

# **Student Handbook 2023-2024**



**Atlanta Area School for the Deaf  
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ATLANTA AREA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

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*"Love is the foundation upon which great teaching is built." – Unknown*

July 18, 2023

Dear Panthers,

Welcome back to a new school year filled with excitement and the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students! As we embark on this journey together, I would like to introduce our theme for this academic year: "The Superpower of Relationships is L.O.V.E.!"

At the heart of our educational mission lies the power of relationships. The connections we forge with our students, their families, and our fellow colleagues have the potential to transform lives and create a nurturing environment for growth. This year, we will embrace the superpower of relationships and harness its incredible strength to foster an inclusive, empathetic, and supportive Panthers community.

L.O.V.E. serves as an acronym that encapsulates our approach to building strong relationships. Each letter represents a fundamental aspect of our commitment to creating an environment where every person is heard, respected, and valued.

L

**Listen with Empathy:** Listening is the cornerstone of understanding. By truly listening to one another, we cultivate empathy, compassion, and a deeper understanding of each individual's unique perspectives and experiences. Let us actively listen, suspend judgment, and embrace diverse viewpoints, allowing our students and colleagues to feel seen and heard.

O

**Open Hearts and Minds:** Openness is the gateway to growth. Let us approach each interaction with open hearts and minds, willing to challenge our assumptions, learn from one another, and celebrate the rich diversity that exists within our school community. By embracing differences, we foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and appreciated.

V

**Value Each Voice:** Every voice matters. We will create spaces where everyone feels encouraged to contribute, speak their truth, and share their unique insights. By embracing the multitude of voices within our community, we unlock the full potential of collective wisdom and pave the way for meaningful collaboration and growth.

E

**Empower Through Support:** Empowerment is at the core of our mission as educators. We will provide unwavering support to our students, helping them develop the confidence, resilience, and skills they need to navigate challenges and succeed. Let us also support one another as colleagues, fostering a culture of encouragement and collaboration.



*By embracing the superpower of relationships through L.O.V.E., we will create a learning environment that goes beyond the classroom. Together, we will cultivate a sense of belonging, empathy, and mutual respect, nurturing the whole child and empowering them to become compassionate and contributing members of the Deaf community and as citizens.*

*I am excited to embark on this journey with each and every one of you. Let us remember that our actions, both big and small, have the power to make a lasting impact on the lives of our students and colleagues. Through the superpower of relationships, we will create a Panthers community that thrives on Learning Other Viewpoints Everyday.*

*Additionally, please find attached the documents pertaining to the pre-planning professional learning schedule, teaching assignments, organization chart, bell schedules, and room assignments. These materials are essential for your understanding. It is worth noting that the core leadership team has implemented modifications aimed at fostering collaboration, teamwork, and creating a harmonious educational atmosphere. However, as we strive to address staffing vacancies and ongoing auditorium renovations, it may be necessary to make further adjustments to our plans.*

*We kindly request your understanding, patience, and flexibility as we navigate these challenges and prepare for the upcoming school year. After all, that is what love is all about.*

*Thank you for your unwavering dedication, passion, and commitment to our students' growth. I look forward to an incredible year ahead!*

*See you on **Friday, July 21<sup>st</sup>**, for all returning staff. We will have our opening staff meeting on Monday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30 am!*

*With warmest regards,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive name followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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<u>Thompson</u>	<u>Kim</u>	<u>Literacy Coach</u>	<u>Student Services</u>	<a href="mailto:kthompson@doe.k12.ga.us">kthompson@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Thow</u>	<u>Andrea</u>	<u>Audiologist</u>	<u>Student Services</u>	<a href="mailto:athow@doe.k12.ga.us">athow@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Torres</u>	<u>Norma</u>	<u>Paraprofessional</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<a href="mailto:norma.torres@doe.k12.ga.us">norma.torres@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Underwood</u>	<u>Tiki</u>	<u>Assistant to Superintendent</u>	<u>Support Staff</u>	<a href="mailto:tunderwood@doe.k12.ga.us">tunderwood@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Valenza</u>	<u>Danielle</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<a href="mailto:dvalenza@doe.k12.ga.us">dvalenza@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Walker</u>	<u>Kareem</u>	<u>Food Services</u>	<u>Nutrition</u>	<a href="mailto:kareem.walker@doe.k12.ga.us">kareem.walker@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Watts</u>	<u>Tyra</u>	<u>Long Term Subsitute Teacher</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<a href="mailto:tyra.watts@doe.k12.ga.us">tyra.watts@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Watts</u>	<u>Tatyania</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>High School</u>	<a href="mailto:tatyania.watts@doe.k12.ga.us">tatyania.watts@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Weaver-Fudge</u>	<u>Michelle</u>	<u>AVTF/SEL Teacher</u>	<u>CTAE</u>	<a href="mailto:miweaver@doe.k12.ga.us">miweaver@doe.k12.ga.us</a>



<u>Wells</u>	<u>Diedre</u>	<u>Work Based Learning Teacher</u>	<u>CTAE</u>	<u>dwells@doe.k12.ga.us</u>
<u>Williams</u>	<u>Kimberly</u>	<u>SKI-HI Coordinator</u>	<u>GA PINES</u>	<a href="mailto:kimberly.williams@doe.k12.ga.us">kimberly.williams@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Wilson</u>	<u>Krystle</u>	<u>Special Education Coordinator</u>	<u>Administration</u>	<a href="mailto:kwilson@doe.k12.ga.us">kwilson@doe.k12.ga.us</a>
<u>Wolf</u>	<u>Wendy</u>	<u>Speech Language Pathologist</u>	<u>Student Services</u>	<u>wwolf@doe.k12.ga.us</u>



# SCHOOL CALENDAR 2023-2024

## Students

JULY 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

  

AUGUST 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

  

SEPTEMBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

  

OCTOBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

  

NOVEMBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

  

DECEMBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

  

JANUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

  

FEBRUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

  

MARCH 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

  

APRIL 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

  

MAY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

  

JUNE 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

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## **2023–2024 STATE TESTING SCHEDULE**

1. GKIDS 2.0  
Main Administration Dates:
  - GKIDS 2.0 Readiness Check: July 31, 2023 – October 20, 2023
  - GKIDS 2.0 (ongoing assessment): July 31, 2023 - May 13, 2024
  
2. Georgia Alternate Assessment (Grades 3-8 and 11)  
Main Administration Dates:
  - March 25, 2024 – May 3, 2024
  
3. Georgia Milestones End of Grade (Grades 3-8)  
Main Administration Dates: April 8, 2024 – May 17, 2024
  - ELA (Writing Pt. 1)
  - ELA (Reading/Language Pt. 2 and Pt. 3)
  - Math (Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)
  - Science (Grades 5 and 8 only, Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)
  - Social Studies (Grade 8 only, Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)
  - Makeup dates continue immediately after the main administration until the end of the testing window.
  
4. Georgia Milestones End of Course (High School)  
Main Administration Dates: April 15, 2024 – May 24, 2024
  - American Literature (Writing Pt. 1)
  - ELA (Reading/Language Pt. 2 and Pt. 3)
  - Algebra 1 (Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)
  - Biology (Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)
  - US. History (Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)
  - Makeup dates continue immediately after the main administration until the end of the testing window.

## **STUDENTS 18 YEARS OR OLDER**

Please note that a student that is eighteen (18) years or older and has their educational rights transferred to them as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) may make educational decisions without legal parent/guardian consent as the student is understood to be an adult.

## **ABSENCES, ATTENDANCE, AND TARDIES**

Whenever students are absent, for any reason, at least one legal parent/guardian must submit a signed and dated written explanation of the absence(s) upon the student's return to school in accordance with the written protocols shared by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee with students and their legal parents/guardians. Georgia law allows for student absences to be excused only for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Illness in immediate family
3. Death in the family
4. Recognized religious holidays
5. Absences mandated by other government agencies such as a court order
6. Serving as a legislative page (excused and counted as present)

## 7. Military deployment of a parent

Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and can result in penalty as imposed by Georgia's Compulsory Education Law and the school's Attendance Protocol Committee.

A written excuse must contain the following information:

1. Name of student
2. Date of written excuse
3. Date(s) of absence(s)
4. Phone number of the legal parent/guardian who signed the excuse
5. Reason for absence(s)
6. At least one legal parent/guardian's signature

A student is able to make up missed school assignments for an excused absence. The school-level superintendent of the school or their designee will determine what options a student has to make up missed assignments.

### DAILY PROCEDURES RELATED TO ABSENCES, ATTENDANCE, AND TARDIES

- All students will report to first (1st) period at 8:00 a.m. Attendance and homeroom responsibilities will occur during the first few minutes of the period.
- Students arriving to first (1st) period after 8:00 a.m. must have an admittance pass from the Front Desk Receptionist. Students who arrive to class without such a pass must be sent to either the Department Head or the Front Desk Receptionist.
- When a student comes late because of riding in a private car or other vehicle that is not provided by the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system), the front desk receptionist will count the student tardy.
- If the school-level superintendent or their designee recognizes a pattern of late vehicles provided by the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system) to either drop off and/or pick up students, the school-level superintendent or their designee will contact the local education agency's (LEA)/home school system special education director and inform that special education director of the pattern of late vehicles.
- If a legal parent/guardian of the student checks that student out of school early, the legal parent/guardian and the student must follow the protocols established by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee.
- Staff must report students they see on campus whose names appear on the absentee list to the Front Desk Receptionist immediately via email or through another means that is approved by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee.
- To the most practical extent possible, legal parents/guardians should inform the Front Desk Receptionist or the department head of any upcoming student events requiring a student to be absent (e.g., doctor's appointments).

Below are requirements regarding how communication to legal parents/guardians and the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system) must be implemented regarding tardies and absences from school.

### TARDIES

Note: The first and second tardy occurrences initiate at a minimum a verbal warning to the student with any other actions required by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee.

TARDIES	COMMUNICATION THAT MUST OCCUR
Third through Ninth Occurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The school-level superintendent of the school or their designee requires a designated staff member to contact the legal parents/guardians of the student.</li></ul>
Tenth Occurrence and Beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The school-level superintendent of the school or their designee must send a letter via first-class mail to the legal parents/guardians of the student and copy the special education director of the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system) regarding the number of tardies including the dates of the tardies.</li></ul>

### ABSENCES

Note: All absences require a written legal parent/guardian excuse that includes the required information included in this student handbook.

ABSENCES	COMMUNICATION THAT MUST OCCUR
Third and Fourth Occurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When three (3) and four (4) unexcused absences occur during one (1) semester, the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee must provide the legal parents/guardians of the student with a warning letter regarding the possible denial of credit.</li></ul>
Fifth Occurrence and Beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When five (5) unexcused absences and more occur during one (1) semester, the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee must send a letter via first-class mail to the legal parents/guardians of the student and the local education agency's (LEA) special education director in which the student resides (home school system) with a warning letter regarding the possible denial of credit. The letter must explain that unexcused absences of five (5) days or more shall constitute a separate offense of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law. A violation of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law shall be referred to the Juvenile Court by the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system).</li><li>The school's Attendance Protocol Committee must meet to discuss the absences and their effect on the student's learning, supports and interventions, and request for an IEP meeting to be held.</li></ul>

### PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF A STUDENT

Students must maintain a primary residence with their legal parents/guardians. If a student's address changes, the legal parents/guardians of the student must notify the School. The legal parent/guardian is required to inform the special education director of the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system) regarding any residential moves. If a student moves to a different local education agency (LEA/home school system), an IEP meeting must be held.

### BULLYING

The State Schools expressly prohibit the bullying of any person, by any means or method, at school, on school property, or at school-related functions. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to direct physical contact

such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate; and social isolation and/or manipulation.

Any student who engages in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to a staff member.
- Students can rely on staff members to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.

Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt.

Disciplinary action after an incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria, or school bus
- Reassignment of classes
- Legal parent/guardian conference
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Detention
- Conduct an IEP meeting
- Contact local authorities

#### **CAR RIDERS (AS APPLICABLE) AT THE END OF A SCHOOL DAY WHO GO HOME**

Car riders are to be picked up Monday through Friday per the directives provided by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee and must be picked up at a designated location.

#### **CAR RIDERS WHO STAY AFTER THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY (AS APPLICABLE) TO PARTICIPATE IN AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS SUCH AS TUTORING, SCHOOL ATHLETICS, AND CLUBS/ORGANIZATIONS**

The school-level superintendent or their designee must confirm with the legal parents/guardians of students (via permission forms signed by those legal parents/guardians) at what time students must be picked up when they participate in after-school activities.

#### **CHANGE OF PLACEMENT FOR A STUDENT/EXPULSION**

Only an IEP team through consensus can make a change in placement for a student. Expulsion is not permitted.

#### **CIVIL RIGHTS CONCERNS**

The State Schools require full compliance with all federal and state non-discrimination laws, including but not limited to: Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Act), Age Discrimination and Employment Act (ADEA), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001, and Public Law 101-476, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

These laws prohibit, and the State Schools forbid, discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, pregnancy, and veteran status in all State School programs and activities. This includes State School academic, extracurricular, athletic, and other State Schools programs, as well as on State Schools buses, during field trips, and in State Schools classes or training programs that take place off school grounds. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. The State Schools will uphold these laws and take discriminatory behaviors

seriously. For detailed information regarding Title IX reporting (including reports of sexual harassment), formal complaint procedures, grievance process/procedures, supportive measures, investigation, available relief, appeal rights, or for any other information regarding Title IX, please see the State Schools Title IX Grievance Process.

The Chief Policy Officer & Title IX Coordinator handles inquiries or concerns regarding the State School's non-discrimination policies. Alternatively, a parent or student may contact the school-level superintendent to share concerns. The Chief Policy Officer & Title IX Coordinator's contact information is:

Louis Erste  
Chief Policy Officer & Title IX Coordinator  
State Schools Division  
Cell Phone: 404.326.3663  
LErste@doe.k12.ga.us

Finally, discrimination complaints may also be filed directly with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, 100 Alabama Street, SW, Suite 4R30, Atlanta, GA 30303 or the U.S. Department of Education, Atlanta Office for Civil Rights, 61 Forsyth St. S.W., Suite 19T70, Atlanta, GA 30303.

### **CLASS/COURSE SYLLABUS**

Students will be provided with a class syllabus at the beginning of the school year explaining classroom procedures, expectations, and course content such as curriculum standards to be learned in the class(es).

### **CLASSROOM PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS**

Classroom parties are at the discretion of the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee.

### **CLINIC/HEALTH CENTERS**

The purpose of the Clinic/Health Center is to provide treatment of minor injuries and acute illness (i.e., severe symptoms, usually of rapid onset and short duration) of students. The Clinic/Health Center staff will provide healthcare services but should never be construed to take the place of the student's doctor or medical provider. Legal parents/guardians of students will be informed anytime a student goes to the Clinic/Health Center. If a student is injured or ill, legal parents/guardians will be requested to come to the school to pick up their child and seek medical attention as needed through their family doctor or chosen medical facility. If the school nurse, school-level superintendent of the school, or a staff member approved by the school-level superintendent of the school, deems that a student needs emergency medical services, the staff member has the authority to call for an ambulance. The legal parents/guardians of the students will be contacted immediately.

### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW**

Every legal parent/guardian of any child between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) shall enroll the child in school. All children enrolled for twenty (20) calendar days or more in public school prior to their seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) birthday shall become subject to the provisions of the compulsory attendance law. The Georgia State Board of Education's rule defines the school year as one hundred and eighty (180) days.

Any legal parent/guardian of a child shall be guilty of a misdemeanor for a violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law upon conviction. The legal parent/guardian of a child shall be subject to fines,

imprisonment not to exceed thirty (30) days, community service, or any combination of the penalties at the discretion of a court/judge.

Five (5) unexcused days and beyond require that the school-level superintendent or their designee provides a written notice to the legal parents/guardians of a student explaining that such absences shall constitute a separate offense of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law. A violation of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law shall be referred to the Juvenile Court by the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system).

### DAILY EXPECTATIONS/PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

The same expectations and consequences apply to behavior in class, the residential component if applicable to the school, off campus activities/events, or any on campus activity/event at any time.

#### Behavior Before and After School

1. Students are not allowed to roam the campus. Students are to be only in designated and supervised areas.

#### Changing Classes

1. Students should walk on the right side of the hall.
2. Students should not linger to continue conversations.
3. Students should keep an appropriate distance from the person in front of them.
4. Electronic devices are not to be used unless in accordance with school protocols.
5. Students are responsible for taking their belongings, including instructional materials, from class to class.
6. Instructional time should not be used to retrieve belongings.

#### Cafeteria Behavior

1. Students are to remain at their table until dismissed.
2. Students are not to engage in roughhousing or throwing of food items.
3. Students are to clean the area around them before they leave.
4. Students are not allowed to remove drinks or food from the cafeteria.

#### Breaks if Scheduled

1. There should be no roughhousing or running.
2. There should be no throwing of items.
3. Trash items should be discarded properly.
4. Students should not reenter the school building without staff permission.
5. Students may wear hats during break, as long as they are outside, if approved by the superintendent of the school or his/her designee.
6. Electronic devices can only be used following the protocols established by the superintendent of the school or his/her designee.

#### At All Times

1. Students must employ good manners and proper etiquette while on school property and during after-school activities/events.
2. Public displays of affection are prohibited. This is defined but not limited to kissing, inappropriate touching, and hugs that are last longer than appropriate.
3. Students will be respectful of others' rights, including fellow students and staff. Disrespectful behavior will be addressed according to school disciplinary protocols.



## DISRUPTION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL

It shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school.

## EXPULSION

Under no circumstances is a student allowed to be expelled. Changes in placement are the decision of the IEP team.

## FAILURE TO LEAVE CAMPUS

Any person who fails to leave the campus when requested and/or returns to campus after being instructed by staff or law enforcement to leave the campus is considered trespassing and can face criminal prosecution of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature in accordance with state law.

## FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Under FERPA, a school may not disclose personally identifiable information from a minor student's education records to a third party unless the student's parent has provided written consent. One of the exceptions to the prior written consent requirement in FERPA allows "school officials," including teachers, within a school to obtain access to personally identifiable information contained in education records provided the school has determined that they have "legitimate educational interest" in the information. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/parents.html>

## FOOD ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL DIETS

Legal parents/guardians of students must obtain and submit a statement from their child's doctor clearly listing any food allergies. The statement from the child's doctor must be submitted to the Clinic/Health Services. When possible, the Food Services Manager will prepare substitutions; however, the parent must prepare and provide food for students on special diets if the student needs a food supplement beyond the regularly served meals.

## FORGERY

Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages or other documentation is prohibited. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users, or deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail, is prohibited. A student bringing prohibited materials into the school's electronic environment will be subject to suspension and/or a revocation of privileges on the system and will be subject to disciplinary action. This includes falsifying signatures of others.

## GRADING

The school will send progress reports home to legal parents/guardians of students at four weeks into a quarter and report cards every nine weeks.

- **Preschool and Prekindergarten Report Cards.** The following academic letter grading scale will be used in **Preschool and Prekindergarten**:  
(P) Proficient      (NY) Not Yet      (IP) In Progress
- **Kindergarten and First Grade Report Cards.** The following academic letter grading scale will be used in **Kindergarten and First Grade**:  
(S) = Satisfactory      (N) = Needs Improvement      (U) = Unsatisfactory

- **Second Grade through Twelfth Grade Report Cards.** The following academic letter grading scale will be used in **Second through Twelfth Grade**:

(A) = 90 and above (B) = 80-89 (C) = 70-79 (D) = 69-60 (F) = 59 and below

- **Grade Point Average (GPA)** for high school students will be calculated on a five-point scale:

(A) = 4.0 (B) = 3.0 (C) = 2.0 (D) = 1.0 (F) = 0.0

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To earn a high school diploma, students must meet diploma requirements in two areas: courses and credits.

- Courses: Students must complete specific course requirements as outlined by the State Board of Education’s Graduation Rule (160-4-2-.48).
- Credits: Students must earn 23 units as a minimum state requirement for graduation.

All students will be required to complete a total of 23 units for graduation. Students will take:

- 4 units of English
- 4 units of Science
- 4 units of Mathematics
- 3 units of Social Studies
- 3 units required from: CTAE and/or Modern Language/ Latin\* and/or Fine Arts
- 1 Health/Physical Education course
- 4 additional electives

*\*Students planning to enter or transfer into a University System of Georgia institution must take two units of the same foreign language.*

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment. The Georgia Milestones EOC shall be used as the final exam in the courses assessed by a Georgia Milestones EOC. Georgia Milestones EOC reports shall provide students, parents, and educators with individual scores on each EOC taken; student scores must be recorded on, in, or with the individual student report card. The numeric score on the Georgia Milestones EOC shall count for 20% of the student’s final numeric grade in the course assessed by the Georgia Milestones EOC. Students with disabilities shall receive appropriate accommodations based on their needs and the specifications as written in their IEP.

Students will be eligible for one of the following types of secondary school credentials:

- High School Diploma – Awarded to students certifying that they have satisfied attendance requirements, unit requirements, and the state assessment requirements.
- State-Defined Alternate Diploma – Awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were assessed using the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0) and meet other requirements of the State Board Rule.
- Special Education Diploma – Awarded to students with disabilities who have not met the requirements for the High School Diploma or the State-Defined Alternate Diploma but have completed their IEP goals.
- High School Certificate – Awarded to students who have not met the requirements of a diploma.

### Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2020-2021 school year may graduate and receive a regular high school diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

- (I) completed an integrated curriculum based on the GPS that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living, and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction, and
- (II) participated in the GAA during middle school and high school, and
- (III) reached their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday OR transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time on or after the 2020-2021 school year may graduate and receive an alternate diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

- (I) completed an integrated curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction, and
- (II) participated in the GAA during middle school and high school, and
- (III) has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.

### HEALTH SCREENINGS

The Clinic/Health Services may provide vision, dental, height, and weight screenings. Trained staff members also coordinate or administer scoliosis screening, nutrition evaluation, and other health-related tests for specific age groups during the school year. The school will notify legal parents/guardians of students of scheduled screenings and screening results.

### HOMELESS CHILDREN

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et. seq.), the school shall provide an educational environment that treats homeless students with dignity and respect. Homeless students are provided with equal access to educational programs provided to other students, have an opportunity to meet state and State Schools academic achievement standards to which all students are held and are not segregated or discriminated against on the basis of their homeless status. This commitment to the educational rights of homeless children and youth applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available.

### HOMEWORK/MAKE-UP WORK

The school-level superintendent of the school or their designee will provide information to students and their legal parents/guardians regarding homework and make-up work.

### LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA)/HOME SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system) except for field trips/work-based learning opportunities coordinated and sponsored by the State School.

### MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

The Clinic/Health services staff at the school will provide appropriate control and assistance with the administration of medication to students.

1. A health services employee or trained designee will be responsible for administration of medication or assistance to the student in self-administration of medication, documentation of administration of medication, and storage of all medications in a locked cabinet.
2. The legal parents/guardians of students must complete and sign an authorization for administration of any medication at school detailing the student's name and doctor, and the medication's name, dosage, and frequency. For a prescribed medication, a doctor must also sign the authorization detailing the medication's name, dosage, time of administration, and potential side effects. The medication will be administered only in accordance with the written instructions from the prescribing doctor. The legal parents/legal guardians shall authorize the staff member assisting with the administration of medication to correspond directly with the student's doctor in the event the staff member deems it appropriate or necessary. The legal parents/guardians should also be contacted as soon as possible if this should occur. Only medical information related to this instance shall be discussed.
3. Medications and corresponding authorizations must be brought to the school office or Clinic/Health Services by a legal parent/guardian or other designated adult. In the event that a legal parent/guardian cannot bring the medication to school, it is the legal parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school in order to plan alternative methods of transport.
4. Medications must be in their original containers with unexpired dates. Prescription medications must be clearly labeled with the doctor's name, and the medication name, strength, dosage, prescription date, time for administration, and dispensing pharmacy.
5. It is the legal parent/guardian's responsibility to notify school Clinic/Health Services staff of medication side effects.
6. Under certain circumstances, a student who has a life-threatening condition (e.g., asthma, diabetes, or allergic reaction) may be granted permission by health services staff to carry medication (such as an inhaler, glucose tablet, Epi-pen, or internal insulin pump) on his or her person as approved by the student's doctor. Such permission will only be granted in response to a written statement from the student's doctor that such a need exists based on a life-threatening condition and a completed and signed authorization from the legal parent/guardian. The documentation will be kept on file in the student's official file and the Clinic/Health Services. School staff will be informed on a need-to-know basis.
7. All medications (prescription and over-the-counter medications) require appropriate authorization (legal parent/guardian and/or doctor) for each new school year or whenever there are changes in the student's medication to be administered at school.
8. Any student not complying with this guidance and possessing any medication (prescription or over-the-counter medications) on the school campus shall be subject to disciplinary action.
9. Legal parents/guardians are responsible for unused medication at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from a State School.
10. Medical consent forms must be signed by the legal parents/guardians in order for medical services to be provided. These forms will be updated each school year. It is important that staff have an up-to-date phone number for work and home or a relative or friend's number, so school staff can contact parents. For residential State Schools, in the event medications need to be ordered for a student, a local pharmacy is given the family's medical, billing, and insurance information to open an account. If the pharmacy does not accept the insurance, the medication will be ordered from the pharmacy of the legal parent's/guardian's choice. Except in emergencies, medications will not be ordered until legal parental/guardian consent is obtained. The medical form will be provided for completion. The documentation will be kept on file in the student's official file and the Clinic/Health Services office.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

The State Schools require full compliance with all federal and state non-discrimination laws, including but not limited to: Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Act), Age Discrimination and Employment Act (ADEA), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001, and Public Law 101-476 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). See *Civil Rights Concerns* above for additional information.

## **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

Special education students may be removed to out of school suspension (OSS) for up to a total of ten (10) school days for violation of the student code of conduct or school rules. The ten (10) days can be consecutive or cumulative and occur during one school year. A student cannot be suspended for more than ten (10) days without an IEP meeting.

## **PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW**

In compliance with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act, the State Schools informs parents that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of a student's teacher(s) and/or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

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

If legal parents/guardians want to request information concerning their child's teacher's or paraprofessional's qualifications, they must contact the child's school-level superintendent or their designee.

## **REPORTS TO GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

All employees of the school are mandated reporters by law in the state regarding the safety of children. That said, the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee will file confidential reports to the Georgia Department of Child Protective Services. It is against the law for the Georgia Department of Child Protective Services to divulge who submitted a report. It is also against the law for school staff to inform parents that a report has been made to the Georgia Department of Child Protective Services. School staff will not discuss filed reports with legal parents/guardians.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

Staff are committed to having a safe school. Georgia public school law authorizes schools to conduct searches and seize materials that threaten the safety of the school. Whenever reasonable suspicion exists that a student possesses unauthorized materials, contraband, drugs, or other items deleterious to the safety and welfare of the school community, staff may conduct a search under the following guidelines:

- There is reason to suspect that the student has violated school rules or that the health, safety, or welfare of students may be in danger. The school may conduct searches of individual students at any time when staff suspect the student may have violated a law or school rule. The school may

conduct a search of personal items without the student being present.

- Staff have the authority to seize illegal items (firearms, weapons, and drugs) or other possessions determined to be a threat to the safety and security of others, or that might interfere with school purposes. Students should not pick up or handle any illegal items. Touching or handling any contraband constitutes possession, even though the student does not own the item and did not bring it on school property.
- Staff have the authority to remove from a student's person items used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
- Student book bags, desks, lockers, and other school property may be subject to search without further notice to students or parents. The law authorizes schools to use "drug-sniffing" dogs or metal detectors to conduct such searches. Students are responsible for all items found in their book bags, lockers, vehicles, and desks. Where applicable, students are required to submit to the school office a key or combination for locks on their lockers.
- This law also authorizes schools to use breathalyzers if reasonable suspicion of alcohol use exists or passive alcohol sensors to determine if a student is under the influence of alcohol.
- Upon entry into a school or program that uses restraints and monitored seclusion, a student's legal parents/guardians should be notified in writing that these techniques may be used (but are only used in situations in which the students are in immediate danger to themselves or others).

### **STUDENTS BEING PICKED UP FROM SCHOOL EARLY**

The school may not release a student to any person other than legal parents/guardians or individuals the legal parents/guardians have authorized to pick up the student from school (e.g., a grandparent, other relative, childcare provider, etc.). The legal parent/guardian must notify the school in writing regarding permitting an individual to pick up a student. The school-level superintendent of the school or their designee may have additional paperwork for the legal parents/guardians to complete. Notification that a student may be picked up by an individual as approved by the legal parents/guardians will be placed at a minimum in the student's official school file at the State School. A picture ID must be presented before the student will be released.

### **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

The dress code may be amended as needed by the school-level superintendent or their designee. Exceptions to the dress code may be made for students with documented need for alternate clothing written into their IEP. Students attending job sites should dress according to the standards and/or dress policy of the employer.

Students will dress and groom themselves in such a way as to reflect neatness, cleanliness, and safety. Any apparel, which designates gangs or similar organizations, or any dress that is disruptive to the educational process is prohibited. The school-level superintendent or their designee can determine whether any particular mode of dress or grooming results in a violation of the spirit and/or intent of the dress code. Students in violation of the dress code will be given the opportunity to change into clothing they have or clothing provided by the school. Consequences will increase for students who repeatedly violate the dress code.

The following garments are not permitted:

- Clothing with suggestive or obscene wording, pictures, graphics, or mention of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or tobacco
- Clothing with inflammatory racial, cultural, or religious wording, pictures, or graphics
- Clothing with pictures or wording involving violence or the suggestion of a violent action, weapons, or the advertising of groups that by suggestion of the lyrics of their songs promote violent or inappropriate behavior
- Clothing with rips, tears, or holes in inappropriate areas

- Hats/caps, headscarves (except for religious reasons), bandannas, sweatbands, sunglasses, and gloves may not be worn by either boys or girls in the school buildings
- Undergarments may not be exposed
- Shorts, dresses, and skirts must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee
- See-through mesh shirts or see-through clothing of any kind
- Revealing clothing of any kind
- Spandex shorts or skirts
- Tank tops and tops with “spaghetti straps” and/or low armholes
- School officials may ask students to remove distractive piercing
- Additional items approved by the school-level superintendent of the school

A student may appeal a decision by a staff member regarding a potential violation of the dress code by requesting to meet with the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee.

## TECHNOLOGY USE

### Cell Phone/Smart Phone Use

While cell phones can be an important communication and safety device for families, their use during the school day may be prohibited and can be quite disruptive.

Cell phones/smart phones containing evidence of potential criminal activity, including types of pornography, may be permanently confiscated, and provided to law enforcement. Students who use cell phones or visual recording devices to participate in inappropriate behavior or film inappropriate activity at school or to violate someone’s privacy may also be charged with a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Behaviors that could result in disciplinary action include but are not limited to: sending or showing an inappropriate picture/video to another (other than a staff member); sending or showing a picture/video of a student's misconduct to another (other than a staff member); or knowingly viewing an inappropriate picture/video on another's device. Students charged with violating the Student Code of Conduct may have the device confiscated by the school-level superintendent or their designee. The school is not responsible for electronic devices on school property or at school sponsored events.

### Harassment and Inappropriate Technology Use

Legal parents/guardians should have a serious conversation with their child about the harmful effects of sending out inappropriate videos, pictures, or information, or using technology to harass or threaten someone. Students should also be told about the serious emotional, educational, and criminal impact that harassing, bullying, threatening another, or sending or viewing sexually explicit information may have. Georgia law and the Student Code of Conduct permit serious consequences for students who engage in these behaviors. For instance, these behaviors can result in a report to local authorities, suspension, criminal charges for terroristic threats or child pornography, and an IEP meeting.

### Social Networking Web Sites

Social networking websites and applications such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat or Facebook can become a hurtful or dangerous place for students if left unsupervised. Students may be sharing information or acting upon negative information that they have posted or read. This creates disruptions to student relationships and the learning environment. Legal parents/guardians should talk with their child about the importance of never posting or sharing something mean, hurtful, profane, or obscene online or through other technology.

### Recommendations

Legal parents/guardians having open communication and being able to access and review the content of their child's social media accounts, internet use, and cell phone use is a step in the right direction for student safety. Legal parents/guardians should be aware that students might share personal information that jeopardizes their safety such as: suggestive photos, substance use, weapons, personal cell numbers, personal diary or blog, or current location. Online predators may use this information to search for potential victims. These predators may also pose as teenagers or young adults in order to establish relationships with young people. The support of legal parents/guardians is critical in keeping students safe.

### State Schools Issued Device Fines

If the school issues devices (e.g., tablets, laptops, and computer accessories) to students, fines will apply for lost, stolen, damaged, or destroyed items.

### Failure to Return a Device or Accessories:

A student who fails to return a device or any accessories or peripherals will be responsible for the full replacement cost of the item that was not returned. Please note that while a family may purchase insurance for a device or have homeowner's insurance that may cover the device the school will not be responsible for communicating with any insurance provider. Legal parents/guardians remain solely responsible for paying fees directly to the school.

## **TEENAGE/ADULT DRIVERS RESPONSIBILITY ACT (TAADRA)**

According to the Teenage Driver Responsibility Act which is a state law, students must obtain a Certificate of Attendance from the State School they attend in order to obtain a driver's license in Georgia. During the school year, the school issues Certificates of Attendance. The Certificate of Attendance shall be signed by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee and must be notarized. The Certificate of Attendance is valid for thirty (30) days from the signed date by the school-level superintendent of the school or their and notary.

A Certificate of Attendance will not be issued for a student under the age of 18 who drops out of school without graduating, a student that has remained out of school for ten (10) consecutive school days, a student that has more than ten (10) school days of unexcused absences in the current academic year, or a student that has ten (10) or more school days of unexcused absences in the previous school year. Notice will be given by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee to the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety pursuant to state law, and a student's driver's license or ability to receive a driver's license or learner's permit will be suspended for one (1) year if the student encounters any of the aforementioned attendance issues.

If a student has been found in violation of one of the following offenses, has received a change in placement for committing one of the following offenses, or has waived their right to a hearing and pleaded guilty to one of the following offenses, a violation of TAADRA will be considered to have occurred. The school-level superintendent of the school or their designee will report the following violations to the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety:

- Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel
- Possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school sponsored event
- Possession or use of a weapon in accordance with Georgia law on school property or at a school sponsored event
- Any sexual offense prohibited under Georgia law
- Causing substantial physical or visible bodily harm to or seriously disfiguring another person per Georgia law



A student can reapply for their learner's permit or driver's license after a period of one (1) year or when the student becomes 18 years old, whichever comes first, if there is a violation of TAADRA.

### **TITLE IX AND EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

In accordance with the provisions of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the State Schools do not discriminate against students on the basis of gender in the educational programs and activities that it operates. No student shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic, extracurricular, or other educational program or activity operated by this School.

The State Schools believe that all students should be able to enjoy an educational environment free from all forms of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment undermines the integrity of the educational environment. It is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. The State Schools are committed to upholding these laws and takes discriminatory behaviors seriously. Therefore, State Schools policy prohibits even acts of sexual harassment that may not rise to the level of a violation of federal law.

For detailed information regarding Title IX reporting (including reports of sexual harassment), formal complaint procedures, grievance process/procedures, supportive measures, investigation, available relief, appeal rights, or for any other information regarding Title IX, see the *State Schools Title IX Grievance Process*.

### **VANDALISM**

Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment or materials, data of another user of the system, any of the schools or other networks to which the system has access, or the physical campus is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of guidelines and potential criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Vandalism as defined above will result in the cancellation of system use privileges, possible prosecution, and will require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, hardware, software, and facility repairs.

Students who are issued school property (library books, textbooks, magnifiers, calculators, laptops, electronic devices, etc.) shall be personally responsible for the well-being and return of all school property assigned to them. Failure to return the property or damage to the property can result in the student being required to make restitution, which shall be determined by the administrators.

### **VISITOR ACCESS TO CAMPUS**

#### **LEGAL PARENTS/GUARDIANS:**

Legal parents/guardians are welcome on campus in accordance with the State Schools Visitor policy that limits visits to no more than 30 minutes two times a week unless visitation is for a school sponsored event which lasts longer (e.g., a school play, awards day, etc.). The school-level superintendent or their designee may adjust the visitation time limit based upon extenuating circumstances. During school hours, legal parents/guardians must have prior approval from the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee to meet with a staff member or members. Legal parents/guardians must sign in at the front office located in the administrative building. Once signed in and a visitor's pass is given, the individual(s) that a legal parent/guardian are visiting will be informed of the arrival.

#### CAMPUS TOURS:

If a person would like a campus tour, the person must schedule it with at least a (2) two-day advance notice by contacting the School.

#### GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR VISITORS:

Other visitors must adhere to the aforementioned visitor protocols unless a change to visit duration is approved by the school-level superintendent of the school or their designee. At no time will such visitors be left alone with students unless there is legal documentation in place that would allow for it (memorandum of understanding, GaDOE approved agreement, clear background check, GaDOE approved contract, etc.) For example, the school might have an approved agreement for a college to provide student teachers with practicum placements that will allow student teachers to work alone with students.

Georgia law requires that visitors, with the exception of students, school employees, law enforcement officers or other public safety officials in the performance of an emergency call, shall sign in at the designated location, as stated on posted signs of any school building, between the official starting and dismissal times and provide a reason for their presence at the school.

Any staff member shall have the authority to ask any visitor to explain his or her presence on campus at any time if the person is unaccompanied by another staff member or is not wearing a visitor badge. Any person who does not have legitimate need or cause to be on school property and/or who fails to sign-in at the designated location may be in violation of Georgia law and may face criminal prosecution.

#### WITHDRAWAL

- The school will make every reasonable effort to contact the student and their legal parents/guardians long before the student misses ten (10) consecutive school days using the protocols included in this handbook. This can include but is not limited to sending letters, phone calls, home visits, and the involvement of the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system).
- If the legal parent/guardians provide notice stating that they are withdrawing their child, the school-level superintendent or their designee will send the parents/legal guardians withdrawal paperwork to be completed and returned to the school. The school-level superintendent or their designee will contact the special education director in the local education agency (LEA) in which the student resides (home school system) informing them that the student has been withdrawn.

## Appendix: Teacher Reporting Information

A teacher has the authority, consistent with State Schools policy and applicable law, to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or designee to maintain discipline in the classroom.

Any teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior which violates the student code of conduct and repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn should file a report of such behavior with the school-level superintendent or their designee. The school-level superintendent or their designee and teacher should thereafter follow the procedures set forth in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. 20-2-737-738.

Student behavior which violates state or federal laws as specified in O.C.G.A. 20-2-1184 will result in a report being filed with the police and district attorney.

The school-level superintendent and/or their designee shall develop procedures and guidelines as necessary for implementation of this policy and law.

### Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors

The State Schools adhere to the requirements found in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7 and the Professional Standards Commission's state mandated process for students to follow reporting instances of alleged inappropriate sexual behavior by a school employee. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, or other inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator or other State Schools employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at their school.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5, if a student has allegedly been abused a report of such allegation will be made immediately.

Any report of behavior contemplated in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184 will be made to the appropriate school-level superintendent or their designee who will report the matter to the local district attorney's office.

Behaviors that include Title IX regulations will be addressed using the State Schools Title IX Grievance Process.

## Appendix: Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact the State Schools Section 504 Coordinator at:

**Jan E. Stevenson**

*Special Education Director, State Schools*

Division of State Schools

Phone: 470-263-9731

[jstevenson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jstevenson@doe.k12.ga.us)

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. A student has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet their individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. A student has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their legal parents/guardians. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. A student has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. A student has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
5. Legal parents/guardians have the right to not consent to the State Schools request to evaluate their child. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. Legal parents/guardians have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
7. Legal parents/guardians have the right to ensure that the State Schools will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
8. Legal parents/guardians have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by an IEP team through consensus, including persons knowledgeable about their child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. If a student is eligible under Section 504, the student has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement through the IEP process. 34 CFR 104.35.

10. Legal parents/guardians have the right to prior notice to any actions by the State Schools regarding the potential identification, evaluation, and/or placement of their child. 34 CFR 104.36.
11. Legal parents/guardians have the right to examine their child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. Legal parents/guardians have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the State Schools actions regarding their child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in any hearing/IEP meeting and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. If legal parents/guardians disagree with the decision of an impartial hearing officer (school board members and other State Schools employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), they have a right to a review of that decision according to the State Schools impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. Legal parents/guardians have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

#### Section 504 Procedural Safeguards

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

**Hearing Request:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

- The name of the student
- The address of the residence of the student
- The name of the school the student is attending
- The decision that is the subject of the hearing
- The requested reasons for review
- The proposed remedy sought by the grievant
- The name and contact information of the grievant

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

2. **Mediation:** The State Schools may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in their Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and State Schools must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the State Schools will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.
3. **Hearing Procedures:**
  - A. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
  - B. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or the State Schools, the impartial review official, at their discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
  - C. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
  - D. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at their own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, they must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
  - E. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims they may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e., a recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the State Schools, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
  - F. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
  - G. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
  - H. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
  - I. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the

hearing.

- J. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
  - K. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
  - L. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of State Schools unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports their claim.
  - M. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
4. **Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
5. **Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

## Appendix: Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the State Schools receives a request for access.

Legal parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to the school-level superintendent a written request that identifies the education records they wish to inspect. The school-level superintendent will make arrangements for access and notify the legal parents/guardians or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected or retrieved.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the legal parents/guardians or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading.

Legal parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school-level superintendent, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the legal parents/guardians or eligible student, the school must notify the legal parents/guardians or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a school approved volunteer; a person or company that is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of education records and with whom the school has contracted or who volunteers to perform a service or function for which the school would otherwise use employees (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or insurance adjuster); or a legal parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school will disclose educational records, without consent, to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the State Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is the Student Privacy Policy Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20212-5920.
5. The school may disclose appropriately designated "directory information," for educational and legal compliance purposes, to governmental agencies and offices (including the U.S. Armed Forces) to non-profit entities for school support purposes, or to educational technology providers as deemed appropriate by the school to access educational services, without written consent, unless the legal parents/guardians have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with the below procedures.



- The school also may include personally identifiable information in school publications such as a playbill showing a student's role in a drama production; the annual yearbook; graduation videos or graduation announcements/celebrations; honor roll or other recognition lists; graduation programs; and sports event publications, such as a football game program.
- The school and teachers may also display directory information on school, personnel, classroom or school websites, blogs, or social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or similar) for the purposes of instruction, recognizing student achievement or informing the community about school, classroom, or school activities and events.
- Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information includes a student's name, address, email address(es), phone number(s), date and place of birth, grade level, dates of attendance and most recent previous school attended, degrees/honors/awards received, photograph/peripheral student images or audio (see information below), participation in school activities and sports (as well as weight and height of members of athletic teams), student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems (subject to the State Schools determination that this information cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc.--a student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose), or similar information.
- The school records and maintains audio recordings and video or photographic footage and audio recordings of students on school property and at school events in locations including, but not limited to, parking lots, school buses, lunchrooms, classrooms, and hallways. Such information is used and maintained for security and other purposes, including yearbooks, video yearbooks, and school/personnel publications and websites, blogs, or social media. In many cases, recordings contain peripheral video or photographic footage of students engaged in day-to-day activities including, but not limited to, walking to class, and attending classroom or school activities.
- Peripheral video footage, photographic images, or audio recordings of day-to-day student activities do not include footage of a student or students committing, being involved in, or witnessing a violation of law or school rule, procedure, or policy. The school may also determine that other activities do not qualify as peripheral images, footage, or recordings on a case-by-case basis.

**Legal parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age or a student 18 years of age or older objecting to the release of this information should request a form from the school-level superintendent or their designee in order to place their objection in writing to the school-level superintendent, no later than August 31<sup>st</sup> of each school year or within ten calendar days of the student's placement at the school.**

- **Objections must be renewed each school year.**

**Appendix: COMPULSORY EDUCATION O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1**

Every legal parent/guardian or other person who has control of any child between the ages of 6 and 16 must enroll and send their child to school. Any legal parent/guardian or other person having control of a child that has more than 5 unexcused absences, after being notified by school personnel, will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to the processes of the Local Education Agency (LEA), the home school system in which the student resides, that include the following penalties:

- Fine – not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100
- Imprisonment – not to exceed 30 days
- Community Service – or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of a court
- Each day absent after 5 unexcused absences will constitute a separate offense

Additional information on unexcused absences and consequences are outlined in the Student of Code of Conduct.

## Appendix: NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA affords legal parents/guardians certain rights regarding conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

**Consent** before student's is required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
3. Sex behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

**Receive** notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding,
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law, and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise, distribute the information to others.

**Inspect**, upon request and before administration or use:

1. Protected information surveys of students,
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the legal parents/guardians to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The school maintains policies or procedures, in consultation with parents/guardians, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

The school will directly notify legal parents/guardians of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The school will also directly notify (such as through U.S. Mail, e-mail, or hand delivery) legal parents/guardians of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the legal parents/guardians to opt their child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The school will make this notification to legal parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year if the school has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, legal parents/guardians will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys.

Legal parents/guardians will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening as described above.

Legal parents/guardians who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Student Privacy Policy Office, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920.

## Appendix – State Schools Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education End of Pathway Assessments Privacy Notice

The school values providing students with authentic learning experiences and instruction through its Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Pathway curriculum. As part of this endeavor, the Georgia Department of Education and the school have collaborated to provide students with the opportunity to gain valuable industry credentials before completing high school. This occurs through the student's voluntary and optional completion and passing of the End-of-Pathway Assessment, which may be a national industry certification, national occupational assessment, state licensing assessment, or a state-developed assessment to gauge the student's attainment of critical industry, technical, or career-related skills and knowledge.

These certification exams and assessments are offered primarily for adults by external licensing and accrediting organizations, and they may require the submission and collection of information about the student wishing to gain certification as required by their industries' accrediting procedures. This is a normal component to gaining certification in most industries.

If the student chooses to take the End-of-Pathway Assessment to gain certification, it is with the understanding that the student is voluntarily agreeing to the collection of data necessary to grant the student the certification.

## Appendix - COPPA NOTICE

The school uses software, applications, and online tools to facilitate learning. There are federal regulations that apply to operators of many of these products.

For students to use these tools, certain personal information must be provided to the operator. Under the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), these operators must provide notification and obtain consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13.

However, the school may act on behalf of the legal parents/guardians and can consent to the collection of students' information on the legal parent's/guardian's behalf. For more information on COPPA, please visit <http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/coppafaqs.shtm>.

The school is providing this notice that staff will provide consent to allow an account to be created for students, and to allow information about students to be shared with certain software, application ("app"), or online providers.

If there are any questions about school-level providers, please contact the school-level superintendent.

If legal parents/guardians wish for the school to provide consent on behalf of the legal parents/guardians, they should contact your school-level superintendent.

**PARENT AND STUDENT RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM  
(MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL)**

We have received the Student Handbook and all included documents and understand that we are responsible for reading and understanding this information. Parents are responsible for ensuring their student(s) understand this information.

We also understand that this Student Handbook contains information about possible legal consequences if a child does not attend school as required by Georgia law in § 20-2-690.1. If a child has more than five (5) unexcused absences, legal parents/guardians or other persons who have control or charge of a child are subject to fines, imprisonment, community service, or any combination of these penalties.

We understand that this handbook contains information about opting out of the Georgia Department of Education's Georgia Student Health Survey II (GSHS II) and that if we do not "opt out" our child from survey participation, a student could be selected to complete a survey on or after October 2, 2022.

We understand that all volunteers who work with children in the state of Georgia are required by law to report suspected child abuse as required by Georgia law in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5.

We understand that each student will be provided one copy of this Student Handbook. Anyone requiring an additional copy should contact their school-level superintendent or their designee.

If I/we have any questions about the enclosed information, I/we will ask a school administrator to discuss those questions. Failure to sign and return this form does not relieve me/us or my/our child(ren) from complying with and understanding the information enclosed in the Student Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (if over 10 years old)