

2024/2025  
HIGH SCHOOL  
Handbook Changes

## CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN SCHOOL

Students may possess personal communication devices, such as cellular phones/smart watches, while on school property during the regular school day, **but they must be turned off and not visible or audible**, regardless of the reason, from 7:50AM – 3:05 PM. The principal or principal's designee may grant a student permission to use a personal communication device at the principal or principal's designee's discretion.

A "personal communication device" is a device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor. A staff member who discovers a student in possession of a personal communication device outside the parameters of this policy shall confiscate the device and turn it in to the main office. Students not turning the phone over to the teacher/ staff member will be subject to more severe disciplinary measures.

Students who possess a personal communication device in violation of this policy and school rules are subject to related disciplinary action. Students who use any personal communication device to violate any other school rules, official standardized testing rules, state statutes, or federal communication laws will be disciplined appropriately and referred to the appropriate outside agency/authority.

Students are not to use cell phones in any common areas of the school, including the halls or the cafeteria during school hours, unless specifically directed or supervised by school personnel. **Students are not permitted to contact parents in violation of this policy.**

The actions (or other equivalent actions) taken by administration will be as follows:

- 1) Upon the first offense, the main office will hold onto the device until the end of the school day. The student will be assigned one (1) after-school detention.
- 2) Upon the second offense, the main office will hold onto the device until the student's parents have been contacted. The administration will contact the student's parents to discuss the matter and ensure all parties clearly understand the consequences of a third offense. The device will then be handed to the student or parents and discipline decided.
- 3) Upon the third offense, the device will be confiscated and a conference with parents and student will be held to determine discipline.

**NOTE: Any student using phones to video or record other students could be subject to further disciplinary actions including immediate in-school suspension. Posting of videos on social media is strictly forbidden will result in a major disciplinary referral.**

## VIDEO CAMERAS ON PREMISES

Video cameras are located throughout the interior and exterior of the high school to assist in providing a safe learning environment for students and staff and to protect school district property and equipment.

## VISITORS

The high school welcomes and encourages visits to school by parents, adult residents, and interested educators between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 3:05 P.M. Upon arrival at the school, visitors must register at the main office where they must produce state issued identification and be given instructions. All visitor identification will be scanned and recorded for documentation. No visitor will be allowed access to students without proper clearance and approval.

## SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

The school district does have a wellness policy on record that addresses a comprehensive nutrition program, access to food and beverages at a reasonable cost, physical education, and curriculum designed to educate students on healthy habits.

## PARENT NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The district complies with all federal and state requirements for notifications.

## WEIGHTED GRADES

The two major goals related to the implementation of weighted classes are: (1) to encourage students to take more challenging courses, and (2) to reward students for their achievements in the identified challenging courses.

1) Weights of 1.1, 1.075, 1.05 and 1.025 will be applied in the identified courses when determining final grades at the end of the year. Grade point average will also be determined at this time.

2) The lowest course percentage grade to which the weight would be applied is 75% - - If the student earns a 74% or lower, no weight would be applied.

The following courses are weighted.

1.1	All Advanced Placement Courses
1.075	Pre-Calculus, Organic Chemistry, World Languages IV/V, Anatomy and Physiology
1.05	Honors Algebra II, Honors Geometry, Statistics, Chemistry II, Physics II, World Language III, English Honors 10
1.025	Honors Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology II, Chemistry I, Physics I, World Languages I and II, English Honors 9

Should changes be made in current courses, or if courses are added to the curriculum, the administration may identify additional courses to be weighted.

## FAILED COURSES

A student in grades 9-12 who fails a course required for graduation, or a student in grades 7 or 8 who fails a course needed to be promoted to the next grade level, or a student in grades 7 or 8 who fails a required subject and would rather take it during the summer than repeat it during the next school year has five available options. Any costs incurred through using any of these options are the sole responsibility of the student and parent/guardian. Any option taken must have been pre-approved by a school administrator or school counselor.

### OPTION 1

Take and pass an approved high school correspondence course offered by an accredited institution.

### OPTION 2

Take and pass an approved summer class course consisting of at least 120 hours of instruction at an approved Summer School Program.

### OPTION 3

Take and pass a course of 30 hours of individual tutoring by an approved teacher certified in the area of the course.

### OPTION 4

The District permits seniors who are failing, or anticipate failing, required courses for graduation to earn necessary credits by completing an approved tutoring or correspondence program during the last grading period of the senior year and prior to the end of the school year. Credit will be assigned if the student successfully completes the pre-approved program. The district course grade will be used in determining GPA. Students will be permitted to participate in senior-related activities, including the graduation ceremony, if they successfully complete the pre-approved tutoring program AND pass the district course during the fourth grading period.

### OPTION 5

Failing seniors who have successfully passed all required subjects but did not earn enough total credits for graduation may be tutored by a certified teacher in a subject included in the A-C Valley course catalog in order that the failing senior may fulfill the credits requirement for graduation will be permitted.

If none of the above options are utilized, the failed course will be added to the following year's schedule. This action may result in a student remaining in the same grade and/or delaying graduation.



### **ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART**

<b>Day(s) Absent</b>	<b>Action</b>
1-10 Parent Excuses	The student has <b>3 days</b> from the date of their return to submit an excuse. If no excuse is provided at that time, the absence will be marked as illegal. Students will be assigned lunch detention until the excuse is provided. After 7 days, the day is marked as permanently illegal and the student will be assigned an after-school detention.
11 or More Parent Excuses	All excuses must be provided by a doctor. Students will be assigned lunch detention until the excuse is provided. Any excuse not provided by a doctor will be deemed permanently illegal after the 3-day grace period.
20 or More absences of Any Kind	All excuses must be provided by a doctor. After 3 days from the absence; students will be assigned lunch detention until the excuse is provided. A student attendance improvement meeting will be held with parents to discuss ways to avoid further penalties.

### **Procedures for Illegal Absences**

<b>Day(s)</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	One after-school detention will be issued
2	One day of in-school detention will be issued
3	One day of in-school suspension will be issued and a referral to the SAP (Student Assistance Plan) team
4 - 5	One day of in-school suspension will be issued, SAP involvement. A SAIC meeting will be scheduled to avoid truancy charges.
6 Days or More	One day of in-school detention will be issued for every illegal absence from school. Truancy charges will be filed.

**EARLY DISMISSAL:** Dismissal from school may be considered excused (Doctor's appointment) or unexcused/ illegal ½ day/ full day from school. **NOTE: Only the Nurse can dismiss from school when a student is feeling ill. Any student using their electronic device without approval and asking parents to pick them up will receive an illegal half/ full day and be referred for a cell phone violation.**

### **Tardy to School/ Class**

The school day starts at 7:50 A.M. and ends at 3:05 P.M. Students who report to 1st period after that time will be deemed tardy. Three (3) illegal tardy to school results in a disciplinary referral. Any student providing prior notification of being tardy to school with a valid excuse will not be referred. Tardy to class requires students to be in the classroom when the bell rings. If students are tardy to class, they must sign the late slip and will be referred for disciplinary action after 3 offenses.

Days Tardy	Action
1	Warning given
2	Lunch Detention
3+	After-school Detention

## ENFORCEMENT

### 1) Students 17 years of age and younger:

Truancy Penalty: If a student's absence is ruled unexcused/illegal, the student will be considered truant. Penalties will be assigned as follows:

Unexcused absences for students aged 17 and younger are considered illegal absences. When the third illegal absence is reported for a student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian advising that all future illegal absences will result in a warrant being served on the parent/guardian by the District Magistrate.

If the attendance officer receives **prior notification** from a parent/guardian that a student will be out of school with an unexcused/illegal absence, it is possible the penalties for truancy described in paragraph "A" may be waived.

### 2) Students 18 years of age and older:

Truancy Penalty: If a student's absence is ruled unexcused, the student will be considered truant. Penalties will be assigned as described in the previous chart.

Students 18 or older are not covered by the Compulsory School Attendance Laws (Section 1327). Nevertheless, the students are expected to attend school in the same manner as those students covered under the law. Attendance below 80% may lead to denial of the student walking at graduation or participating in any extra-curricular activities. Any student failing to meet the minimum requirement for attendance will not be eligible for honor recognition.

If the attendance officer receives **prior notification** from a parent/guardian that a student will be out of school with an unexcused absence, it is possible the penalties for truancy described in "A" may be waived.

**NOTE: Any student refusing to fulfill their penalty for violation of the attendance code is ineligible for participation in any school activities beyond the classroom. This includes all extra-curricular activities, field trips, or other school sponsored activities.**

## FIELD TRIPS (SCHOOL SANCTIONED)

Field trips, when used for teaching and learning integral to the curriculum, are an educationally sound and important component of every instructional program. Field trips shall be governed by the following guidelines:

- 1) The safety and well-being of students will be protected at all times.
- 2) Parental permission is sought and obtained before any student may participate.
- 3) The administration approves the purpose, itinerary and duration of each field trip.
- 4) Each field trip is properly planned, integrated with the curriculum, and followed up by appropriate activities that enhance its value.
- 5) Students who, at the time of the trip, have a failing grade in any class may be withheld from the trip to improve their academic standing.
- 6) All missed work must be made up according to their individual teacher's discretion (See G. Make-Up Work).
- 7) Administrative discretion will be used for students who have violated the school's conduct code multiple times or who have multiple absences.

- a) Substantial interference with a student's education.
- b) Creation of a threatening environment.
- c) Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyber bullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students. The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

## **HARASSMENT**

The Allegheny-Clarion Valley School Board strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the school. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the District to maintain an educational environment in which harassment, in any form, is not tolerated.

The Board prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of students by all district students and staff members, contracted individuals and vendors, and volunteers in the schools. The Board encourages students who have been harassed to promptly report such incidents to the designated employees.

The Board directs that complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the District's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals, nor retaliation, shall occur as a result of good faith charges of harassment.

The term harassment is defined as conduct that has the intent to harass, annoy, or alarm another. This may include but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, national origins, age, or handicap/disability.

Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment occurs when a person

1. Strikes, shoves, kicks, or otherwise subject the other person to unwanted physical contact
2. Follows the other person in or about a public place.
3. Communicates to or about such other person in any lewd, lascivious, threatening or obscene words, language, drawings, or caricatures.
4. Repeatedly engages in conduct which serves no legitimate purpose.
5. Repeatedly communicates disparaging statements or opinions about an individual's physical characteristics, sexuality, mental health, or physical health/ conditions.

Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment or has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Communication of sexual harassment could include but is not limited to the following: physical contact, auditory communication, or the use of technology (personal communication devices, Internet, etc.).

Each staff member shall be responsible for maintaining an educational environment free from all forms of unlawful harassment. Any staff member who becomes aware of harassing behavior must make a report to the building principal within the day that the harassment occurs.

When a student believes that she/he is being harassed, the student should immediately inform the harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate. If the unwelcome, offensive, or inappropriate behavior continues, the student shall follow the established complaint procedure.

### Complaint Procedure

1) A student shall report a complaint of harassment, orally or in writing, to the building Principal or designated employee, who shall inform the student of his/her rights and of the complaint process.



2) The building Principal shall conduct an impartial, thorough, and confidential investigation of the alleged harassment. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred shall be investigated.

3) The building Principal shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending the disposition of the complaint which will be available to all parties involved.

#### Discipline

1) A substantiated charge against a district student shall subject such student to disciplinary action, consistent with the student discipline code, and may include educational activities and/or counseling services related to unlawful harassment.

2) If it is concluded that a student has made false accusations, such student shall be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with the student discipline code.

#### Appeal Procedure

1) If the complainant or accused is not satisfied with the Principal's decision, she/he may file a written appeal to the Superintendent.

### **TERRORISTIC THREATS/ACTS**

A-C Valley School District recognizes the danger that terroristic threats and acts by students present to the safety and welfare of district students, staff, and community. The District acknowledges the need for an immediate and effective response to a situation involving such a threat or act.

Terroristic threat shall mean a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize another, to cause evacuation of a building, or to cause serious public inconvenience, in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such a terror or inconvenience.

Students are prohibited from communicating terroristic threats or committing terroristic acts directed at any student, employee, Board member, community member, or school property.

The administration is to act promptly and appropriately to information and knowledge concerning a possible or actual terroristic threat or act.

The building Principal shall immediately begin an investigation and inform the Superintendent after receiving a report of such threat or act.

When the building Principal has evidence that a student has made a terroristic threat or committed a terroristic act, the following guidelines shall be applied:

1) The building Principal shall immediately suspend the student.

2) The building Principal shall promptly report the incident to the Superintendent.

3) Based on further investigation and consideration of previous infractions of school rules and regulations, the Superintendent may report the student to law enforcement officials and/or recommend expulsion of the student to the Board.

If a student is expelled for making terroristic threats or committing terroristic acts (1) the Board may require, prior to readmission, that the student provide competent and credible evidence indicating the student does not pose a risk of harm to others, and (2) the student, upon return to school, shall be placed on probationary status and be subject to random searches.

In the case of exceptional students, the District will take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

### **WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS**

Dangerous weapons and replicas of weapons are forbidden on school property.

No students shall knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any weapon including but not limited to: knives, cutting instruments, cutting tools, nunchaku, ice picks, explosives, machetes, firearms, shotguns, rifles, air guns, irritating or poisonous gases, poisons, Tasers, or other objects that are fashioned with the intent to use, sell, harm, threaten or harass students, staff, parents, or patrons in any school building, on any school premises, on any school bus, or off the school grounds at any school activity, event or function before, during or after school hours.

*NOT CHANGED*

environment which may be harmful to them, the District, in addition to enforcing the school's discipline policy, will strictly administer all provisions of Act 145 of 1996. Therefore, a pupil who possesses or uses tobacco in a school building, on a school bus or on school property owned by, leased by, or under the control of a school district not only violates the school's discipline policy, but also commits a summary offense.

A pupil who commits an offense under this policy shall be subject to the school penalty and be referred to the local judicial authority. Upon conviction, the pupil will be sentenced to pay a fine for the benefit of the school district and pay court costs. When a pupil is charged with violating Act 145, the court may admit the offender to an adjudication alternative in lieu of imposing the fine.

The school penalty associated with being caught with tobacco will include a suspension in addition to completing a tobacco education program. Failure to complete the program as prescribed may result in further disciplinary taken by the district.

A summary offense under Act 145 shall not be a criminal offense of record, shall not be reportable as a criminal act, and shall not be placed on the criminal record of the offending school-age person if any such record exists.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

Drug definitions shall include any alcohol or malt beverage and drug listed in Act 64 (1972) as a controlled substance, chemically abused substance, or medication for which a prescription is required under the law, and/or any substance that is intended to alter mood. Examples include but are not limited to, concentrated energy drinks, beer, wine, liquor, marijuana, hashish, anabolic steroids, chemical solvents, glue, look-alike substances, and any capsules or pills not registered with the school nurse. **No open containers of any kind are permitted in school. Sealed drinks for lunch and sealed water bottles are acceptable.**

### Reasonable Suspicion Testing

Subject to the limitations contained in this policy, the District may require any student to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has or is using prohibited drugs and/or alcohol. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific contemporaneous physical, behavioral, or performance indicators of probable drug and/or alcohol use. The requirement of a drug and/or alcohol test is within the discretion of the District and is not a prerequisite to the administration of punishment under this policy.

The following circumstances shall constitute grounds for reasonable suspicion:

- 1) Direct observation and/or confirmation by a District employee of drug and/or alcohol use or possession;
- 2) Abnormal or erratic behavior indicating intoxication;
- 3) Physical symptoms indicating intoxication including, but not limited to, glassy or bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, loss of balance, poor coordination or reflexes;
- 4) First-hand information provided by reliable and credible sources of use, possession, or intoxication;
- 5) The presence of a drug or alcohol on the student, detectable by the senses, such as the smell of marijuana or alcohol;
- 6) Possession of illegal drugs, prescription drugs for which the student does not have a prescription, alcohol containers, or drug paraphernalia.

Intoxication means being excited, stupefied, or affected by alcohol or a drug to the point where physical and mental control is diminished.

A report from any source indicating reasonable suspicion that a student may be in violation of this policy should be immediately given to a member of the administrative staff. The administrative staff member must determine that the circumstances constitute reasonable suspicion of drug and/or alcohol use before a student can be requested to take a drug or alcohol test. The administrative staff member is required to write in reasonable detail the facts, symptoms, or observations that form the basis of reasonable suspicion.



If a student appears incoherent, or appears to be in other mental or physical distress indicating danger or injury to the health and safety of the student, District personnel shall seek immediate medical attention before any other actions under this policy are taken. The health of the student shall be given priority.

Once an administrator finds reasonable suspicion, an administrator shall contact the student's parent/guardian. If that is not possible, the student will be placed immediately in ISS until a parent can be contacted. Once the parent has been contacted, the student will be released to their parents and a drug/alcohol test must be conducted within 24 hours and provide the school with a copy of the results. Failure to comply with the mandatory 24 hours will result in immediate placement in Alternative Education or referral for expulsion. The student will remain on OSS (out-of-school suspension) until the results are reviewed by both the administration and parents.

**Students not violating the D/A policy:** The student is permitted to return to the regular education environment.

### **Students found to be violating the D/A policy:**

#### **Option One:**

- 1) A student found to be violating the D/A policy within the school premises will receive an immediate nine-day (OSS) out-of-school suspension and will be reported to law enforcement officials.
- 2) The student will be referred to the SAP (Student Assistance Program) team for screening and assessment. Any recommendations from the SAP screening/ assessment are mandatory. Non-compliance will result in immediate suspension and possible expulsion.
- 3) The student will be placed in an alternative education program and/or recommended to the Board of School Directors for an expulsion hearing.

**Option Two:** Should the parent and student not agree to the terms and conditions of Option One the following will occur:

1. Withdrawal from school in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code
2. Hearing before the Board of School Directors for possible expulsion from school

Further, no student involved in a drug-related incident will be considered for readmission to school until written documentation of a drug/alcohol evaluation is provided and the student has successfully completed a rehabilitation program if the need for such a program is recommended through the screening and assessment. Any item not specifically addressed in this policy will be handled by administrative decision. The administration reserves the right to decide the best course of action for any case in question.

## **DRESS CODE**

The Student Council, faculty, and administration of A-C Valley recognize the need for students to be guided by three basic principles in regard to clothing, accessories, makeup, and hairstyles. Clothing that is hazardous to health and safety, disruptive and distractive within the educational environment, and offensive to community standards will not be permitted during the school day. The administrative team will decide whether a dress code violation has occurred by using the three pronged principles –

1. Is the dress/ item distracting
2. Does it cause a safety concern
3. Is it offensive in some way to those around him/her

**The following is a partial list of inappropriate clothing/styles which are not to be worn in the school:**

- 1) Hats, head coverings, hoods of any kind in the building.
- 2) Sunglasses (without a doctor's written order) - Sunglasses should be stored in your locker.
- 3) Hairstyles that cover eyes (use appropriate hair accessories to keep the hair out of the eyes).
- 4) Coats – All coats must be secured in the student's locker. If a student feels a classroom might be too cold, we suggest keeping a sweater or sweatshirt at school.
- 5) Any clothing that has printed material that may be considered obscene or inappropriate, including vulgarity/sex/sexual connotations (double meanings)/nudity/alcohol/tobacco/drugs and similar themes.
- 6) Clothing with holes that expose undergarments or bikini area is not permitted