



**HOUSTON COUNTY**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

✿ *Building Excellence & Success Together* ✿

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## 2024-2025

# Houston County School District

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## INTRODUCTION

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Houston County Board of Education believes that every individual should be accepted into the educational program. The goal of the Houston County School District stresses the development of students to become self-directed and self-disciplined citizens of the school and community. It is the responsibility of the school system, student body, and the community to provide for a safe environment conducive to learning, to protect the right of the student to learn, and to protect the right of the teacher to teach.

This handbook is to communicate information clearly to all concerned. Primarily, its purpose is to inform concerned parties the rules of conduct and behavior for the students enrolled in the Houston County School District and to stipulate due process procedures that may be used by students and/or parent or guardian to appeal administrative decisions or express grievances. The staff are authorized to take reasonable measures to establish appropriate school behavior. Any professional employee shall have the authority to control any student's conduct while under the supervision of the school district. This authority to control student conduct shall extend to all activities of the school, including games and public performances of athletic teams and other school groups, trips, excursions, and all other activities under school sponsorship and direction. Such measures may include the use of reasonable force to restrain or correct students and maintain order.

### FUTURE CHANGES

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a regular basis, the Houston County School District reserves the right to change this handbook and any content within, without notice, except as may be required by state and federal law. As a result, **the online version of the handbook shall be the official version**. A digital copy of the handbook may be found on the district website at: <https://www.houston.k12.tn.us/parents-students>

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## NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Houston County Schools District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Further, is also policy of the Houston County School District not to discriminate on the basis of creed, religion, or marital status in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies.

The District utilizes curriculum materials that reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, and disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a pluralistic society.

## STUDENT DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT/BULLYING/INTIMIDATION

In order to maintain a safe, civil, and supportive environment in school for students to learn and achieve high academic standards, acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, hazing, or any other victimization of students, based on any actual or perceived traits or characteristics, are prohibited.<sup>1</sup>

This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parent(s)/guardian(s). This policy shall cover employees, employees' behaviors, students, and students' behaviors while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop. If the act takes place off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, this policy is in effect if the conduct is directed specifically at a student and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

The principal/designee is responsible for educating and training respective staff and students as to the definition and recognition of discrimination/harassment.

The Director of Schools shall develop forms and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this policy and state law.

## DEFINITIONS

"Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment" is an act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and the act has the effect of:

1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
2. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
3. Causing emotional distress to a student; or
4. Creating a hostile educational environment.

Bullying, intimidation, or harassment may also be unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, nationality, origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment.

"Bullying" is a pattern of unwanted or aggressive behavior repeated over time and involves and imbalance or unfair match of power.

"Cyber-bullying" is a form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, text messaging, emails, social networking sites, instant messaging, videos, web sites, or fake profiles.

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“Hazing” is an intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health or safety. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate hazing activities.

Hazing does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

## COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

***Any individual who has knowledge of behaviors that may constitute a violation of this policy shall promptly report such information to the principal/designee.***

While reports may be made anonymously, an individual's need for confidentiality shall be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary actions to resolve a complaint. The identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

The principal/designee at each school shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints. Once a report is received, the principal/designee shall initiate an investigation within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the report. If an investigation is not initiated within forty-eight (48) hours, the principal/designee shall provide the Director of Schools with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframe. The principal/designee shall immediately notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) when a student is involved in an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. The principal/designee shall provide information on district counseling and support services. Students involved in an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying shall be referred to the appropriate school counselor by the principal/designee when deemed necessary.

The principal/designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy, and such act shall be held to violate this policy when it meets one of the following conditions:

1. It places the student in reasonable fear or harm for the student's person or property;
2. It has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
4. It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Upon the determination of a violation, the principal/designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. All investigations shall be completed and appropriate intervention taken within twenty (20) calendar days from the receipt of the initial report.<sup>7</sup> If the investigation is not complete or intervention has not taken place within twenty (20) calendar days, the principal/designee shall provide the Director of Schools with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation has not been completed or the appropriate intervention has not taken place.<sup>7</sup> Within the parameters of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a written report on the investigation will be delivered to all involved parties and the Director of Schools.

## RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

The principal/designee shall consider the nature and circumstances of the incident, the age of the individual, the degree of harm, previous incidences or patterns of behavior, or any other factors, as appropriate, to properly respond to each situation.

A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The employee may appeal this decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator.

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A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including suspension. The student may appeal this decision in accordance with disciplinary policies and procedures.

## **REPORTS**

When a complaint is filed alleging a violation of this policy where there is physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a student or a student's property, the principal/designee of each middle school, junior high school, or high school shall report the findings and any disciplinary actions taken to the Director of Schools and the Chair of the Board.

Each year, the Director of Schools/designee shall prepare a report of all of the bullying cases brought to the attention of school officials during the prior academic year. The report shall also indicate how the cases were resolved and/or the reasons they are still pending. This report shall be submitted to the state department of education by August 1st and information therein shared with the Board.

## **RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS**

Retaliation against any person who reports or assists in any investigation of an act alleged in this policy is prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in retaliation shall be determined by the principal/designee after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

False accusations accusing another person of having committed an act prohibited under this policy are prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including expulsion.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND AWARENESS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

- [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)
- [violencepreventionworks.org](http://violencepreventionworks.org)
- [pacerkidsagainstabullying.org](http://pacerkidsagainstabullying.org)
- [operationrespect.org](http://operationrespect.org)

## **TITLE IX AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

In order to maintain a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment, all forms of sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex are prohibited. Complaints regarding sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex may be reported to: Kelly Brown at the Board of Education Office, 6420 Highway 13, PO Box 209, Erin, TN 37061, 931-289-4148 or Josh Rutherford at Houston County High School, 2500 Highway 149, Erin, TN 37061, 931-289-4447 or both via email at [civilrightscomplaints@houstonk12tn.net](mailto:civilrightscomplaints@houstonk12tn.net).

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## RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

### STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Each student has the right to:

1. Have the opportunity for a free education in the most appropriate learning environment;
2. Be secure in his/her person, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizure;
3. Be educated in a safe and secure environment;
4. Have appropriate resources and opportunities for learning;
5. Not be discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or disabilities; and
6. Be fully informed of school rules and regulations.

Each student has the responsibility to:

1. Know and adhere to reasonable rules and regulations established by the Board and school officials;
2. Respect the human dignity and worth of every other individual;
3. Refrain from libel, slanderous remarks, and obscenity in verbal and written expression;
4. Study and maintain the best possible level of academic achievement;
5. Be punctual and present in the regular school program;
6. Dress and groom in a manner that meets reasonable standards of health, cleanliness, modesty, and safety;
7. Maintain and/or improve the school environment, preserve school and private property, and exercise care while using school facilities;
8. Refrain from behavior which would lead to physical or emotional harm or disrupts the educational process;
9. Respect the authority of school administrators, teachers, and other authorized personnel in maintaining discipline in the school and at school-sponsored activities;
10. Obey the law and school rules as to the possession or the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and other unauthorized substances or materials; and
11. Possess on school grounds only those materials which are acceptable under the law and accept the consequences for articles stored in one's locker.

### PARENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/guardians have the right to:

1. Be actively involved in their student's education;
2. Be treated courteously, fairly, and respectfully by school staff; and
3. Receive all relevant information and communication related to their student's education.

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to:

1. Make sure their student attends school regularly and on time, and when a student is absent, send in written excuse notes;
2. Support the District by being a role model for their student, talking with their student about school and expected behavior, and communicating the value of education through words and action;
3. Be respectful and courteous to staff, other parents/guardians, and students while on school premises and during school activities;
4. Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities that promote social and emotional growth in the areas of creative arts, music, and athletics; and
5. Work with principals and school staff to address any academic or behavioral concerns or complaints students may experience.



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## ANNUAL NOTICES

### ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLANS

Prior to July 1989, the Houston County Board of Education submitted a Management Plan to the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration. The Management Plan details all areas where asbestos containing materials are present in Houston County Schools and the manner in which the materials will be handled.

The Management Plan will be available for public review at Houston County Board of Education. Viewing time will be from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. (Local time) Monday through Friday. The Plan will be updated every six months beginning July 1, 1989 with progress reports updated annually.

### CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

#### **Modified Meals**

The School Nutrition Program shall make reasonable modifications to accommodate children with special needs. These modifications will be made on a case-by-case basis and **must** be supported by a written statement from a licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write prescriptions under state law.

#### **Houston County Child Nutrition Meal Charge Administrative Procedure**

*As provided in SP 46-2016, all school food authorities (SFAs) operating the federal school meal programs (National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program) must have a written and clearly communicated meal charge administrative procedure in place no later than July 1, 2017. All SFAs must have an administrative procedure in place for children participating at the reduced price or paid meal rate who either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. SFAs are required to communicate that administrative procedure to families and school and/or district-level staff members as appropriate. SFAs should ensure the administrative procedure is communicated on an annual basis.*

Families will have access to the meal charge administrative procedure. A written copy of the district-wide charge administrative procedure will be included in student handbooks and posted on the school website. Families of transfer students will also receive a written copy of the district-wide charge administrative procedure in the same manner.

#### **Local Charge Administrative Procedure Considerations**

##### **General**

Breakfast is available **FREE** for all students. Current lunch prices can be found on the district website at [www.houston.k12.tn.us/Administration2/14](http://www.houston.k12.tn.us/Administration2/14). Generally, students who are unable to pay for lunch at the time of the meal service are allowed to charge. Students charging lunch will receive reimbursable meals.

##### **Charge limits**

The amount of charges allowed for students and staff is \$25. Once the student or staff member reaches the \$25 limit, the school principal, or their designee, must give written permission to allow the student or staff member to be able to continue to charge meals.

##### **Alternate meals**

Houston County School District does not offer alternate meals to students and staff that have exceeded the charge limit.

##### **Household Notification**

**Low balance notification:** *Payer Balance Notices will be sent via email on a weekly basis for students and staff whose account balance is less than \$5.*

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**Negative balance notification:** PRE-K THROUGH 8 - *The SFA will notify households weekly of **negative** balances by sending printed notifications home with the students and/or email notifications. Payments are expected within a week of notice. If there is no payment or response, cafeteria staff will follow up with a notification mailed to the home address or will contact the parent/guardian by phone.* GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 – *The SFA will notify household weekly of **negative** balances by sending email notifications to students and/or parents email address that is on file. If payment is not received or there is no response from the household, cafeteria staff will follow up with a notification mailed to the home address or they will contact the parent/guardian by phone.*

## **Delinquent Debt**

Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, with efforts being made to collect them. The debt may remain on the accounting documents until it is either collected or determined to be uncollectable.

The household's debt will be delinquent until the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from Houston County Schools. The cafeteria staff will continue to attempt to collect a debt throughout the school year. If debt is not paid within 30 days of initial notification, school administration will be notified and they will attempt to collect the debt owed. If payment is not received by the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school, Houston County Schools reserves the right to hold records and reports cards until that debt is paid in full.

## **Repayment plans**

Each household may request a repayment plan that will include payment levels and due dates appropriate to a household's particular circumstances. Please contact the Child Nutrition Program Supervisor at 931.289.4148 for establishing a repayment plan.

## **Bad Debt**

Bad debt is determined to be uncollectable, with that further collection efforts for delinquent debt deemed useless or too costly. Delinquent debt will be considered as bad debt on the last day of the school year or when the student withdraws from school.

- Bad debts (debts which have been determined to be uncollectable), including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, are unallowable. Related collection costs, and related legal costs, arising from such debts after they have been determined to be uncollectable are also unallowable (section 200.426 of subpart E).
- Bad debt must be written off as an operating loss on the last day of the school year; the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) resources may not be used to cover the costs related to the bad debt. **Bad debt will be collected from the district's general purpose fund, or any other non-federal source. A list of students and staff that have bad debt in the cafeteria will be presented to the school administration for payment on the last operating day of the school year. This will include unpaid checks returned due to non-sufficient funds. *These funds will be obtained to restore the unallowable bad debt to the NSFSA. These funds may come from the school district's general fund, school or community organizations, or any other non-federal sources.*** Once this debt is paid the Administration may continue to attempt to collect the amount from the students and staff in order to reimburse their general fund account or other non-federal source.
- Once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges must be maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

## **Additional Resources**

Families may find assistance with applying for free or reduced-price school meals by contacting the Houston County Board of Education, Child Nutrition Program Supervisor at 931.289.4148.

*In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA*

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*programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.*

*Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.*

*To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:*

*Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410  
Fax: (202) 690-7442; or  
Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Rachel Shelton  
Food Service Coordinator  
[rshelton@houstonk12tn.net](mailto:rshelton@houstonk12tn.net)  
931-289-4148

## EDUCATION RECORDS

Education records of students in public education shall be treated as confidential. Information in such records relating to academic performance and attendance shall not be made available to unauthorized personnel without written consent of the parent/guardian of a minor student (TCA 10-7-504). For detailed information about student education records, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policies 6.600, 6.601, and 6.602.***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parent(s)/guardian(s) and eligible students certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within forty-five (45) days after the day the District receives a request for access.
  - a. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible students who wish to inspect education records shall submit to the principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect.
  - b. Arrangements for access will be made, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student will be notified of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
  - a. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible students who wish to amend a record they believe is inaccurate shall submit to the principal a written request that clearly identifies the part of the record they wish to change and specify why they believe it is inaccurate or misleading.

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- b. If the District does not agree to amend the record as requested, the District will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided when notified of the denial.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
  - a. Education records may be disclosed without prior written consent if a school official has a legitimate educational interest.
  - b. A school official is a person employed by the District as: an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks.
  - c. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

## EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced No Child Left Behind. Tennessee's ESSA plan incorporates much of the work that is already underway in Tennessee's schools and that is included in the department's strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*. The final plan also updates the department's work in several key areas, including district and school accountability, school improvement, support for English learners and historically underserved populations, and strengthening teacher and principal pipelines. These updates are both in response to feedback from Tennessee's education community as well as federal and state requirements, all of which are intended to strengthen schools and empower districts to provide a high-quality education for all students throughout their academic journey.

## STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the District may disclose appropriately designated directory information without written consent, unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student (a student who is 18 years or older) has opted out of the disclosure of directory information.

In addition, federal law requires the District to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of students unless parents/guardians have opted out in writing.

The District has designated the following information as directory information:

"Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time), participation in

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officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

Student directory information for 11th and 12th graders shall be made available upon request to persons or groups which make students aware of occupational and educational options; including official recruiting representatives of the military forces of the State and the United States.

If the parent/guardian wishes to opt-out of the above, he/she shall indicate his/her preference on the "Opt-Out Notifications" form on the last page of the *Student Handbook*.

## SURVEYS, ANALYSES, AND EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS

Surveys, analyses, and evaluations for research purposes shall be allowed by the Board when the project is viewed as contributory to a greater understanding of the teaching-learning process, the project does not violate the goals of the Board, and the disruption of the regular school program is minimal. The Director of Schools shall develop administrative procedures for approving requests for conducting surveys, analyses, or evaluations by agencies, organizations, or individuals. The requests shall outline what is to be done, who is to be involved, and how the results will be used and distributed.

Prior to the dissemination of a survey, analysis, or evaluation to students, parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the opportunity to review the materials. Such notification shall include information indicating the purpose of the survey, analysis, or evaluation as well as who will have access to the results. The survey, analysis, or evaluation shall only be administered to students under the age of eighteen (18) whose parent(s)/guardian(s) provide written, informed, and voluntarily signed consent. A student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older may participate after he/she provides written, informed, and voluntarily signed consent. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures for granting such parental requests.

No student shall be required, as part of any program, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
2. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
3. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
4. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
5. Legally privileged relationships;
6. Income; or
7. The collection of student biometric data involving the analysis of facial expressions, EEG brain wave patterns, skin conductance, galvanic skin response, heart-rate variability, pulse, blood volume, posture, and eye-tracking

without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent/guardian.

The collection of the following student data is strictly prohibited:

1. Political affiliation or voting history;
2. Religious practices; and
3. Firearm ownership.

## TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents may request information about their child's/children's classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessional staff. Information requested may include a teacher's State certification status and college degrees and majors, as well as the qualifications of paraprofessionals providing services to their children. Parents must be notified if their child has been assigned to, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

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## TITLE I

Title I is the largest and best known section of the law. It requires states to set high standards for student achievement and, using tests tied to these standards, to assess children's progress in meeting them. Parents and the public will learn about school and district performance through annual report cards issued by state education departments and local school districts.

1. ***Title I - eligible school***

The federal government uses complicated formulas to allocate money to school districts around the country. In Houston County Schools, the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch determines if a school qualifies for Title I services and/or funds.

2. ***Title I targeted assistance school and schoolwide program school***

In a targeted assistance school, the Title I services are provided only to students identified as needing assistance in reading or math. It is usually provided in small groups either in a regular class or in special programs. In a schoolwide school, at least 40% of the students must qualify for free or reduced lunch. A schoolwide program can be used to benefit ALL students in a school. School staff and parents must make the decision to become a schoolwide program. In Houston County all schools are Title I schoolwide schools.

3. ***Allowable uses for Title I funds***

Title I funds can be used to provide extra help for students performing below grade standard, implement reading and math programs, reduce class size, hire paraprofessionals, provide professional development, purchase materials and equipment or to staff/run after school or summer programs.

4. ***Highly Qualified***

Houston County Schools meets teacher qualifications and highly-qualified paraprofessional requirements as specified in ESSA legislation.

## UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE

Students who attend a school within the District identified by the State of Tennessee as persistently dangerous or students who are victims of a violent crime while in or on school grounds shall be given the opportunity to attend a safe school within the District. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.2061***.

## VACCINATIONS

Local Education Agencies are required to provide families annual notice at the beginning of each school year with information on influenza and meningococcal diseases and the effectiveness of vaccinations [TCA 49-6-5005].

This information is provided for your benefit and information only. There is not a current requirement in Tennessee for vaccinations against these diseases. At this time, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) do not recommend the meningococcal vaccine for most children under age eleven (11) years. However, since meningococcal disease is a serious illness, some young children may be at risk and may need the vaccine. Please take time to carefully read through the Vaccine Information Statements from the CDC on the following pages.

**As always, speak with your child's health care provider about recommendations for all childhood immunizations.** If you have questions, you may contact the school nurse, the local Health Department (931-289-3463), or the State Department of Health in Nashville, Tennessee (<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-contact-information.html>)

### **INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE (LIVE, INTRANASAL): WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

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## **1. WHY GET VACCINATED?**

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year, usually between October and May.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses, and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact.

Anyone can get flu. Flu strikes suddenly and can last several days. Symptoms vary by age, but can include:

- fever/chills
- sore throat
- muscle aches
- fatigue
- cough
- headache
- runny or stuffy nose

Flu can also lead to pneumonia and blood infections, and cause diarrhea and seizures in children. If you have a medical condition, such as heart or lung disease, flu can make it worse.

Flu is more dangerous for some people. Infants and young children, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system are at greatest risk.

Each year **thousands of people in the United States die from flu**, and many more are hospitalized.

**Flu vaccine** can:

- keep you from getting flu,
- make flu less severe if you do get it, and
- keep you from spreading flu to your family and other people.

## **2. LIVE, ATTENUATED FLU VACCINE – LAIV, NASAL SPRAY**

A dose of flu vaccine is recommended every flu season. Children younger than 9 years of age may need two doses during the same flu season. Everyone else needs only one dose each flu season.

The **live, attenuated influenza vaccine** (called LAIV) may be given to healthy, non-pregnant people **2 through 49 years of age**. It may safely be given at the same time as other vaccines.

LAIV is sprayed into the nose. LAIV does not contain thimerosal or other preservatives. It is made from weakened flu virus and **does not cause flu**.

There are many flu viruses, and they are always changing. Each year LAIV is made to protect against four viruses that are likely to cause disease in the upcoming flu season. But even when the vaccine doesn’t exactly match these viruses, it may still provide some protection.

Flu vaccine cannot prevent:

- flu that is caused by a virus not covered by the vaccine, or
- illnesses that look like flu but are not.

It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop after vaccination, and protection lasts through the flu season.

## **3. SOME PEOPLE SHOULD NOT GET THIS VACCINE**

Some people should not get LAIV because of age, health conditions, or other reasons. Most of these people should get an injected flu vaccine instead. Your healthcare provider can help you decide.

Tell the provider if you or the person being vaccinated:

- have any allergies, including an allergy to eggs, or have ever had an allergic reaction to an influenza vaccine.

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- have ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (also called GBS).
- have any long-term heart, breathing, kidney, liver, or nervous system problems.
- have asthma or breathing problems, or are a child who has had wheezing episodes.
- are pregnant.
- are a child or adolescent who is receiving aspirin or aspirin-containing products.
- have a weakened immune system.
- will be visiting or taking care of someone, within the next 7 days, who requires a protected environment (for example, following a bone marrow transplant)

Sometimes LAIV should be delayed. Tell the provider if you or the person being vaccinated:

- are not feeling well. The vaccine could be delayed until you feel better.
- have gotten any other vaccines in the past 4 weeks. *Live* vaccines given too close together might not work as well.
- have taken influenza antiviral medication in the past 48 hours.
- have a very stuffy nose.

#### **4. RISKS OF A VACCINE REACTION**

With any medicine, including vaccines, there is a chance of reactions. These are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible.

Most people who get LAIV do not have any problems with it. Reactions to LAIV may resemble a very mild case of flu.

**Problems** that have been reported following LAIV:

*Children and adolescents 2-17 years of age:*

- runny nose/nasal congestion
- cough
- fever
- headache and muscle aches
- wheezing
- abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea

*Adults 18-49 years of age:*

- runny nose/nasal congestion
- sore throat
- cough
- chills
- tiredness/weakness
- headache

Problems that could happen after any vaccine:

- Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction. Such reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.
- As with any medicine, there is a very small chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

The safety of vaccines is always being monitored. For more information, visit: [www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/)

#### **5. WHAT IF THERE IS A SERIOUS REACTION?**

**What should I look for?**

- Look for anything that concerns you, such as signs of a severe allergic reaction, very high fever, or unusual behavior.



# Houston County School District

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- Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness. These would start a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

## **What should I do?**

- If you think it is a severe allergic reaction or other emergency that can't wait, call 9-1-1 and get the person to the nearest hospital. Otherwise, call your doctor.
- Reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your doctor should file this report, or you can do it yourself through the VAERS web site at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov), or by calling **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS does not give medical advice.*

## **6. THE NATIONAL VACCINE INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines.

Persons who believe they may have been injured by a vaccine can learn about the program and about filing a claim by calling **1-800-338-2382** or visiting the VICP website at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation). There is a time limit to file a claim for compensation.

## **7. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?**

- Ask your doctor. He or she can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
- Call **1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)** or
- Visit CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

Vaccine Information Statement  
Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine  
8/7/2015  
42 U.S.C. § 300aa-26

## **MENINGOCOCCAL ACWY VACCINE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis).

### **1. WHY GET VACCINATED?**

**Meningococcal disease** is a serious illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and infections of the blood. Meningococcal disease often occurs without warning – even among people who are otherwise healthy.

Meningococcal disease can spread from person to person through close contact (coughing or kissing) or lengthy contact, especially among people living in the same household.

There are at least 12 types of *N. meningitidis*, called “serogroups.” Serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y cause most meningococcal disease.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease but certain people are at increased risk, including:

- Infants younger than one year old
- Adolescents and young adults 16 through 23 years old
- People with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*
- People at risk because of an outbreak in their community

Even when it is treated, meningococcal disease kills 10 to 15 infected people out of 100. And of those who survive, about 10 to 20 out of every 100 will suffer disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage, kidney damage, amputations, nervous system problems, or severe scars from skin grafts.

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**Meningococcal ACWY vaccine** can help prevent meningococcal disease caused by serogroups A, C, W, and Y. A different meningococcal vaccine is available to help protect against serogroup B.

## **2. MENINGOCOCCAL ACWY VACCINE**

Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (**MenACWY**) is licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for protection against serogroups A, C, W, and Y.

Two doses of MenACWY are routinely **recommended for adolescents 11 through 18 years old**: the first dose at 11 or 12 years old, with a booster dose at age 16. Some adolescents, including those with HIV, should get additional doses. Ask your health care provider for more information.

In addition to routine vaccination for adolescents, MenACWY vaccine is also recommended for certain groups of people:

- People at risk because of a serogroup A, C, W, or Y meningococcal disease outbreak
- People with HIV
- Anyone whose spleen is damaged or has been removed, including people with sickle cell disease
- Anyone with a rare immune system condition called “persistent complement component deficiency”
- Anyone taking a drug called eculizumab (also called Soliris®)
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*
- Anyone traveling to, or living in, a part of the world where meningococcal disease is common, such as parts of Africa
- College freshmen living in dormitories
- U.S. military recruits

Some people need multiple doses for adequate protection. Ask your health care provider about the number and timing of doses, and the need for booster doses.

## **3. SOME PEOPLE SHOULD NOT GET THIS VACCINE**

Tell the person who is giving you the vaccine **if you have any severe, life-threatening allergies**. If you have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a previous dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine, or if you have a severe allergy to any part of this vaccine, you should not get this vaccine. Your provider can tell you about the vaccine’s ingredients.

Not much is known about the risks of this vaccine for a pregnant woman or breastfeeding mother. However, pregnancy or breastfeeding are not reasons to avoid MenACWY vaccination. A pregnant or breastfeeding woman should be vaccinated if she is at increased risk of meningococcal disease.

If you have a mild illness, such as a cold, you can probably get the vaccine today. If you are moderately or severely ill, you should probably wait until you recover. Your doctor can advise you.

## **4. RISKS OF A VACCINE REACTION**

With any medicine, including vaccines, there is a chance of side effects. These are usually mild and go away on their own within a few days, but serious reactions are also possible.

As many as half of the people who get meningococcal ACWY vaccine have **mild problems** following vaccination, such as redness or soreness where the shot was given. If these problems occur, they usually last for 1 or 2 days.

A small percentage of people who receive the vaccine experience muscle or joint pains.

### **Problems that could happen after any injected vaccine:**

- People sometimes faint after a medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting, and injuries caused by a fall. Tell your doctor if you feel dizzy or lightheaded, or have vision changes.

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- Some people get severe pain in the shoulder and have difficulty moving the arm where a shot was given. This happens very rarely.
- Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction. Such reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

The safety of vaccines is always being monitored. For more information, visit: [www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/)

## **5. WHAT IF THERE IS A SERIOUS REACTION?**

### **What should I look for?**

Look for anything that concerns you, such as signs of a severe allergic reaction, very high fever, or unusual behavior.

Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness – usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

### **What should I do?**

If you think it is a severe allergic reaction or other emergency that can't wait, call 9-1-1 and get to the nearest hospital. Otherwise, call your doctor.

Afterward, the reaction should be reported to the "Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System" (VAERS). Your doctor should file this report, or you can do it yourself through the VAERS web site at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov), or by calling **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS does not give medical advice.*

## **6. THE NATIONAL VACCINE INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines.

Persons who believe they may have been injured by a vaccine can learn about the program and about filing a claim by calling **1-800-338-2382** or visiting the VICP website at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation). There is a time limit to file a claim for compensation.

## **7. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?**

- Ask your health care provider. He or she can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - Call **1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)** or
  - Visit CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/)

Vaccine Information Statement (Interim)  
Meningococcal ACWY Vaccines  
8/24/2018  
42 U.S.C. § 300aa-26

## **ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS**

### **DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS**

In accordance with *Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.307*, students shall not consume, possess, use, sell, distribute, or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages in school buildings, on school grounds, in school vehicles or buses, or at any school-sponsored activity, function, or event, whether on or off school grounds.

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Disciplinary sanctions shall be imposed on students who violate this standard of conduct. Such sanctions shall be consistent with local, state, and federal laws up to and including suspension/expulsion as well as referral for prosecution. Completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program may also be recommended.

A student may be subject to testing for the presence of drugs in the student's body in accordance with TCA 49-6-4313 and the policy of the Houston County Schools if there are reasonable indications to the principal that such student may have used or be under the influence of drugs. For detailed information on drug testing, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.3071***.

Information about drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation programs shall be made available through the school office.

## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the Director of Schools will notify the public media and request that an announcement be made.

If school is not in session or is dismissed early due to snow or inclement weather, the Director of Schools in consultation with the principal(s) of the impacted school(s) shall determine if all scheduled activities in which students are involved shall be postponed or cancelled. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.8011***.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Extracurricular activities must be initially approved by the Board and must adhere to set guidelines. For more information and a list of these guidelines, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.300***.

Student organizations are an extension of the academic curriculum and are intended to complement the basic instructional program. For more information on student clubs and organizations, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.702***.

## STUDENT FEES AND FINES

Each principal shall be responsible for providing to all students and their parents or guardians written notice of the required student fees and the process for fee waiver for students who receive free or reduced-price lunches. The parent or guardian of an eligible student must sign the appropriate application for free or reduced-price lunches and the waiver of school fees, but may pay for all or a portion of the school fees.

Students who destroy, damage, or lose school property, including but not limited to buildings, school buses, books, equipment, and records, will be responsible for the actual cost of replacing or repairing such materials or equipment. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.709***.

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFERS

For grades 9-12, enrollment in or transfers to Houston County Virtual Academy (HCVA) will be open through the end of the 2nd week of school for each semester, with enrollment/transfer after the cut-off only available with approval by the Director of Schools/designee on a case-by-case basis.

Each year, the Director of Schools/designee shall review the number of spaces available in each elementary school by grade, class, and program levels. This information shall be posted on the district's website along with the dates of the district's open enrollment period. The open enrollment period shall last for thirty (30) days and information about the number of seats available shall be posted for at least fourteen (14) days prior. The Director of

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Schools/designee shall reserve a reasonable number of enrollment spaces at each school to account for the enrollment of zoned students, siblings of students, and students who have a parent/guardian employed at the school.

During the district's open enrollment period each year, a parent/guardian may request that his/her child attend a school within the district other than the one to which the child is zoned. The Director of Schools/designee shall review such requests, and if adequate space is available, grant such transfers. If the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces, the Director of Schools/designee shall implement a lottery to fill the available spaces.

A parent/guardian of a student who is registering for kindergarten may submit a request to attend a school within the district other than the one to which the child is zoned only *after* registration in the school of zone is completed. The deadline for submitting kindergarten requests will be the date designated for new student registration each year.

The open enrollment process shall be completed before other nonresident transfers are approved.

## STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

Parents/guardians shall provide written notice by completing a *Student Withdrawal Form* and submitting to the school principal/office staff when it is known that their child will be withdrawing from school. Included in this notice is the reason for withdrawal and the name and address of the subsequent school. Parents/guardians are responsible for any outstanding debt at the time of the withdrawal. All debts must be cleared before academic transcripts will be released to the enrolling school.

A student is not officially withdrawn until a request for educational records is received from the enrolling school.

## TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS

All uses of tobacco, tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco), electronic/battery operated devices, vapor products, and all other associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the District's buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased, or operated by the District.

Smoking and vaping shall be prohibited in any public seating areas including, but not limited to, bleachers used for sporting events or public restrooms. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.803***.

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The Houston County School District is committed to providing safe and efficient transportation for our students. We value information regarding any situation you feel poses a safety risk to our students or others. If you observe a safety hazard with our school buses or driver(s), you may contact Transportation Director Rick Chadwick at 931-289-4293 or you may submit a complaint form (available on the district's website at <https://www.houston.k12.tn.us/departments/transportation>) in writing to the following address or fax number:

Houston County School District  
Transportation Department  
6460 Highway 13  
PO Box 209  
Erin, TN 37061  
Fax: 931-289-4843

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## VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

Except on occasions such as school programs, athletic events, open house, and similar public events, *all* visitors will report to the school office when entering the school and will sign-in. Authorization to visit elsewhere in the building or on the school campus will be determined by the principal/designee. Guest passes shall be issued for all persons other than students and employees of the school.

Persons who come onto school property shall be under the jurisdiction of the site administrator/designee. Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school or district business are expected to behave accordingly. Specifically, actions that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:

1. Cursing and use of obscenities;
2. Disrupting or threatening to disrupt school or office operations;
3. Acting in an unsafe manner that could threaten the health or safety of others;
4. Verbal or written statements or gestures indicating intent to harm an individual or property; and
5. Physical attacks intended to harm an individual or substantially damage property.

The principal or his/her designee has the authority to exclude from the school premises any persons disrupting the educational programs in the classroom or in the school, disturbing the teachers or students on the premises, or on the premises for the purpose of committing an illegal act.

The principal shall engage law enforcement officials when he/she believes the situation warrants such measures.

Houston County Schools has established the following procedures for parentally-requested outside service providers, defined as non-school employed therapists or practitioners, to observe and/or provide services to students:

1. A signed agency agreement, along with verification of the required background check(s), must be on file with the Board of Education.
2. Written parental and service provider requests, liability statements, and confidentiality statements must be on file in the school prior to the provider accessing the school building.
3. The observations/services must be educationally based or medically necessary and cannot result in a disruption to the educational process.
4. Any provider requesting access to a building/student must make the request at least five (5) days prior to the planned observation and follow the above requirements.

Each principal is responsible for setting guidelines for building access, check-in procedures, and school rules for outside service providers. A service provider may be denied access to a school at any time at principal discretion if any rules or procedures are not followed.

## STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

### ATTENDANCE

Recognizing that absenteeism is a hindrance to efficient education of students and that punctuality and regularity of attendance affect the progress of a student at school, the Houston County Board of Education has adopted the following attendance policy. The parent/guardian or other person having charge and control of a child is held responsible for the child's regular school attendance. Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing school for any reason (excused, suspended/expelled) for 10% of the school year or eighteen (18) days. This is different than unexcused or truant absences which may result in legal intervention.

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## TENNESSEE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW

Every parent, guardian, or legal custodian residing within the state of Tennessee having control or charge of any child or children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17), both inclusive, shall cause such child or children to attend public or non-public school and in event of failure to do so, shall be subject to the penalties hereinafter provided.

The meaning of the word “inclusive” is that the child must attend school from seven (7) until eighteen (18) years old.

## ATTENDANCE REPORTS REQUIRED BY LAW

It shall be the duty of the principal or teacher of every public and non-public school to report promptly to the Director of Schools, or his/her designated representative, the names of all children who have withdrawn from school, or who have been absent five (5) days (*this means a total of five (5) days during the school year and not necessarily five (5) consecutive days*) without adequate excuse. Each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences by a student shall also be reported.

Such Director shall thereupon serve, or cause to be served, upon the parent, guardian, or other person in Tennessee in parental relation to such children unlawfully absent from school, written notice that attendance of such children at school is required. A new notice shall be sent after each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences.

If it appears that within three (3) days after receipt of the notice, any child, parent, guardian, or other person in parental relation has failed to comply with the provisions of this part, the Director of Schools, in the name of the local school system, shall report the facts of such unlawful attendance to the sheriff, constable, city policeman, district attorney general, or the foreman of the grand jury, who shall proceed against the parent, guardian, or other person in parental relation in accordance with the provisions of this part, unless the parent, guardian, or person having charge and control of the child shall at once place the child in some day school as aforementioned.

The Director of any local school system, after written notice to the parent/guardian of a child, shall report any child who habitually and unlawfully absents himself/herself from school to the appropriate judge having juvenile jurisdiction in that county, the child to be dealt with in such manner as the judge may determine to be for the best interest of the child.

## PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS

The judge may assess a fine of up to fifty dollars (\$50.00) or five (5) hours of community service, at the discretion of the judge, against the parents or legal guardians of K-6 children if the child is absent more than five (5) days during any school year guardians present adequate excuse.

**TCA 49-6-3007**

Any parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control of any child who shall violate the provisions of this part, **TCA 49-6-3009**, shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

Each day's unlawful absence shall constitute a separate offense.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;

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2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent(s)/guardian(s).

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee. **Principals may accept three (3) parent notes per semester for the purpose excusing an absence.** Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness/injury;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances;
6. College visits;
7. Pregnancy;
8. School sponsored or school endorsed activities;
9. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
10. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness; and
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

## **TRUANCY**

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement; therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session.

The Director of Schools/designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and disseminated to all students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrative staff.

The Attendance Supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent(s)/guardian(s).



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Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee. Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness/injury;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances;
6. Pregnancy;
7. School endorsed activities;
8. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
9. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness; and
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

## ***Progressive Truancy Plan***

### **Tier I**

Tier I of the progressive truancy intervention plan shall apply to all students within the district and include schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to, all students and parents receiving information regarding truancy prevention. This information will be provided through district website, social media, automated calls/texts/emails, the Student Handbook, and enrollment packets

### **Tier II**

Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences, but before referral to juvenile court, and includes the following:

1. Mailed letter to parent/guardian
2. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
3. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Attendance Supervisor/Designee. The contract shall include:
  - a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
  - b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
  - c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court.
4. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress; and
5. A school employee shall conduct an individualized assessment detailing the reasons a student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

### **Tier III**

Tier III shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful. Tier III shall consist of the following interventions: Truancy Intervention Class, Parenting Strategies Class, individual school program, and/or non-compliance truancy petition with the juvenile court. The interventions shall address students' needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/designee.

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## **NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY**

A principal/designee may excuse a student to participate in non-school sponsored extracurricular activities. The principal shall document the approval in writing and shall excuse no more than ten (10) absences each school year. No later than seven (7) business days prior to the student's absence, the student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation along with a written request for the excused absence from the student's parent/guardian. The request shall include the following:

1. Student's name and personal identification number;
2. Student's grade;
3. The dates of the student's absence;
4. The reason for the student's absence; and
5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.

## **RELEASED TIME COURSE**

A principal/designee may excuse a student to attend a course in religious moral instruction for up to one (1) class period per school day. Students shall not be excused during any class which requires an examination for state or federal accountability purposes.

The student shall submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian prior to participation in the released time course. The principal/designee shall document the approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal/designee as proof of the student's participation in the released time course. The district shall not be responsible for transporting students to and from the place of instruction.

Upon submission of the student's transcript from the entity that provided the released time course, the student may be awarded one (1) unit of elective credit. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures with secular criteria for determining whether credit shall be awarded.

## **MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

School principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one-day excused absence upon the return of a parent or custodian serving active military service. Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during these absences.<sup>11</sup>

## **MAKE-UP WORK**

Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during the excused absences. However, the student is excused for the day or days of absences, not the material covered in his/her classes. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility, not the teacher's, for make-up work in all subject matter covered during his/her absence. The time limit for make-up work is at the direction of the teacher. The student shall make arrangements for make-up work within three (3) working days, provided teachers are available.

## **STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT**

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled EOC exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Excused students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam.

## **CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL**

Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion.<sup>12</sup> If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be advised if the student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.
2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

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## **DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION**

More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license or to obtain such if of age.

## **ATTENDANCE HEARING**

Students with excessive (more than five (5)) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist to excuse an absence(s) or to determine if the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send written notification to the Director of Schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of Schools/designee.

The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.

Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee. The action of the Board shall be final.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

The Director of Schools/designee shall promote students to the next grade level based on the successful completion of required academic work or demonstration of satisfactory progress in each of the relevant academic areas. Students who have difficulty in achieving the requirements for promotion may be considered for retention. Factors used to identify students for retention shall include:

1. Ability to perform at the current grade level;
2. Results of local assessments, screening, or monitoring tools;
3. State assessments, as applicable;
4. Overall academic achievement of the student;
5. Likelihood of success with more difficult material if promoted to the next grade;
6. Attendance record; and
7. Social and emotional maturity.

A student may be retained when such retention is in the best interest of the student. However, a student shall not be retained more than once in any grade. Retention decisions affecting a student receiving special education services shall be made in consultation with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team and in accordance with the provisions of the IEP. For more information, refer to *Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.603*.

## **STUDENT PROGRESS**

Student report cards shall be provided every nine (9) weeks during the school year. The reporting procedure shall be in writing and shall be uniform for all reporting periods during each school year. Each report shall be signed by the parents and returned promptly to the school. Student report cards shall indicate the students' attendance, academic progress and other information necessary to communicate effectively with the parents.

At least two (2) times during the school year, conferences shall be scheduled in which parents and teachers may discuss any pertinent problems or other matters of concern regarding the development and education of each student. Conferences shall be physically accessible to all students, parents and/or guardians.

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## STUDENT WELFARE

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In accordance with *Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.403*, no student shall be denied an education solely because of a communicable disease, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the disease.

Parents or guardians of infected students shall inform appropriate school officials of the infection so that proper precautions for the protection of other students, employees, and the infected student shall be taken.

No student with a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals shall enter or remain in the regular school setting. If a school principal has reason to believe a student has a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals in the regular school setting, the principal shall:

1. Assign the student to a setting which will protect other students, employees and the student; or
2. Exclude the student from school until certification is obtained from a physician or the County Health Department by either the parent or principal stating that the disease is no longer communicable.

If the principal has reason to believe that the student has a long-term communicable disease, the principal must require confirmation from a physician or the county Health Department as to the student's condition. If the student is confirmed to have a long-term communicable disease the principal shall refer the student for special education services.

The principal may request that further examinations be conducted by a physician or county Health Department and may request periodic re-examinations after the student has been readmitted to the school. Expenses incurred from examinations requested by school officials shall be paid by the Board.

The names of all students excluded from school under this policy shall be forwarded to the office of the Director of Schools.

### IMMUNIZATIONS

No students entering school, including those entering kindergarten or first grade, those from out-of-state, and those from nonpublic schools, will be permitted to enroll without proof of immunization. The following immunizations are required:

#### **Children enrolling in Pre-K:**

- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV)
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) - age younger than 5 years only
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) - age younger than 5 years only
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - 1 dose of each, normally given together as MMR
- Varicella - 1 dose or credible history of disease
- Hepatitis A - 1 dose, required by 18 months of age or older

#### **Children enrolling in Kindergarten:**

- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV) - final dose on or after the 4th birthday

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- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - 2 doses of each, usually given together as MMR
- Varicella - 2 doses or credible history of disease
- Hepatitis A - total of 2 doses, spaced at least 6 - 18 months apart

## **All children entering 7th grade (including currently enrolled students):**

- Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis booster (Tdap) - evidence of one Tdap dose given any time before 7th grade entry is required regardless of Td history
- Varicella - 2 doses *or* credible history of disease

## **Children who are new enrollees in a TN school in grades *other* than Kindergarten**

- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV - final dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - 2 doses of each, normally given together as MMR
- Varicella - 2 doses or credible history of disease
- New students entering grades other than 7th grade are not required to have Tdap

Exceptions, in the absence of an epidemic or immediate threat thereof, will be granted to any child whose parent or guardian shall file with school authorities a signed, written statement that such measures conflict with his/her religious tenets and practices; or due to medical reasons if such child has a written statement from his/her doctor excusing him from such immunization.

## MEDICINES

No school official or teacher will routinely dispense medication to students except in unique situations in which a child's health is dependent upon medical aid. If under exceptional circumstances a child is required to take non-prescription or prescription medication during school hours and the parent/guardian cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal/designee will assist in self-administration of the medication if the student is competent to self-administer medicine with assistance in compliance with the following regulations.<sup>1</sup>

Written instructions ***signed by the parent/guardian*** will be required and will include:

1. Child's name;
2. Name of medication;
3. Name of physician;
4. Time to be self-administered;
5. Dosage and directions for self-administration (non-prescription medicines must have label direction);
6. Possible side effects, if known; and
7. Termination date for self-administration of the medication.

**The medication must be delivered to the principal's office in person by the parent/guardian** of the student unless the medication must be retained by the student for immediate self-administration (i.e. students with asthma).

**Discipline consequences may result for students transporting medication without prior authorization.**

For additional information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.405***.

## PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

The principal shall ensure that there is a complete physical examination of each student prior to:

1. Entering school for the first time. This applies to PreK, kindergarten, first grade and other students for whom there is no health record; <sup>1</sup> and
2. Participation as a member of any athletic team or in any other strenuous physical activity program.

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Cost of the examination shall be borne by the parent or guardian of the student. These records shall be on file in the principal's office.

Screening tests for vision, hearing and lice will be conducted. Parents/Guardians will receive written notice of any screening result that indicates a condition that might interfere or tend to interfere with a student's progress.

In general, the school district will not conduct physical examinations of a student without parental consent to do so or by court order, unless the health or safety of the student or others is in question.

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR

The following protocols concerning standards of conduct and behavior will apply to every student enrolled in Houston County School District. These regulations apply to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or in any school-sponsored activity, or **whose conduct at any time or place (i.e. off-campus, social media, etc.) has a direct and immediate effect on the learning environment or maintaining order and discipline in the schools.**

## ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS

Alternative School is defined as a short-term intervention program designed to develop academic and behavioral skills for students who have been suspended or expelled from the regular school program. Placement of a student results in termination of all school privileges, including attending or participating in school-sponsored events and extracurricular activities. During the alternative school term, students are not allowed to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities at any of the four schools in the Houston County School District. This also applies to any out-of-county school-sponsored activities. Houston County Alternative School operates on the same calendar and schedule as all other schools in the district.

## BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT TEAM

Each school will utilize a team-based approach to collaborate and recommend evidence-based interventions that support students' behavioral and social-emotional needs in an effort to reduce the need for more restrictive punitive placements. These teams may be involved in the development of behavior plans, the assigning of appropriate discipline, and/or the referral of the student for additional supports and services as warranted.

## SCHOOL BUS CONDUCT

The school bus is an extension of school activity; therefore, students shall conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for safety and classroom behavior. Families will be provided a copy of *Houston County Bus Rules*, outlining district expectations for riding school buses and potential consequences for infractions. Students in violation of bus conduct rules shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with established board policy governing student conduct and discipline. In most instances of *minor* infractions, the following will occur:

### **Warnings:**

Verbal - Driver will warn a student of misconduct and give the student an opportunity to correct the behavior.

Written - Driver will issue a written warning on misconduct. Copies of warning will be given to parent/guardian, student's principal, and a copy retained by driver.

**NOTE: Profanity, smoking/vaping, fighting, sexual misconduct, threatening driver or fellow students, alcohol, controlled substance, damaging property, or other major infractions will be reported to the student's principal without any prior warning from the driver.**

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After a bus driver has issued both a verbal and written **warning** to a student for behavior infractions, the bus driver shall report any subsequent offenses, in writing, to the principal. The student guilty of said misconduct will be called in to the office and such disciplinary action as deemed necessary shall be taken, and future acceptable conduct required. A report to the student's parent/ guardian or a conference with parent/guardian is the recommended procedure in all cases.

1st Offense: A 1st Offense will warrant one (1) to three (3) days suspension of bus privileges or ISS, depending upon the seriousness of the offense.

2nd Offense: A 2nd Offense will warrant a three (3) to ten (10) day suspension of bus privileges, depending upon the seriousness of the offense.

3rd Offense: A 3rd Offense will warrant a long-term suspension from bus privileges. (*Long-term shall be defined as 15 days up to a semester.*) A parent conference is urged, if at all possible.

4th Offense: A 4th Offense will warrant suspension from bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. A parent conference is urged, if at all possible.

Students shall become ineligible for transportation when their behavior is such as to cause dissension on a school bus or when they disobey state or local rules and regulations pertaining to pupil transportation.

***NOTE: Offenses and disciplinary actions in other parts of this policy may apply. Offenses may warrant more than one disciplinary action. The Special Education Supervisor will be notified when transportation privileges are suspended for special education students. The building administrator and the Director of Transportation may assign alternative consequences when necessary and appropriate.***

## **VANDALISM OF SCHOOL BUSES/VEHICLES**

Care of a school bus/vehicle and prevention of needless abuse shall be the responsibility of the driver. Unnecessary and wanton abuse of a school bus/vehicle by a student shall result in that student being made ineligible for transportation in addition to any other disciplinary measures. Said student shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damage and assurance given that the abuse will not reoccur.

The following procedures shall be followed when damage is done to a bus by a student:

1st Offense: Any student caught damaging a school bus/vehicle in any manner will be suspended from riding any bus in the Houston County School System until restitution is made, either by the student or parent/guardian.

2nd Offense: Any student caught damaging a school bus/vehicle the 2nd time must pay for the restitution of the seat and will be suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year. If the offense occurs during the second semester of the school year, the student shall also be suspended for the 1st semester of the following year.

3rd Offense: Any student caught damaging a school bus/vehicle the 3rd time must pay for the restitution of the seat and will be suspended from riding a school bus for the remainder of his/her school career.

Cameras or video cameras are used to monitor student behavior on school buses transporting students to and from school or extracurricular activities. Photographs and video footage shall be used only to promote the order, safety, and security of students, staff, and property.

These materials shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) days. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may submit requests to view photographs and video footage to the Director of School/designee, and a time shall be arranged for viewing. The Director of Schools/designee shall be present when parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided the opportunity to review photographs and video footage.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.308.***

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## CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students shall help maintain the school environment, preserve school property, and exercise care while using school facilities. The principal/designee shall make a full and complete investigation of any instance of damage or loss of school property. The investigation shall be carried out in cooperation with law enforcement officials when appropriate. When the person causing damage or loss has been identified and the costs of repair or replacement have been determined, the Director of Schools shall take steps to recover these costs. This may include recommending the filing of a civil complaint in court to recover damages. If the responsible person is a minor, recovery will be sought from the minor's parent/guardian.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The Houston County Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment that encourages the academic, emotional, and social development of all students. The Board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property (including school vehicles) and at school-sanctioned events.

All students, when on school property (including school buses/vehicles) or attending school functions, will

- follow all school rules.
- respect fellow students and all school personnel.
- exhibit academic integrity.
- use appropriate language, avoiding profanity, racial and ethnic slurs, or any other denigration of others in communications.
- assist to eliminate the use of violence, bullying, and intimidation of others.
- demonstrate respect for school campuses and property.
- support their school's activities and organizations.
- display good sportsmanship and school spirit.
- work to improve their school.

The principal of each school shall be responsible for implementation and administration in his/her school and shall apply the Code uniformly and fairly to each student at the school without partiality and discrimination. During an investigation, an infraction witnessed by, or statement of, a staff member may be considered proof barring compelling evidence to the contrary.

## CONTRABAND

It is a violation of school policy to possess a weapon on any school property or during any school-sponsored events.

In addition, school officials who find any other contraband materials upon the school premises will immediately report it to appropriate law enforcement authorities. Persons who bring such material upon school premises, whether students or not, will be prosecuted in accordance with State Law.

As used herein, "contraband" is all substances or materials the presence of which is prohibited by school policy or State Law including, but not limited to, controlled substances, drugs, alcohol or alcoholic beverages, abusable glue or aerosol paint, guns, knives, weapons, incendiary devices, and stolen property.

The school system retains authority to conduct routine patrols of parking lots and inspection of interiors of automobiles on school property. Searches of such automobiles may be conducted in accordance with State Law as long as there is probable cause. Dogs, metal detectors, and/or other devices may be used in conducting such searches.



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## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure in any Houston County public school.

## DETENTION

A student may be detained before or after school for disciplinary reasons provided the parent/guardian of such students has been given advance notice. Parent/guardian shall be responsible for arranging the student's transportation to comply with the detention schedule.

While in detention, the student will be required to engage in some constructive activity related to the school. Such activity shall be in compliance with school and state rules and regulations relative to the student's safety and welfare. Supervised study of class assignments or additional assignments for discipline may be used.

## DRESS CODE

The Board of Education believes that proper etiquette, social customs, and good grooming are part of the educational process. While parents should exercise the primary authority in determining what appropriate dress is and grooming for their children in accordance with their age and grade, it is the responsibility of the school system to work with parents in encouraging students to assume this responsibility and to execute it sensibly as they mature.

The Dress Code is designed to ensure the health and safety of students and to avoid distractions to the educational process, while preserving the basic rights of individuals. Each school will establish written guidelines to be followed.

Additionally, existing laws and/or school regulations require the wearing of protective clothing, eye shields, or other dress for the health and safety of students participating in certain activities. Each school will notify students of these rules. Individual schools will assume responsibility for determining compliance with the dress code and for ruling on specific terms of clothing and general appearance for safety and health, or for the order, well-being, and general appearance of students. Students failing to comply with the Dress Code shall be required to make immediate arrangements for appropriate clothing. Refusal to make such arrangements shall result in a Category II offense.

## DISCIPLINARY HEARING AUTHORITY

A Disciplinary Hearing Authority (DHA) shall conduct appeals for students who have been suspended for more than ten (10) school days. Such appeals shall be made in writing to the Director of Schools within five (5) days from the date the alternative placement, suspension, or expulsion began. Upon receiving notification of the request to appeal the suspension decision, the DHA shall provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student, the student, and any other appropriate person of the time, place, and date of the hearing. The hearing must be held no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the suspension. Within five (5) days of the DHA rendering a decision, the student, principal, principal-teacher, or assistant principal may request a review by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. For more information, refer to *Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.317*.

## INTERROGATION AND SEARCHES

### A. INTERROGATIONS

#### 1. Interrogations by School Personnel:

Students may be questioned by teachers or school administrators/designees about any matter pertaining to the operation of a school and/or the enforcement of its rules. Any student answering falsely, evasively, or refusing to answer questions, may be subject to disciplinary action.

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If a student is suspected or accused of misconduct or infraction of the student code of conduct, a school administrator/designee may interrogate the student, without the presence of parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians and without giving the student constitutional warnings.

## **2. Interrogations by Police: *(at administrator's request)***

If a school administrator/designee has requested assistance from the police department to investigate a crime involving his/her school, the police shall have permission to interrogate a student suspect in school during school hours. The school administrator/designee shall first attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the student of the intended interrogation, but the interrogation may proceed without the attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or his/her designee shall be present during the interrogation.

The use of police women or female staff members is desirable in the interrogation of female students.

## **3. Police-Initiated Interrogations:**

If the police deem circumstances of sufficient urgency to interrogate students at school for unrelated crimes committed outside of school hours, the police department shall first contact the principal regarding the planned interrogation, inform him/her of the probable cause to investigate within the school. The principal shall make reasonable effort to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the interrogation, but the interrogation may proceed without the attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or his/her designee shall be present during the interrogation.

## **B. SEARCHES**

### **1. Searches by School Personnel:**

Any principal, or his/her designee, having reasonable suspicion may search any student, place or thing **(including cell phones/communication devices)** on school property or in the actual or constructive possession of any student during any organized school activity off campus, including buses, vehicles of students or visitors, and containers or packages if he/she receives information which would cause a reasonable belief that the search will lead to the discovery of:

1. Evidence of any violation of the law;
2. Evidence of any violation of school rules or regulations or proper standards of student or faculty conduct;
3. Any object or substance which, because of its presence, presents an immediate danger of harm or illness to any person.

**A cell phone is subject to a search, but will be limited to areas in the phone where evidence would be found (e.g. picture files, text messages, phone logs, etc.). Refusal by a student to unlock their device and allow a search is implied as an admission of guilt.**

A student using a locker that is the property of the school system does not have the right of privacy in that locker or its contents. All lockers or other storage areas provided for student use on school premises remain the property of the school system and are provided for the use of students are subject to inspection, access for maintenance, and search.

A student may be subject to physical search or a student's pocket, purse or other container may be required to be emptied because of the result of a locker search, or because of information received from a teacher, staff member or other student if such action is reasonable to the principal. All of the following standards of reasonableness shall be met. If information suggests:

1. A particular student has violated policy;
2. The search could be expected to yield evidence of the violation of school policy or disclosure of a dangerous weapon or drug;
3. The search is in pursuit of legitimate interests of the school in maintaining order, discipline, safety, supervision and education of students;
4. The primary purpose of the search is not to collect evidence for a criminal prosecution; and

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5. The search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student, as well as the nature of the infraction alleged to have been committed.

School officials may conduct hand-held or walk-through metal detector checks of a student's person or personal effects.

## **2. Searches by Police:**

If public health or safety is involved, upon request of the principal who shall be present, police officers may make a general search of students' lockers and desks, or students' or nonstudents' automobiles for drugs, weapons or items of an illegal or prohibited nature.

If the principal has received reliable information which he/she believes to be true that evidence of a crime or of stolen goods, not involving school property of members of the school staff or student body is located on school property and that any search for such evidence or goods would be unrelated to school discipline or to the health and safety of the student body, he/she shall request police assistance; and procedures to obtain and execute a search warrant shall thereafter be followed.

Anything found in the course of the search conducted in accordance with this policy which is evidence of a violation of the law or a violation of student conduct standards may be:

1. Seized and admitted as evidence in any hearing, trial, suspension or dismissal proceeding. It should be tagged for identification at the time it is seized and kept in a secure place by the principal or the principal's designee until it is presented at the hearing. At the discretion of the principal, the items seized may be returned to the parent/guardian of the student or if it has no significant value, the item may be destroyed, but only with the expressed written permission of the Director of Schools.
2. Any seized item may be turned over to any law enforcement officer. Any dangerous weapon or drug as defined in TCA 49-6-4202 shall be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement official after completion of an administrative proceeding at which its presence is reasonably required.

Whenever the possibility of uncovering evidence of a criminal nature exists, the principal or his/her designee may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer to:

1. Search any area of the school premises, any students or any motor vehicle on the school premises; or
2. Identify or dispose of anything found in the course of a search conducted in accordance with this policy.

The involvement of law enforcement officials is encouraged when there is reasonable cause to suspect that criminal evidence is about to be uncovered.

## **3. Automobile Searches:**

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege not of right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspection of the exteriors of students' automobiles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal, unauthorized or contraband without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The school system retains authority to conduct routine patrols of parking lots and inspection of interiors of automobiles on school property. Searches of such automobiles may be conducted in accordance with State Law. Dogs, metal detectors, and/or other devices may be used in conducting such searches.

## **4. Use of Dogs, Metal Detectors, or Other Devices:**

Dogs, metal detectors, or other devices may be used in conducting searches. Dogs shall not be used to search students unless school officials have established *independently* that there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a particular student possesses illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials on his/her person. In such cases, every precaution shall be taken to ensure the safety of students and school personnel when such searches are being conducted. An indication by the dog, metal detector, or other device that illegal, unauthorized, or contraband material is present shall be reasonable cause for a further search by school officials.

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## 5. Notification of Law Enforcement Authorities:

If a property conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

## 6. Arrest:

Custody and/or arrest may be affected by a police officer after her/she has shown proper identification and credentials.

## C. Alcohol and Drug Testing:

Students shall be subject to testing for alcohol and/or drugs during the school year when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student has violated policy, as search has produced evidence of the presence of alcohol/drugs, or observation/reliable information indicate that the student is under the influence of alcohol/drugs on school property or school-sanctioned events. The Board shall pay costs of any testing required pursuant to this policy. For more information, refer to *Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.3071*.

## OFFENSES

In grades pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) through 2<sup>nd</sup>, all disciplinary action for offenses is at the discretion of the school principal. Code of conduct for students in Pre-K and kindergarten shall utilize alternative discipline practices such as modeling, redirection, positive behavioral supports, individual behavior plans, and/or time-out. In these grades, exclusionary discipline (suspension and expulsion) shall only be used as a measure of last resort. **For Category V-IX offenses, the principal has disciplinary discretion for students in grades 3-5.**

Repetition of any of the offenses set forth herein shall require assignment of additional points in a minimum of five-point increments in addition to any discipline imposed.

All reference to days suspended shall mean “school days” rather than “calendar days”. Suspension may be *in-* or *out-of-*school.

Staff members shall ensure that disciplinary measures are implemented in a manner that:

1. Balances accountability with an understanding of traumatic behavior;
2. Teaches school and classroom rules while reinforcing that violent or abusive behavior is not allowed at school;
3. Minimizes disruptions to education with an emphasis on positive behavioral supports and behavioral intervention plans;
4. Creates consistent rules and consequences; and
5. Models respectful, non-violent relationships.

In order to ensure that these goals are accomplished, the school district shall utilize the following trauma-informed discipline practices: school-wide positive behavior supports, “Access for All”, preventative strategies for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), individual behavior plans, and/or school Behavioral Support Teams.

Per state statute, a teacher, principal, school employee, or school bus driver, in exercising the person’s lawful authority, may use reasonable force when necessary under the circumstances to correct or restrain a student to prevent bodily harm or death to another person.

**Principals have discretion to refer any category offense to the school Behavioral Support Team.**

*Offenses marked with an (\*) require that the student be reported to appropriate law enforcement officials in addition to school-imposed discipline. “Reporting” does not necessarily mean that the student should be prosecuted in juvenile proceedings. The building principal should exercise reasonable discretion and determine if prosecution is warranted. Instances of sexual misconduct or illegal use of a communication device involving minors will be reported to the Department of Children’s Services (DCS).*

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## **CATEGORY I**

### **A. TARDINESS:**

Failing to attend classes promptly within the time limits set by the school. Teachers may impose classroom penalties for any unexcused tardiness. After being tardy three (3) unexcused times to any class, the student will be referred to the principal for discipline.

### **B. PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION**

Bodily contact, including kissing and/or hugging, and/or hand holding.

### **C. SKIPPING CLASS**

Willfully refusing to attend assigned classroom and/or leaving a classroom without permission from the person in charge.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st Offense: At discretion of the principal, not including suspension or greater punishment.

2nd & Subsequent Offenses: At discretion of the principal. Shall result in disciplinary action that is equal to or exceeds disciplinary action assigned for the previous offense in the same category.

## **CATEGORY II**

### **A. TOBACCO\*:**

Possessing any type of tobacco/nicotine products (including smokeless tobacco), electronic/battery operated devices, vapor products, pouches, and all other associated paraphernalia on school premises (including school buses/vehicles) or at any school-sponsored activity. Students in violation of the policy may be required to complete an assigned prevention course.

#### ***Tennessee Code Annotated 39-17-1505(a)(b)(c)***

- (a) It is unlawful for a person who has not attained twenty-one (21) years of age to possess either a tobacco, smoking hemp, vapor product, or smokeless nicotine product, to purchase or accept receipt of either product, or to present or offer to any person any purported proof of age that is false, fraudulent, or not actually that person's own for the purpose of purchasing or receiving any tobacco, smoking hemp, vapor product, or smokeless nicotine product.*
- (b) Any person who violates this section may be issued a citation by a law enforcement officer who has evidence of the violation. Regardless of whether a citation is issued, the product shall be seized as contraband by the law enforcement officer.*
- (c) A violation of this section is a civil offense, for which the general sessions or juvenile court may, in its discretion, impose a civil penalty of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than fifty dollars (\$50.00), which may be charged against a person who is at least eighteen (18) years of age but less than twenty-one (21) years of age, or, in the case of a minor, against a parent, guardian, or custodian. The general sessions or juvenile court may, in its discretion, also impose community service work not to exceed fifty (50) hours or successful completion of a prescribed court program for a second or subsequent violation within a one-year period.*

### **B. CANNABIDIOL (CBD)**

Possessing CBD (compounds derived from the marijuana plant) or similar products in any form (oil, gummies, vapes, etc.) on school premises (including school buses/vehicles) or at any school-sponsored activity. Most, if not all, CBD products may not be purchased by minors in Tennessee.

### **C. DISOBEDIENCE:**

Willfully disobeying the authority of a person duly authorized to exercise such authority at school or at a school sponsored activity.

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**D. DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT:**

Engaging in conduct which is aggressive, boisterous (rough and noisy, rowdy, rambunctious, unruly, etc.) or disruptive *in any way* of the educational process. **Administration has discretion to elevate the offense category with regard to physical aggression.**

**E. DISRESPECT TOWARDS A TEACHER OR ANY SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE**

**F. GAMBLING:**

Wagering money or personal property.

**G. SELLING ITEMS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL-SANCTIONED FUNDRAISERS**

**H. LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION**

Includes transporting another student off campus without permission.

**I. INDECENT OR OBSCENE ACTS OR MATERIALS:**

1. Any indecent or obscene act, including possession or distribution of obscene materials, or other acts of an obscene or vulgar nature. *\*Such materials involving minors may be subject to legal action. See Category V, B.*
2. Wearing clothing, while on school grounds during the school day which exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent manner or contains suggestive writings, images, weapons, references to alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco and disrupts the learning environment.
3. Vulgar and Profane Language: Using profane or obscene language or gestures. Use of such language or gestures toward any school system employee shall be viewed as requiring suspension or greater punishment.
4. Unwanted physical contact such as intentional touching, bodily contact, patting, grabbing, or kissing.

**J. DEROGATORY REMARKS**

Racial, sexist, homophobic, or religious slurs directed toward another or the use of such slurs generally.

**K. DISPLAY OF OR USE OF A CELL PHONE/ANY ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES DURING SCHOOL HOURS, TO INCLUDE SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION.**

Students may possess personal communication devices and personal electronic devices so long as such devices are turned off and stored away or in a designated area in a classroom as directed by the teacher. Such devices include, but are not limited to, wearable technology such as eye glasses, rings, or watches that have the capability to record, live stream, or interact with wireless technology; cell phones; laptops; and tablets. However, a teacher may grant permission for the use of these devices to assist with instruction in his/her classroom and teachers are encouraged to integrate the devices into their course work. The principal/designee may also grant a student permission to use such a device at his/her discretion.

**Any audio or visual recording by students is strictly prohibited on school property or at school functions unless authorized by the principal/designee.**

Unauthorized use or improper storage of a device will result in confiscation until such time as it may be released to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

**L. OTHER CONDUCT WARRANTING DISCIPLINE:**

Any conduct which is dishonest (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, or other intent to deceive, etc.), disruptive, or may be harmful to the student or others, and interfering with any school purpose, not otherwise specifically enumerated herein.

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## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st Offense: At discretion of the principal, in-school suspension, suspension, or alternative school. If a cell phone is confiscated, the student may pick up the device from the school office when leaving for the day.

2nd Offense: At discretion of the principal, in-school suspension, suspension, or alternative school. If a cell phone is confiscated, a parent/guardian must pick up the device from the school office.

3rd & Subsequent Offenses: Suspension, alternative school, or expulsion. If a cell phone is confiscated, a parent/guardian must pick up the device from the school office.

## **CATEGORY III**

### **A. THEFT\*:**

Theft of property of the school or property of any person on school premises. Possession of stolen property with the intent to deprive the true owner thereof shall be considered theft. IN ALL CASES, the student shall be required to compensate for the damage or theft. Report to law enforcement officials if theft exceeds \$50.00 or if there is suspicion of chronic theft.

### **B. THREATS:**

Threatening, knowledge of such a threat, or implying physical violence against another student in any fashion.

### **C. FIGHTING:**

A physical altercation with another student beyond pushing and shoving. Report to proper law enforcement officials if bodily harm is inflicted. Law enforcement may charge the student with a legal violation as appropriate.

### **D. POSSESSION OF A LOCKING BLADE POCKET KNIFE WITH BLADE NOT EXCEEDING 3" IN LENGTH**

### **E. BULLYING / HARASSMENT**

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st Offense: At discretion of the principal, suspension, or alternative school.

2nd Offense: Suspension, alternative school.

3rd Offense: Suspension, alternative school or expulsion.

4th Offense: Expulsion.

## **CATEGORY IV**

### **A. DAMAGE TO SCHOOL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY:**

Willfully damaging or destroying school district property. In ALL CASES, the student shall be required to compensate for the damage. Report to proper law enforcement officials if damage exceeds \$50.00.

### **B. EXTORTION\*:**

Obtaining anything of value or forcing anyone to do something against his/her will or attempting to do so by threat of violence or retribution. Report to proper law enforcement officials upon second offense.

### **C. HAZING**

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

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1st Offense: At discretion of the principal.

2nd Offense: Suspension, alternative school.

3rd Offense: Expulsion.

*For category V-IX offenses, the principal has disciplinary discretion for students in grades 3-5.*

## **CATEGORY V**

### **A. INDECENT EXPOSURE OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT\***

### **B. ILLEGAL USE OF COMMUNICATION DEVICE\***

1. Intentionally or knowingly, by use of a telecommunication device, transmits, distributes, publishes, or disseminates a photograph, video, or other material that contains a sexually explicit image of a **minor**; or
2. Intentionally possesses a photograph, video, or other material that contains a sexually explicit image of a **minor**. [TCA 37-1-148]

### **C. USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES TO DISTRIBUTE UNFIT MATERIAL**

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st & Subsequent Offenses: Automatic referral to the Behavioral Support Team. Suspension, alternative school, or expulsion.

## **CATEGORY VI**

### **A. DANGEROUS CONDUCT\*:**

1. Threatening to use any weapon.
2. Using or threatening to use a contrived weapon to inflict bodily harm. (*Contrived weapon - any such sharp pointed or edged instrument such as a chair, bat, tool, or any other contrived weapon*).

### **B. THREATS TOWARD ANY SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE\*:**

Threatening physical violence against *any* school district employee.

### **C. STARTING A FIRE\***

### **D. ACTIVATING A FALSE FIRE OR EMERGENCY ALARM\***

### **E. ANY CONDUCT THAT IS DANGEROUS, NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFICALLY ENUMERATED**

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st & Subsequent Offenses: Placement in alternative school for not less than 30 days or expulsion.

## **CATEGORY VII**

### **A. ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, AND/OR ILLEGAL DRUG PARAPHERNALIA\*:**

*Possession of alcohol or illegal drug paraphernalia or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.*

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st & Subsequent Offenses: Automatic referral to Behavioral Support Team. Placement in alternative school for not less than thirty (30) days or expulsion.



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## **CATEGORY VIII**

### **A. ARSON\*:**

Knowingly ignites any school structure with the intent to cause damage, implying a fire will be started on school property, or being an accomplice to starting a fire.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st and Subsequent Offenses: Automatic referral to Behavioral Support Team. Placement in alternative school for not less than thirty (30) days or expulsion. Restitution for damages shall be made before readmission will be considered.

## **CATEGORY IX**

### **A. OTHER CRIMINAL CONDUCT\*:**

Any other conduct, not specifically enumerated herein, that constitutes a crime under the laws of the State of Tennessee or the United States, on school premises or at any school-sponsored activity.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

1st & Subsequent Offenses: At discretion of the principal. Restitution for any damages shall be part of any disciplinary action.

## **SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS**

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)**

In-school suspension (ISS) shall be offered to students as an alternative program (if applicable) to complete academic assignments and receive credit for work completed.

Students given ISS in excess of one (1) day from classes shall attend special classes attended only by students guilty of misconduct or be placed in an isolated area appropriate for study. Personnel responsible for ISS shall ensure that each student is supervised at all times and has textbooks and classwork assignments from his/her regular teachers.

### **SUSPENSIONS LONGER THAN FIVE DAYS**

If a suspension is longer than five (5) days, the principal shall develop and implement a plan for improving the student's behavior.

### **SUSPENSIONS LONGER THAN TEN DAYS**

If the principal suspends a student for longer than ten (10) days, he/she shall immediately give written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student of the right to appeal the decision. All appeals shall be filed within five (5) days of receipt of the notice. These appeals may be filed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student, or any person holding a teaching license who is employed by the school district if requested by the student.

The appeal from this decision shall be to the Disciplinary Hearing Authority appointed by the Board. If a Disciplinary Hearing Authority has not been appointed, then the appeal shall be to the Board.

### **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is defined as termination of attendance and exclusions from school-sponsored activities for a minimum of the remainder of the current school year. If expulsion is indicated, the principal shall suspend the student pending final determination of his/her recommendation for expulsion by the Behavioral Support Team. Written notification of the temporary suspension and the recommendation of expulsion will be mailed to the parent/guardian as soon as

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possible, and a copy of the suspension and recommendation of expulsion shall be forwarded to the Director of Schools within forty-eight (48) hours.

Students in grades 6-12 assigned to In-School Suspension, Suspension, or Alternative School are *not* permitted to participate in or attend any school-sponsored activities both during and after school. For more information on suspensions, refer to ***Houston County School Board Policy 6.316***.

## ZERO TOLERANCE

In order to ensure a safe and secure learning environment, the following offenses shall be a violation of ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.309*** and shall not be tolerated:

1. Bringing to school or being in possession of a weapon or dangerous instrument not otherwise specified in the discipline policy;
2. Bringing to school or being in unauthorized possession of a firearm on school property;
3. Unlawful possession of any drug, including any controlled substance, controlled substance analogue, or legend drug on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event;
4. Aggravated assault;
5. Assault (physical aggression toward another that is one sided) that results in bodily injury upon any student, teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of the school, or school resource officer; or
6. Valid threats of mass violence on school property or at a school-related activity as determined by a Threat Assessment Team.

When it is determined that a student has violated this policy, the principal shall notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system as required by law.

All Zero Tolerance offenses shall be brought before a district Zero Tolerance Committee. The Committee will hear statements of the parties involved and determine if the infraction meets the criteria as a Zero Tolerance offense. Committing any of these offenses shall result in a student being expelled from the regular school program for at least one (1) calendar year unless modified by the Director of Schools. Modification of the length of time shall be granted on a case-by-case basis. Students who commit Zero Tolerance offenses may be assigned to an alternative school or program at the discretion of the Director of Schools.

## INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

### ENGLISH LEARNERS

If the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes a student from effective participation in the educational programs offered by the District, the District shall take reasonable actions to provide the student equal access to its programs. Students who are English learners (EL) shall be identified, assessed, and provided appropriate services. No student shall be admitted to or excluded from any program or extracurricular activity based on the student's surname or EL status.

The Director of Schools shall evaluate the effectiveness of the District's language assistance programs to ensure EL students will acquire English proficiency and the ability to participate in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time.

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Parents of EL students shall be given notice of, and information regarding, the instructional program within the first thirty (30) days of the school year or within the first two (2) weeks of a student being placed in a language instruction educational program. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.207.***

## HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The homebound instruction program is for students who, due to a medical condition or an IEP team decision, are unable to attend the regular instructional program. The homebound instruction program shall consist of a minimum of three (3) hours of instruction per week while school is in session for a period of time determined, on a case-by-case basis, by the District.

To qualify for this program, a student shall have a medical condition that will require the student to be absent for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive instructional days (or an aggregate of at least ten (10) instructional days for a student who has a chronic medical condition) or educational needs such that an IEP team has determined the home setting to be the child's least restrictive environment (LRE). The student shall be certified by his/her treating physician as having a medical condition that prevents him/her from attending regular classes or have a signed IEP document reflecting the homebound placement as the student's LRE. The services provided to the homebound student shall reflect the student's capabilities and be determined by the homebound instructor, after consultation with appropriate professional staff of the student's assigned school. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.206.***

## HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students shall be immediately enrolled, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (i.e. academic records, immunization records, health records, proof of residency) or missed the District's application or enrollment deadlines. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to submit contact information to the District's homeless coordinator. The Director of Schools shall ensure that each homeless student is provided services comparable to those offered to other students within the District, including transportation, special education services, programs in career and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students, and school nutrition. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.503.***

## MIGRANT STUDENTS

The District shall:

1. Identify migratory students and assess the educational and related health and social needs of each student;
2. Provide a full range of services to qualifying migrant students including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs, elective classes, fine arts classes, etc.;
3. Provide migratory students with the opportunity to meet the same statewide assessment standards that all students are expected to meet;
4. To the extent feasible, provide advocacy and outreach programs to migratory students and their families and professional development for district staff; and
5. Provide parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to participate in the program.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.504.***

## SECTION 504 AND ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The District is committed to maintaining equitable employment and educational practices, services, programs, and activities that are accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. To discuss concerns or seek resolutions related to Section 504 of the ADA, contact the 504 Coordinator at the Board of Education office. The coordinator shall respond to all complaints within twenty (20) days with a written response as well as information on further

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grievance procedures that may be followed if the complaining party is not satisfied with the coordinator's proposed resolution. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.802***.

## STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Students in foster care, including those awaiting foster care placement, shall be immediately enrolled, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (i.e. academic records, immunization records, health records, proof of residency) or missed the District's application or enrollment deadlines.

The District and the child welfare agency shall determine whether placement in a particular school is in a student's best interest. Other parties, including the student, foster parents, and biological parents (if appropriate), shall be consulted. If the child has an IEP or a Section 504 plan, then the relevant school staff members shall participate in the best interest decision process. This determination shall be made as quickly as possible to prevent educational disruption.

The District shall collaborate with the local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear and written procedures governing how transportation to a student's school of origin shall be provided, arranged, and funded. This transportation will be provided for the duration of the student's time in foster care.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.505***.

## STUDENTS FROM MILITARY FAMILIES

A student who does not currently reside within the District shall be allowed to enroll if he/she is a dependent child of a service member who is being relocated to Tennessee on military orders. To be eligible for enrollment, the student will need to provide documentation that he/she will be a resident of the District on relocation. Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student shall provide proof of residency within the District.

Students with parent(s)/guardian(s) in the military may also be eligible for excused absences related to his/her deployment.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.506***.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Houston County Schools provides special education and/or related services for all students with disabilities eligible under IDEA, Part B and state law. Areas of eligibility include: Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Functional Delay, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Giftedness, Language Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury and Visual Impairment. If you know of a child who may be eligible for special education services between the ages of 3 and 21 or have any questions about your child's special education services, please contact the Director of Special Programs at 931-289-4148.

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## QUICK GUIDE TO PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

### EVALUATION



You have the right to ask your school to evaluate your child to see if your child has a disability and needs special education services. Your school district has up to 60 calendar days to initially evaluate and up to an additional 30 calendar days to develop an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** if your child is determined to be eligible for services. The timeline starts when the school district receives signed parental consent. Your child must be assessed using tests and procedures that are sensitive to your child's disability or cultural background. For example, a test in English should not be conducted for the child whose primary language is Spanish.

### CONSENT



Your **consent** (written permission) is required for the school district to evaluate your child for the first time, unless a special education hearing officer has ordered an evaluation. Even if the evaluation team decides that your child is eligible for special education services, you do not have to accept the services for your child. For your child's first IEP, no services can be provided until you give written consent for your child to receive special education services.

If you accept services, **you can revoke your consent** to services at any time. You must submit this request in writing to your child's school. A revocation would forfeit *all of your child's* special education services, related services, and any other supports included in your child's IEP. If you decline or revoke consent for services, you can request services at a later time. Depending on the

### DECISION MAKING



You have the right to **participate in developing an IEP for your child**. You are an important part of the team that makes decisions about your child's education. You have the right to share information and express your opinion at any team meeting or anytime you feel it would help your child's education. The team decides the kind and amount of services your child needs and where the services will be provided.

The team must include your child's teachers and school administrators, parents, and other individuals as needed.

If you have ideas or concerns about your child's program, you should first talk to your child's teachers or other people who work with your child. Talking with members of the team early on can often prevent problems later. Open, mutual communication between you and the other members of your child's team is encouraged in order to provide an appropriate program for your child.

### SERVICES



One important part of IDEA requires public schools to provide a **free, appropriate public education (FAPE)**. **Free** means that special education services are provided at no cost to the parents. **Appropriate** means that your child's program must provide the *right kind of services* based on your child's needs, and *enough services* for your child to receive educational benefit. This benefit comes through access to and progress in the general education curriculum used for all children. Your child has a right to make progress toward their individual goals through access to the same activities, classrooms, and settings as children who do not have disabilities.

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## LOCATION



Your child should receive their education in the **least restrictive environment** (LRE). This means that children with disabilities, including preschoolers, will be educated in a regular education environment along with their nondisabled peers to the extent appropriate. The school they would attend if they didn't have a disability should be considered first. Children are only removed from being educated with typical peers if it is determined, based on data, that they cannot be appropriately served in the regular education environment, even with the use of supports and services. A regular early childhood education classroom must include at least 50 percent of children who do not have disabilities.

## NOTICE



You have a right to know about why the school district is either proposing or refusing specific actions, supports, or services. This explanation is called **Prior Written Notice** (PWN). This notice must be given to you, in a language you understand, in a reasonable amount of time before the school district takes action or refuses to take action about:

- whether your child is eligible for services,
- the type of disability your child has,
- what services your child will receive, and/or
- where your child will receive services.

Once an IEP is developed or revised and any PWN with proposed changes is received, the IEP should be implemented as soon as possible. If needed, you have up to 14 calendar days to review and consider the information on the IEP. The IEP will go into effect on the 15th calendar day unless you notify the team that you disagree and take steps to resolve any

## COPIES AND PRIVACY



The school district must give you a copy of the full **Notice of Procedural Safeguards** when your child is referred for evaluation and at least once each school year that your child is receiving special education services. Parents can also obtain a copy from their child's school at any time or from the Tennessee Department of Education.

You have a right to see all of **your child's records**. You can prevent the school from sending your child's records to someone else without your written permission. The school must give you a free copy of the evaluation report and a free copy of your child's IEP.

**Parents are encouraged to contact any of these organizations for assistance in understanding and navigating the special education system.**

<b>Tennessee Disability Pathfinder</b>  800.640.4636 (Multilingual)  <a href="http://www.familypathfinder.org">www.familypathfinder.org</a> <a href="mailto:tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.org">tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.org</a>	<b>Disability Rights Tennessee</b>  800.342.1660  <a href="http://www.disabilityrights.org">www.disabilityrights.org</a> <a href="mailto:GetHelp@disabilityrightstn.org">GetHelp@disabilityrightstn.org</a>	<b>Support Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)</b>  800.280.7837 (English) 800.975.2919 (Spanish)  <a href="http://www.tnstep.org">www.tnstep.org</a> <a href="mailto:information@tnstep.org">information@tnstep.org</a>	<b>Tennessee Voices for Children</b>  800.670.9882  <a href="http://www.tnvoices.org">www.tnvoices.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@tnvoices.org">info@tnvoices.org</a>	<b>The Arc Tennessee</b>  800.835.7077  <a href="http://www.thearc.org">www.thearc.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@thearc.org">info@thearc.org</a>
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## **504 Due Process**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides parents with the right to an impartial due process hearing to contest any action of the LEA with regard to a student's identification, evaluation or placement. 34 CFR §104.36. The parent has the right to personally participate and to be represented by an attorney, at their expense, at the hearing.

## **Request for Due Process**

A parent who wishes to challenge the LEA's action or omission with regard to the identification, evaluation or placement of a student who has or is believed to have a disability, shall make an oral or written request for a due process hearing to the LEA's Section 504 coordinator. If a request is received orally, it should be reduced to writing or the parent/guardian should be provided a form for such purpose. The written request must clearly state that the parent is seeking a Section 504 due process hearing. The LEA cannot refuse a parent's due process hearing request. The LEA cannot unilaterally determine whether a due process hearing is warranted, as such decisions are reserved to the impartial hearing officer.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SERVICES**

### **TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Textbooks are property of the Board and shall be returned at the end of the school year, upon completion of the course or upon withdrawal from a course or school. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are to sign an agreement stating they shall be responsible for the textbooks received and used by their children. Textbooks and/or instructional materials shall be available for inspection by parents/guardians upon request. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policies 4.400***.

### **USE OF THE INTERNET**

The District supports the right of students to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes that it is incumbent upon students to use this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner. Students will be given appropriate instruction in internet safety as a part of any instruction utilizing computer resources. A written parental consent shall be required prior to the student being granted access to electronic media involving District technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of online behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, shall be signed by the parent/guardian of minor students and also by the student. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.406***.

### **USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Students may possess personal communication devices, such as cell phones, while on school property. However, the personal communication device must be in the off mode and must be kept in a backpack, purse or similar personal carry-all and may not be used during school hours. The principal or his/her designee may grant a student permission to use a personal communication device at his/her discretion. A device used outside these parameters shall result in confiscation of the device until such time as it may be released at the principal's discretion to the student's parent or guardian. Use of cameras on personal communication devices is strictly prohibited on school property or at school functions. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

# Houston County School District

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## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

### Acceptable Use of Computer Equipment:

#### Provisions:

1. **Acceptable:** uses of computer for activities which support learning and teaching. Computer users are encouraged to develop uses which meet their individual educational needs and which take advantage of the computer's functions.
2. **Unacceptable (*may result in disciplinary action*):** uses of school computers include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Changing computer settings such as: Screen Savers, Backgrounds, Volume (unless permitted by teacher), Fonts (type, color, and sizes), Screen (color, size), and any controls located in the Control Panel.
  - b) Installing or deleting programs from/to the computer from ANY source such as: Internet, DVD, Network, or removable disk/drive. Unless approved by the Technology Coordinator.
  - c) Vandalizing school equipment either physically or electronically.

### Acceptable Use of Electronic Networks:

It is the general policy of Houston County Schools that network services are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Users of the Houston County Schools network must acknowledge their understanding of the general policy and guidelines as a condition of using the network.

Use of the Houston County Public Schools network services is a privilege, not a right. Failure to adhere to this policy and administrative procedures may result in suspension or revocation of network access. Willful or intentional misuse could lead to disciplinary action or criminal penalties under applicable state and federal law.

#### Provisions:

1. **Acceptable:** uses of the network are activities which support learning and teaching. Network users are encouraged to develop uses which meet their individual educational needs and which take advantage of the network's functions.
3. **Unacceptable (*may result in disciplinary action*):** uses of network include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Plagiarizing, which is the taking of someone else's words, ideas, or findings and intentionally presenting them as your own without properly giving credit to their source.
  - b) Revealing home phone numbers, addresses, or other personal information.
  - c) Downloading or copying information without prior teacher approval.
  - d) Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures.
  - e) Using obscene language.
  - f) Harassing, insulting, defaming or attacking others.
  - g) Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks.
  - h) Hacking or attempting unauthorized access.
  - i) Violation of copyright laws.
  - j) Trespassing in another's folders, work or files.
  - k) Intentional misuse of resources.
  - l) Using another's password or other identifier (impersonation).
  - m) Use of the network for commercial purposes.
  - n) Buying or selling on the Internet.
3. **The staff of Houston County Schools will be responsible for:**
  - a) Teaching students the Houston County Schools Policy and Procedures for Network/Internet use.
  - b) Supervising and guiding student access to the Network/Internet.



# Houston County School District

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4. **All Users of the Houston County School network services are responsible for adhering to the Houston County School Policy and Procedures for Network/Internet Use.**
5. **The following people are entitled to use the network if they have signed the Acceptable Use Policy Signature Page and have it on file**
  - a) All Houston County Schools staff.
  - b) All Houston County Schools students under the supervision of a staff member.
  - c) Others who request Guest Accounts from the Network Administrator. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be granted, if warranted, as needs and resources permit.

## **Acceptable Use of the Internet:**

Houston County Schools cannot completely eliminate access to information that is offensive or illegal and residing on networks outside of the Houston County Schools system. However, Houston County Schools are in compliance with CIPA (Children Internet Protection Act) and provide Internet filtering through LineWize/FamilyZone. Houston County Schools make no express or implied warranties for the Internet access it provides. The accuracy and quality of information obtained cannot be guaranteed. Houston County Schools will not guarantee the availability of access to the Internet and will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties. Information sent or received cannot be assured to be private.

## **All students must adhere to the following rules:**

### **Provisions:**

1. **Acceptable:** Teachers may work directly with small groups of students or with an entire class. Internet access will be limited to those sites approved by the teacher previewed in advance. Teachers will be responsible for reviewing the Internet policy and procedures with students prior to any directed searches.

Houston County Schools is an official Google Apps for Education district. The advantages of our association with GAFE include Google Apps and Google Drive for our staff and students. Teachers and students will be issued Google IDs that will end in “@houstonk12tn.net”. These accounts allow for supervised access to limited Google products including Apps and Drive. Not all Google products are provided with this account. Your Houston County Schools Google ID cannot receive emails from users outside of the 'houstonk12tn.net' domain.

2. **Unacceptable (may result in disciplinary action):** uses of the Internet include, but are not limited to:
  - a) ***Email***: Absolutely no personal email accounts are to be used at school.
  - b) ***Chat Programs***: Students are not allowed to use/download chat programs via Internet nor any program dealing with internet chat or messaging.
  - c) ***File sharing programs***: Downloading and sharing image, audio, and data files illegally. They steal school bandwidth which greatly degrades network performance. Under the “Digital Millennium Copyright Act” file sharing programs are illegal at all Schools, Colleges, and Universities.
  - d) ***Games***: Students are not allowed to play, download, or install games on school computers.
  - e) ***Web Sites***: Accessing, downloading, storing, or printing files or messages from the internet that are sexually explicit, obscene, or that offends or tends to degrade others. The administration invokes its discretionary rights to determine such suitability.

## **TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY (RUP) AND TECHNOLOGY REFERENCE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Houston County Schools (HCS) intends that students and employees benefit from technological resources while remaining within the bounds of safe, legal and responsible use. Accordingly, HCS establishes this Responsible Use Policy and Technology Handbook to govern student use of school district technological resources. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school district property, and it applies to all school district

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technological resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections, the resources, tools and learning environments made available by or on the networks, and all devices that connect to those networks.

## About Chromebooks

Google Chromebooks are a type of electronic device combining the practicality of a laptop with the simplicity and effectiveness of a tablet. Parents and students who are security conscious are delighted to find out that Chromebooks are among the most secure devices on the market. Chromebooks link directly to the cloud and run Google Apps, but can be used without a Wi-Fi connection.

## Who Can Participate

A student who is actively enrolled in any Houston County school may be provided a learning device to use in the classroom. HCS strongly believe this initiative is a vital component in preparing students to be college and career ready.

## General Expectations for Use of School Technological Resources

1. District technological resources are provided for school-appropriate purposes only. Acceptable uses of such technological resources are limited to responsible, efficient and legal activities that support learning and teaching. Use of school district technological resources for political purposes or for commercial gain or profit is prohibited. Student personal use of school district technological resources for amusement or entertainment during the school day is also prohibited without permission from authority.
2. Students must comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as any other incidents of plagiarism.
3. No user of technological resources, including a person sending or receiving electronic communications, may engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing or transmitting images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive or considered to be harmful to minors. All users must comply with HCS policies.
4. The use of anonymous proxies to circumvent content filtering is prohibited.
5. Users may not install or use any Internet-based file-sharing program designed to facilitate sharing of copyrighted material.
6. Users of technological resources may not send electronic communications fraudulently (i.e., by misrepresenting the identity of the sender).
7. Users must respect the privacy of others. When using e-mail, chat rooms, blogs or other forms of electronic communication, students must not reveal personal identifying information (of self or others), or information that is private or confidential, such as the home address or telephone number, credit or checking account information or social security number of themselves or fellow students. Users also may not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.
8. Users may not intentionally or negligently damage computers, computer systems, electronic devices, software, computer networks or data of any user connected to school district technological resources. Users may not knowingly or negligently transmit computer viruses or self-replicating messages or deliberately try to degrade or disrupt system performance.
9. Users may not create or introduce games, network communications programs or any foreign program or software onto any school district computer, electronic device or network without the expressed permission of the Technology Director or designee.
10. Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as "hacking" or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems or accounts.
11. Users are prohibited from using another individual's ID or password for any technological resource.

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12. Users may not read, alter, change, block, execute or delete files or communications belonging to another user without the owner's express prior permission.
13. If a user identifies a security problem on a technological resource, s/he must immediately notify a system administrator. Users must not demonstrate the problem to other users. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access.
14. Teachers shall make reasonable efforts to supervise students' use of the Internet during instructional time, to ensure that such use is appropriate for the student's age and the circumstances and purpose of the use.
15. Students who are issued district owned and maintained devices must also follow these guidelines:
  - a. Keep the device secure and damage free.
  - b. Do not loan out the device, charger or cords.
  - c. Do not leave the device unattended.
  - d. Do not eat or drink while using the device or have food or drinks in close proximity to the device.
  - e. Do not place the device on the floor or on a sitting area such as a chair.
  - f. Do not leave the device near table or desk edges.
  - g. Do not stack objects on top of the device.
  - h. Do not leave the device outside.

## **Handling, Care and Use by Students**

- You are responsible for all media, Internet usage, downloads, file creation, file deletion, file sharing, file storage, and other actions that involve all software or applications accessed via your assigned device. Do not allow other users to use the device assigned to you.
- Your device is only for creation of, storage of, access to, and consumption of school-appropriate content. Do not access, store, create, consume, or share unauthorized or inappropriate content with your device.
- Make sure the device logs on to the school district's network daily to receive necessary updates that are critical to keeping the device safe and operational.
- Make sure nothing is ever connected to, or inserted into, any of the ports and/or connectors of the device that are not intended for that particular port or connector.
- Make sure your device is never exposed to liquids or other foreign substances, including drinks, paint, ink, glue, cleaners, polishes, or any type of health/beauty aid (lotion, nail polish, perfume, soap, shampoo, etc.).
- Make sure the surface of your device is not altered or defaced. Do not decorate your assigned device or remove labels, stickers, or tags from the device that are affixed by school district personnel.

## **Security, Storage and Transport**

- Keep the device powered off when not in use.
- Do not hold, lift, or suspend the device in the air solely by the screen/display.
- Handle the device with caution. Do not throw, slide, drop, toss, etc. the device.
- Relocate a device that is powered on, opened up, and in use for class to a secure location to be monitored by a staff member if leaving the classroom at school. Do not leave it on a small or unstable desk in a crowded classroom if you are leaving the room, even if only for a moment.
- Keep your device secure. Students are responsible for their device at all times. Devices should be stored in appropriate classroom charging cart overnight.

## **Privacy**

No right of privacy exists in the use of technological resources. Users should not assume that files or communications accessed, downloaded, created or transmitted using school district technological resources or stored on services or hard drives of individual computers will be private. School district administrators or individuals designated by the superintendent may review files, monitor all communication and intercept e-mail messages to maintain system integrity and to ensure compliance with board policy and applicable laws and regulations. School district personnel shall monitor on-line activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-owned computer. Under certain circumstances, HCS may be required to disclose such electronic information to law

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enforcement or other third parties. For example, release student activities or correspondence as a response to a document production request in a lawsuit, as a response to a public records request or as evidence of illegal activity in a criminal investigation.

## **Google Account**

Through a HCS student login, the district provides students with a district owned and managed account to access Google Apps for Education. Google provides access to specific Google products to school districts on an a-la-carte basis. HCS chooses which Google services students have access to and manages the secure Google accounts. Services that students have access to include, but are not limited to, Drive, Mail, Sites and Calendar.

## **Other School Issued Accounts**

To provide access to appropriate online resources and services, their teachers or schools may issue students accounts. Because new technologies are being developed every day, students may gain or lose access to different services or resources during the school year. All services and resources will be vetted for appropriateness of content and compliance with Federal CIPA and COPPA privacy regulations. Educational software and web based educational tools do collect and store the students' information as to assess their progress. It is our duty to inform each parent that personal information is collected for education and assessment purposes.

## **File Storage**

- Every student is provided storage on Google Drive for school related files and content.
- Flash drives, etc. formatted as storage devices can be used on HCS Devices.
- Any time a device requires repair or maintenance, all data and documents stored locally on the device will be lost.

## **Content Filtering and Restricted Material on the Internet**

HCS employs a third-party filtering application on all district computers that is updated regularly. These updates are pushed to student devices each time they are logged on to the district's network. The content filter, as configured by the district and as operates on the device in possession of a student who is using the device will restrict inadvertent access to unapproved content online and deter attempts to deliberately access unapproved content online. This does not absolve the user from attempting to access unauthorized or inappropriate sites on the Internet. Attempts to disable, reconfigure, or circumvent the content filter is a violation of the aforementioned usage policies and can result in administrative referral for disciplinary consequences or restrictions of a student's technology use privileges. Because of the nature of the Internet, no content filter is capable of preventing all access to all online content that is not school-related. Although the content filter will provide a degree of protection to the user and the device, the user assumes responsibility for not accessing content that is not school-related, whether blocked by the filter at that particular time or not. HCS recognizes that it is impossible to predict with certainty what information on the Internet students may access or obtain. Nevertheless, school district personnel shall take reasonable precautions to prevent students from accessing material and information that is obscene, pornographic or otherwise harmful to minors, including violence, nudity, or graphic language that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose. HCS shall ensure that technology protection measures are used and are disabled or minimized only when permitted by law and board policy. HCS is not responsible for the content accessed by users who connect to the Internet via their personal mobile telephone technology (e.g., 3G, 4G service). Any access of unapproved content online, whether through a district-owned device, personal cell phone, or any other personal electronic device, while at school is a violation of usage policy.

## **Damage to Device**

By taking possession of a borrowed device, the borrower agrees to assume full responsibility for the safety, security, care, and proper use of the borrowed property. In case of accident or careless handling of the property, the borrower agrees to assume full responsibility for the damaged device as deemed necessary by the school district. In the case of damage to a borrowed device, the user must report a potentially damaging incident to school administration of the

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appropriate building within one school day of the occurrence. Failing to report damage or potentially damaging incidents in a timely manner described here may result in a financial obligation for the student/parent/guardian in the amount of repair costs for the damaged property.

## Reporting Loss/Damage/Theft

By taking possession of a borrowed device, the borrower agrees to assume full responsibility for the safety, security, and care of the borrowed property.

- In the case of loss or theft occurring at school, the borrower must report the incident to school administration of the appropriate building within one school day of the occurrence.
- Failing to report loss or theft in the manner described here will result in the missing property being categorized as lost rather than stolen and may result in the user assuming full responsibility for the loss of the device and the corresponding financial obligation for the replacement costs of the lost property.
- In the case of damage to a borrowed device, you must report the potentially damaging incident to school administrators of the appropriate building within one school day of the occurrence.
- Failing to report damage or potentially damaging incidents in the timely manner described above may result in the user assuming responsibility of necessary repair costs for the damaged property.

## Repair Costs

- Repairs will be made to a borrowed device if the nature of the damage makes the device inoperable or leaves the device in a state where the damage is likely to increase after redistribution resulting in need of repair for a future user.
- The student/parent/guardian is responsible for any cost of repairs related to a damaged device. Principals may use their discretion for charges where malice intent and/or obvious neglect are present.

Repair	1 <sup>st</sup> Incident	2 <sup>nd</sup> Incident	3 <sup>rd</sup> Incident or neglect
Broken Screen	\$45 max	\$55 max	\$65 max
Charger	\$35 max	\$40 max	\$45 max
Broken or Missing Keys (minor damage)	\$5 per key	\$7 per key	\$10 per key
Broken or Missing Keys (major damage)	\$45 max	\$50 max	\$55 max
Top Plastic Case	\$30 max	\$35 max	\$40 max
Bottom Plastic Case	\$30 max	\$35 max	\$40 max
Battery Replacement	\$45 max	\$55 max	\$65 max

**\*\* This table is based on market conditions and is subject to change.\*\***

## Replacement Costs

- A student/parent/guardian is responsible for cost of replacement of a lost device. The replacement cost of a lost device is based on the cost of a replacement device based upon the device value. Principals may use their discretion for charges regarding a lost device.
- A student/parent/guardian is responsible for the replacement cost of any device accessories lost while in their possession. Replacement costs of device accessories are based on the price for which HCS purchases replacement accessories from 3rd party vendors. Principals may use their discretion for charges regarding lost accessories.

## Parent/Guardian Initiated Accommodations

It is the belief of HCS that every student should be granted equal access to the resources provided by the school district for learning. It is not the district's recommendation that a student be restricted access to any learning resource that is granted to all other students. If circumstances outside of school call for a student to have limited or restricted access to district-provided resources, a written request by the student's parent/guardian, in collaboration

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with a school administrator, must be placed on file with the particular school from which the parent/guardian is requesting the special accommodation. If the request is initiated by parent/guardian, then approved by a school administrator, and placed on file with the school's technology department, a student may be granted "as needed only" or "by teacher request only" access to their device, rather than having it issued into the student's possession.

## **Administrator-Initiated Accommodations**

Noncompliance with the expectations of the Responsible Use Policy can result in the loss of privilege with, or restricted access to, district-provided technology as a consequence for misuse or a safety measure for a particular student. If this is the case, a school administrator will collaborate with the student and parent/guardian to make arrangements that may deny or restrict access to the resource in question. The use of HCS technology is a privilege rather than a right and can, therefore, be taken away from a user who has displayed behavior, or a pattern of behavior, that is considered by an administrator to be potentially unsafe or unhealthy for the user, other students, staff, the technology itself, or the learning environment.

## **Disclaimer**

*HCS makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the service it is providing. HCS will not be responsible for any damages suffered by any user. Such damages include, but are not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries or service interruptions, whether caused by the school district's or the user's negligence, errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The school district specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its Internet services.*

*Portions Modified/Quoted from Lebanon Special School District, Lebanon, TN. Legal References: U.S. Const. Amend. I; Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5); Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 17 U.S.C. 101 et seq.; 20 U.S.C. 6777; G.S. 115C-325(e); HCS Board Policies; and Student Handbooks.*

**Houston County School District reserves the right to update this Responsible Use Policy (RUP) at any time deemed necessary. For the most up-to-date RUP, please visit our website [www.houston.k12.tn.us](http://www.houston.k12.tn.us).**

# Houston County School District

## TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**Houston County School District will participate in the following assessments for the 2023-24 school year.** (Tests and dates are subject to change pending Tennessee Department of Education mandates.) All schools are required to meet Annual Measurement Objectives (AMO) in achievement, as measured by these assessments.

Assessment Name	Administration Date/Window	Subject(s)	Grade(s)	Purpose
Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) End of Course (EOC) Assessments	Fall 2024 Block <i>Specific dates TBA</i>	ENG I & II, ALG I, & II, Geometry, Biology, & U.S. History	9-12 Enrolled in Course	State-mandated achievement test to measure student skills and academic performance.
	Spring 2025 Block <i>Specific dates TBA</i>			
TCAP Achievement	Spring 2025 <i>Specific dates TBA</i>	English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, & Social Studies	3-8	State-mandated achievement test to measure student skills and academic performance.
Grade 2 Achievement	Spring 2025 <i>Specific dates TBA</i>	ELA & Math	2	Optional state achievement test to measure student proficiency.
Multi-State Alternative Assessment (MSAA)	Spring 2025 <i>Specific dates TBA</i>	ELA & Math	2-8; 11	Alternative achievement measure for students with most severe cognitive disabilities.
TCAP-Alternative	Spring 2025 <i>Specific dates TBA</i>	Science & Social Studies	2-8; 10	Alternative achievement measure for students with most severe cognitive disabilities.
ACT	March 11, 2025	English, Math, Reading, Science	11	Diagnostic assessment that measures a student's readiness for college.
ACT Senior Retake	October 1, 2024	English, Math, Reading, Science	12	Diagnostic assessment that measures a student's readiness for college.

**Parents will receive an individual score report for each test their child takes. Reports will be provided once scores are finalized and sent by the appropriate agency (i.e. ACT, TDOE, Pearson, etc.). For the most up-to-date testing information, please check the school district website at: <https://www.houston.k12.tn.us/parents-students/assessment-information>**

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Answers to many questions and helpful information may be obtained from the Tennessee State Department of Education by calling 1-888-212-3162 or visiting **[www.tn.gov/education](http://www.tn.gov/education)**.

Local School Board Policies are available on the school district's website at **[www.houston.k12.tn.us](http://www.houston.k12.tn.us)**. Board policies may be created or modified throughout the school year. Online versions are considered official and will supersede any printed forms.

Erin Elementary School	931-289-3127
Tennessee Ridge Elementary School	931-721-3780
Houston County Middle School	931-289-5591
Houston County High School	931-289-4447
Houston County Virtual Academy (Grades 9-12)	931-289-5525
Houston County Adult High School/Alternative School	931-289-5525
Houston County Board of Education	931-289-4148
Houston County Schools Transportation Department	931-289-4293

## CHILD ADVOCACY GROUP

In addition to the state and local resources available to parents and children, there are many agencies and organizations that offer support, information, training, and help in advocating for persons with disabilities in Tennessee.

### **Disability Rights in Tennessee**

(800) 342-1660 Email: [GetHelp@disabilityrightstn.org](mailto:GetHelp@disabilityrightstn.org)

### **Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)**

(800) 280-7837 (English) (800) 975-2919 (Spanish) Email: [information@tnstep.org](mailto:information@tnstep.org)

### **Tennessee Voices for Children**

(800) 670-9882 Email: [info@tnvoices.org](mailto:info@tnvoices.org)

### **The Arc of Tennessee**

(800) 835-7077 Email: [info@thearctn.org](mailto:info@thearctn.org)

## TN DISABILITY SERVICES

### **Tennessee Disability Services -- Disability Pathfinder Database:**

<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vkc/pathfinder/>

### **Tennessee Department of Human Services: Disability Services:**

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/section/disability-services>

### **Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

<https://www.tn.gov/didd/>



# Houston County School District

## STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL**

### Houston County Schools Acceptable Use Agreement

Please read and/or discuss with your child the *Acceptable Use Policy*, *Technology Responsible Use Policy (RUP)*, and *Technology Reference for Parents and Students* included in the *Houston County School District Student Handbook*. In accepting this agreement, your child accepts the responsibility of using the school's computers, networks, and internet access in a responsible and appropriate manner. Your signature indicating that you have received and agreed to the guidelines is necessary before access will be allowed.

The Houston County School District supports and respects each family's decision whether or not to apply for student access and whether to terminate or suspend that access. Parents/guardians have the right to request alternative activities which do not require access to networked information resources. Access, if issued, shall remain in effect through the remainder of this school year, unless suspended or terminated by either the student, the school, or the parent/guardian.

**I have received and will discuss the *Acceptable Use Policy*, *Technology Responsible Use Policy (RUP)*, *Technology Reference for Parents and Students*, and the *Acceptable Use Agreement* with my child. My child will use technology in an appropriate and responsible manner.**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Acknowledgement (required for each student):**

- ☐ **I have received the *Houston County School District Student Handbook* which includes health/immunization notifications, attendance, discipline, and federal programs policies. I will review the information therein with my child.**

**Please read carefully and check any that apply:**

- ☐ **Please do not include my child's name, image, and/or student work in information that may be released to the public without my consent. This includes, but is not limited to:**
- Newsletters
  - Newspapers
  - District Website
  - School Website
  - Honor Roll
  - Awards
  - Promotions

- ☐ **Please do not release my child's Directory Information to the Armed Forces.**

- ☐ **I would like to opt out of the Houston County School District automated phone call notification system.**

Name of Parent/Guardian (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*Failure to sign and return the form does not relieve the student from the responsibility of complying with the rules and policies referenced in the Student Handbook.*

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