Dress Code

Students are required to dress appropriately for school. Each local school will establish and publish a dress code applicable to that school. In addition to the requirements established by the local school, prohibited dress shall include any attire that depicts, promotes, or advertises gang affiliation, illegal activity, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco, sexual references, offensive words or designs, and other clothing which is disruptive to the learning environment.

Progressive Discipline Procedures

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 where 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.

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 punishment for an offense includes long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer as outlined in Code Section 20-2-754. 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 or hearing officer.

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

This progressive discipline model is divided into three levels. Each level represents progressively more serious misbehavior and consequences. The level of discipline imposed shall be based on the severity of the misbehavior. Parents/Guardians and students are advised that a student's disciplinary history will be taken into account when disciplinary action is required.

- Level 1 - Warnings to In-School Suspension
- Level 2 - In-School Suspension to Out-of-School Suspension
- Level 3 - Out-of-School Suspension to Tribunal

****ALL OF THE ABOVE CONSEQUENCES MAY BE ADJUSTED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION***

Weapons/School Safety Zone

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 non-lethal 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 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.

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/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney.

This handbook serves as the student's copy of the Code of Conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to weapons and possible disciplinary actions.

It shall be unlawful for any person to carry or to possess or have under control any weapon within a school safety zone (1,000-foot radius) or at a school building, school function, or on school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school.

The term “*weapon*” means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or 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, metal knuckles, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapons, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun charka, 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 weapon of like kind, and any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section 16-11-106. If you think or know someone is carrying a weapon, drugs or alcohol on school property, please call the Confidential HOTLINE to help keep our school safe. Please call: 770-267-1353 Or 1-877-SAY-STOP

You do not have to give your name!

Restraint Compliance Notification

Social Circle City Schools complies with state requirements related to restraint and seclusion as set out in Georgia SBOE Rule 160-5-1-35. Consistent with that rule, physical restraint will be used only in situations in which the student is in immediate danger to himself/herself or others, and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other less intensive de-escalation techniques. A parent or guardian will be notified in writing each time their student has been restrained. The Social Circle City School System maintains written policies and procedures governing the use of restraint.

Search and Seizure

School Property

School lockers, desks, and other school property in Social Circle City Schools shall be subject to inspection by dog-sniffing and/or school authorities at all times. The principal of each school or a designee shall take reasonable steps to ensure that students are advised (by the student handbook or by some other means) each year of this policy.

Student Searches

Individual student searches shall be conducted by school officials without the aid of law enforcement officers except in unusual circumstances. No search shall be conducted of a student's person, whether by dog-sniffing or otherwise, except where based on reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the particular student has violated, or is violating, either state/federal law, and/or a school rule. Such search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

"Prohibited Substance" defined:

A prohibited substance is any substance prohibited from school premises by state/federal law and/or by school rules. Examples of prohibited substances include but are not limited to: narcotics, tobacco, vapes, alcoholic beverages, and firearms.

"Reasonable Grounds" defined:

"Reasonable grounds" shall exist when:

1. A particular student is observed by school officials or employees to be in possession of any material or substance prohibited by state/federal law.
2. A particular student is observed to be acting in such a strange or unusual manner as to reasonably suggest to the official or employee the likelihood of such possession.
3. Reliable sources report to school officials any of the matters referred to above; or
4. Any other evidence exists providing a reasonable basis for suspecting that the student has violated or is violating either state/federal law and/or school rules.

DISCLAIMER

Any policy or procedural changes that take place after the publishing of the student handbook will be

shared with families electronically. Such changes will supersede what may be listed in the student handbook.