

Rockdale County Public Schools

Discipline Code of Conduct

The Rockdale County Board of Education (“Board”) has the authority and reserves the right to develop and implement a Discipline Code of Conduct (“Code”) for all students. The code focuses on creating a safe, supportive, and secure learning environment that promotes academic, social, and emotional development for all students. Administrators in Rockdale County Public Schools may develop and create additional rules and regulations as are necessary to manage their schools. The Code shall apply to students from their arrival on school property until their departure from school property. The term “school property” means all property owned, rented, or used by the Board, including but not limited to school buses and other modes of transportation.

The Code may also apply to students who are not on school property if the student engages in misconduct that could or does create a direct or potential danger or disruption to the general welfare and discipline of the school or other students. Additionally, the Code shall apply to students when they are at school functions, activities, events, or under the supervision of the school.

Reasonable efforts will be made to use a behavior support process to avoid student disciplinary problems. These efforts may include but are not be limited to school-based counseling, Student Support Team (“SST”), social and emotional behavior programs, referral to community agencies, prevention and intervention services, mentoring, alternative counseling education and nurturing programs.

Parents/Guardians and students are advised that school administrators, teachers and coaches will take a student's disciplinary history into account when disciplinary action is required.

Within each school, assistant principals, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, media specialists, or any other adult in a supervisory role over students have the responsibility to maintain order and enforce this Code. The principal of the school has the ultimate responsibility and authority to oversee the application, interpretation, and enforcement of the Code according to policy and regulations.

Rockdale County Public Schools will strive to:

1. Provide a quality public education to all students.
2. Provide a safe learning environment where students and parents/guardians are treated courteously, fairly, and respectfully.
3. Provide students and parents/guardians with an opportunity to express their opinions, concerns, and complaints in a respectful manner.
4. Address known concerns of students and parents/guardians in a timely and professional manner.
5. Notify students and parents/guardians about policies and procedures of Rockdale County Public Schools.

Rockdale County Public Schools expects each student to:

1. Read and become familiar with the Code of Conduct.

2. Behave in a responsible manner and follow the Code while at school, on school buses, at school bus stops, and at all school related functions on and off campus.
3. Take ownership of your school community and work to improve your school community by cooperating with other students, staff, and volunteers.
4. Be courteous and respectful to others, even if you disagree with them.
5. Attend all scheduled classes, regularly and on time.
6. Prepare for each class by completing assignments and having required materials.
7. Communicate with their parents/guardians about their academic progress and ask for help if needed.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Rockdale County Public Schools expects each parent/guardian to:

1. Read and become familiar with the Code of Conduct and discuss the Code with their student.
2. Make sure their student attends school regularly, on time, and notifies the school before the start of the school day if their student is going to be absent.
3. Give the school accurate and current contact information and update their contact information as necessary.
4. Inform school administrators and teachers about any concerns in a respectful and timely manner.
5. Work with their student's school-based team to help their student find academic and behavior success.
6. Support their student's learning and school activities.
7. Work to improve the school community by being respectful and courteous to school personnel, other parents/guardians, and students.
8. Respect other students' privacy rights.

School-Sponsored Clubs and Organizations

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-705, parents/guardians may decline permission for his or her student to participate in a club or organization. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact their respective schools to review the complete list of clubs/organizations offered at the school site. Additional information relative to costs associated with individual clubs as well as club sponsorship is available at school sites. Parents/legal guardians may withhold permission for students to join or participate in a club or organization. If you do not want your child to participate in any clubs or organizations, please complete the opt-out form, "Withhold Permission to Participate in Clubs and Organizations" and return it to your school within the first 15 official days of the school year or within 15 days of being provided access to the Student Discipline Code of Conduct. This form is available on the school system's website (www.rockdaleschools.org) under the forms link or from your school's office.

Informing Children of Criminal Penalty

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735, parents/guardians are encouraged to inform their children on the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

In accordance with O.C.G.A § 20-2-751.2, a local board of education which has a student who attempts to enroll or who is enrolled in any school in its school system during the time in which that student is subject to a disciplinary order is authorized to refuse to enroll or subject that student to short-term suspension, long-term

suspension, or expulsion for any time remaining in that other school system's or school's disciplinary order upon receiving a certified copy of such order if the offense which led to such suspension or expulsion in the other school system or school was an offense for which suspension or expulsion could be imposed in the enrolling school.

Teacher Authority/Responsibility

Teachers have the authority to remove from his or her class a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn. Local school administrators shall establish at each school at least one Placement Review Committee who will have the authority to do the following:

1. Return the student to the teacher's class upon determining that such placement is the best alternate or the only available alternative; or
2. Refer the student to the principal (or designee) for appropriate action.

For each committee established, the faculty shall choose two teachers to serve as members and one teacher to serve as an alternate member and the principal shall choose one member of the professional staff of the school to serve as a member. The teacher withholding consent to readmit the student may not serve on the committee. Teachers who have knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is a violation of the student code of conduct, are required to file a report with the principal. Such report shall not exceed one page in length and shall include a description of the behavior.

Behavior Code

The philosophy of Rockdale County Public Schools is that all students have the right to learn. RCPS supports this goal by giving each student access to a safe and secure learning environment. The Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct for Students establishes guidelines that help create an atmosphere where students can maximize their learning opportunities.

RCPS developed the Code of Conduct to help school administrators create a safe learning environment where students receive fair and consistent discipline if they violate the Code. This Code of Conduct is designed to allow for flexible application between the elementary, middle, and high school levels. This Code applies to students in virtual and in-person educational settings, which includes virtual and in-person school sponsored events and activities. The purpose of the Code is to help students learn how to take ownership of their learning ownership, to help students prevent problem from reoccurring, and to keep parents informed of misbehavior. The administration of discipline should be fair and consistent and school administrators should issue discipline in a progressive manner, when appropriate. The level of discipline imposed should be based on the severity of the misbehavior, include a consideration of the student's behavior history, and the age of the student. Parents/Guardians and students are advised that a student's behavior history will be taken into account when behavior action is required. The welfare of and respect for the individual student, as well as that of other students in the school, are of utmost importance in deciding proper courses of action.

The purposes of disciplinary action in our schools are to demonstrate to students how they must have ownership of the problem, to help the student prevent the problem from reoccurring, and to keep parents informed of misbehavior. The administration of discipline will be as fair and consistent as possible. Discipline will be administered in a progressive manner, when appropriate, and it will draw on the professional judgment of educators and administrators. The level of discipline imposed will be based on the severity of the misbehavior and consideration of student's disciplinary history. Parents/Guardians and students are advised that administrators will take a student's disciplinary history into account when disciplinary action is required. The welfare of and respect for the individual student, as well as that of other students in the school, are of utmost importance in deciding appropriate discipline, which may include a range of discipline management, alternative resolutions, and positive behavior techniques.

The following discipline procedures are outlined to ensure that all students are aware of the actions that violate school rules and the consequences of such actions. This list is not all-inclusive and Rockdale County Public Schools reserves the right to modify the Code in its sole discretion and as required by law. **Please visit www.rockdaleschools.org for the most up-to-date copy of the Code.** You may also obtain a copy of the Code of Conduct by visiting the front office of your child's school. A student committing an act of misconduct not listed will be subject to the discretionary authority of the administrator. Any violations warranting in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS) shall result in a loss of privileges consistent with the duration of the suspension. Loss of privileges includes but is not limited to participation in athletic events (games/practices), afterschool activities, field trips, or any other school-related functions not related to classroom instructions.

When a Code of Conduct violation is reported or suspected, the principal (or designee) will determine the best way to investigate the allegation. If the principal (or designee) deems appropriate, the investigation may include interviewing employees and students for relevant information. The principal (or designee) has the responsibility and authority to question students about alleged violations of the Code of Conduct to maintain the safety and order of the school environment. An administrator does not need prior parent/guardian permission or notice to interview or collect witness statements from students. If appropriate, an administrator will try to notify parents/guardians about the interviews and/or the collection of witness statements. An administrator's failure to inform a parent/guardian will not be a defense to the admissibility of the interview and/or witness statement. If the principal (or designee) deems appropriate, the investigation may include reviewing and securing a copy of school video surveillance or student-created videos, images, texts, or other media that captures the alleged violation.

The principal (or designee) will contact the parents/guardians at an appropriate time during or after the investigation. Administrators reserve the right to contact emergency medical services if a student is injured during or after an alleged violation of the Code of Conduct. Georgia law may require administrators to contact law enforcement if alleged misconduct violates criminal law. In either instance, administrators will strive to contact parents/guardians as soon as practical.

Parent involvement is necessary for correcting behavioral problems. Disciplinary actions may include any or all the consequences addressed in this Code of Conduct. Any student who receives 15 or more cumulative days of suspension for disciplinary reasons or who is guilty of violation of Rule 27 of this Discipline Code of Conduct may be recommended to the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee for possible long-term suspension or expulsion. Once a student has appeared before a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee, the principal is

authorized to request another hearing at any future time during the student's educational career in the school system.

A student who is suspended / expelled from school may not be on any property owned or leased by Rockdale County Public Schools, including school buses and bus stops, during the term of his/her suspension / expulsion without the prior written permission of school authorities. A violation of this directive could result in a charge of trespass and additional disciplinary action.

This Discipline Code of Conduct applies to all students, K-12, enrolled in the Rockdale County Public Schools. The Discipline Code of Conduct shall not infringe on any right provided to students with Individualized Education Programs pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), or any other applicable federal and state policies, procedures, and regulations, including those established by Title IX of the Civil Rights Act. Copies of the Discipline Code of Conduct shall be available in each school and in each classroom will have access to the Code of Conduct. The most up-to-date version of the Code of Conduct shall be on the district/school website (www.rockdaleschools.org). The content of the Discipline Code of Conduct shall be explained to all students at the time of their enrollment in a manner deemed appropriate by the school administrator. Parents/Guardians and students are provided a form for signatures, acknowledging receipt and review of their individual copy of the Discipline Code of Conduct.

As a school leader and a role model for other students, each student shall pledge the following:

- I shall conduct myself with propriety, dignity, morality, integrity, honesty, and consistency with the student code of conduct and all policies of the Rockdale County Board of Education;
- I shall not engage in any activity likely to bring reproach, disgrace, infamy, or public ridicule to myself, my school, or the school system; and,
- I shall adhere to this pledge at all times including when on campus, at school-related events, and off campus.

Part I ~ Substantive Rules

Rule 1	Disruption and Interference with School
Rule 2	Damage, Destruction, or Theft of School Property
Rule 3	Damage, Destruction, or Theft of Private Property
Rule 4	Assault and/or Battery on a School Employee
Rule 5	Fighting and/or Battery to a Person Not Employed by the School
Rule 6	Bullying/Teasing
Rule 7	Weapons and Dangerous Instruments
Rule 8	Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages, Stimulant Drugs, Controlled Substances or Medications
Rule 9	Disregard of Directions or Commands
Rule 10	Unexcused Absences and Tardiness
Rule 11	Dress and Grooming
Rule 12	Parking and Traffic-Related Violations on Campus
Rule 13	Refusal to Accept Disciplinary Action

Rule 14	Use of Profane, Vulgar, or Obscene Words, Gestures, Pornographic/Vulgar Materials or Actions Which Disrupt School System Operations
Rule 15	Gambling on School Property or at a School Function
Rule 16	Misbehavior on Bus
Rule 17	Criminal Law Violations
Rule 18	Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Display of Affection
Rule 19	Rude and Disrespectful Behavior
Rule 20	Tobacco/Smoking-Related Offenses
Rule 21	Cheating, Plagiarism, or Academic Dishonesty
Rule 22	Altering Records, Misrepresenting Information, Forgery
Rule 23	Misuse of Computer, Network, Internet, or Intranet
Rule 24	Loitering, Trespassing, or Breaking and Entering
Rule 25	Other Misbehavior
Rule 26	Misbehavior While Off School Property
Rule 27	Cumulative Offenses

Disciplinary Actions

Some of the disciplinary actions that may be used for student violations of the Code of Conduct include but are not limited to the following:

- Verbal or Written Warning
- Removal from Classroom
- Removal from Bus
- Referral to Principal's Office
- Parent Conference
- Student Behavior Contract
- Detention Before or After School Hours
- Reassigned to Another Class
- Transfer to Alternative Placement
- Suspension or Removal from Extracurricular Activity
- In-School Suspension
- Short-Term Suspension
- Long-Term Suspension
- Expulsion
- Permanent Expulsion
- Referral to Law Enforcement
- Combination of any of the above

A student in Pre-K through third grade cannot be assigned to out-of-school suspension for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first receiving support through a multi-tiered system such as response to intervention, unless the student possesses a weapon or other dangerous instrument, illegal drugs, or the behavior endangers the physical health of other students or employees.

Range of Recommended Disposition

Administrators will use a preponderance of the evidence standard to determine if a violation of the Code of Conduct occurred. Under this standard, a student has violated the Code of Conduct if the available evidence establishes that a violation occurred more likely than not.

Level I Discipline – any combination of in-school (ISS) or out-of-school (OSS) suspensions ranging from one (1) to five (5) days;

Level II Discipline – any combination of in-school (ISS) or out-of-school (OSS) suspensions ranging from one (1) to ten (10) days; or on a case-by-case recommendation for long term suspension and expulsions;

Level III Discipline – up to a 10-day out-of-school suspension pending a disciplinary hearing for long-term suspension, placement in an alternative program, or permanent expulsion.

Discipline Rule		Maximum Recommended Disposition
Rule 1: Disruption and Interference with School		
1.1	A student shall not block any entrance, occupy any school building, prevent any class or function from taking place, prevent any student, guest, or employee from using any facilities, or block any normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic, or otherwise deprive others of free access to, or use of, any facility, program, or activity associated with the Rockdale County schools. Georgia law prohibits the upbraiding, insulting, or abusing of any teacher, administrator, or bus driver upon the premise of any school in the presence and hearing of a student.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. CHOICES program in lieu of suspension.
1.2	A student shall not cause false fire alarm or discharge a fire extinguisher in the absence of fire.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days.
1.3	A student shall not intentionally make noise, engage in horseplay, or act in any other manner to interfere seriously with the teacher's ability to conduct his/her class.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days
1.4	A student shall not bring toys, games, radios, laser pointers, or other electronic devices to school. Electronic devices will be confiscated and may be redeemed by student's parent/guardian in the front office. The school system accepts no liability for confiscated electronic devices.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
1.5	A student shall not, in any other manner, by the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, false report to authorities (i.e. prank calls), or any other conduct, intentionally cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school, or engage in any such conduct for the purpose of causing the disruption or obstruction of any such lawful mission, process, or function.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.

1.6	A student shall not use or otherwise operate a cell phone, tablet, or similar electronic communication device during the school day without the approval of the building administration and/or classroom teacher. Unauthorized use of electronic devices will result in confiscation and electronic devices may be redeemed by student's parent/guardian in the front office. The school system accepts no liability for confiscated electronic devices.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days; loss of privilege of possession of device on school property, and confiscation of device.
1.8	A student shall not urge, encourage, or counsel other students to violate any portion of this Student Discipline Code of Conduct.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. May refer to discipline hearing on a case by case basis. Referral to CHOICES program in lieu of suspension.
1.9	A student shall not cause or participate in a disruption in the school cafeteria (such as throwing food, leaving trays on the table, causing spills of foods, or similar behavior).	Suspension permissible 1-10 days.
1.10	A student shall not inappropriately use an electronic device for purposes such as hacking school networks, modifying school records, cheating, harassing, bullying (aka cyberbullying during the school day and/or that which causes a disruption with school), or photographing/video recording others without permission or test material.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. Maximum penalties may be exceeded if injuries result; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.
1.11	The taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or otherwise (commonly called texting, sexting, emailing, etc.) is strictly prohibited and it may constitute a CRIME under state and federal law. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the school district; and reported to law enforcement which may result in arrest, criminal prosecution, and LIFETIME inclusion on sexual offender registries.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. Refer to law enforcement. May refer to student discipline hearing on a case by case basis.
1.12	The receipt or possession of obscene, pornographic, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, are strictly prohibited and may constitute a CRIME under state and federal law. Any person receiving or possessing obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the school district; and reported to law enforcement which may result in arrest, criminal prosecution, and LIFETIME inclusion on sexual offender registries. This rule will not be enforced if the possessing or receiving student self-reports the receipt or possession to a school official.	Same disposition as 1.11.
1.13	School officials have the authority to search confiscated electronic devices if there is reasonable suspicion that electronic devices were used to violate school policies or laws.	Same disposition as 1.10.
Rule 2: Damage, Destruction, or Theft of School Property		

2.1	A student shall not cause damage to or destroy school property, or attempt to cause damage to or destroy school property, which includes library books, textbooks, reference materials, computer hardware or software, school buildings or facilities including furnishings and contents, school buses or other vehicles operated, leased, or owned by the school system, or any other materials or equipment owned by the school or school system.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. Substantial damage to property will result in a mandatory recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion; restitution for damages; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.
2.2	A student shall not steal school property or attempt to steal school property which includes library books, textbooks, reference materials, computer hardware or software, school buildings or facilities including furnishings and contents, school buses or other vehicles operated, leased, or owned by the school system, or any other materials or equipment owned by the school or school system.	Same disposition as 2.1. May refer to CHOICES. May be referred to disciplinary hearing.
2.3	A student shall not possess, use, sell or attempt to sell, or transmit stolen school property.	Same disposition as 2.1.
Rule 3: Damage, Destruction, or Theft of Private Property		
3.1	A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property either on the school grounds or during a school activity, function, or event off school grounds, or while under school supervision.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. Substantial damage to property will result in a mandatory recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion; restitution for damages; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.
3.2	A student shall not steal or attempt to steal private property either on the school grounds or during a school activity, function, or event off school grounds, or while under school supervision.	Same disposition as 3.1.
3.3	A student shall not possess, use, or transmit stolen private property.	Same disposition as 3.1.
Rule 4: Assault and/or Battery on a School Employee		
4.1	A student shall not threaten to cause physical injury or mental anguish to a school employee or school resource officer on the school grounds or during a school activity, function, or event off school grounds, or while under school supervision.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days; may recommend long-term suspension or expulsion on a case by case basis; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.
4.2	A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or mental anguish to a school employee or school resource officer on the school grounds or during a school activity, function, or event off school grounds, or while under school supervision.	Same disposition as 4.1. Note: A student who intentionally commits any act of physical violence resulting in physical injury to a school employee shall be permanently expelled from all public school programs. The

	<p>student may be allowed by the tribunal to attend alternative education programs. Students in grades K-5 may be allowed by the tribunal to re-enroll in the regular public school programs.</p> <p>Automatic referral to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction</p>
<p>4.3 Aggravated Battery: (State Code) A student shall not maliciously cause or intend to cause bodily harm to school personnel by depriving him/her of a member of his/her body, by rendering a member of his/her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his/her body or a member thereof.</p>	<p>Automatic/Immediate 10-day suspension.</p> <p>Mandatory referral to Student Disciplinary Hearing; mandatory permanent expulsion; mandatory referral to law enforcement.</p>
Rule 5: Assault and/or Battery to a Person Not Employed by the School	
<p>5.1 Fighting: A student shall not fight or cause a fight on school grounds or during a school function.</p> <p>Note: School administrators (and disciplinary tribunals if applicable) will investigate all incidents of physical aggression, including but not limited to affray, assault, battery, and fighting. School administrators may consider a self-defense argument, but when a student raises an affirmative defense of self-defense in a school disciplinary proceeding, the student bears the burden of proving that defense.</p>	<p>First Offense: Suspension permissible 1-5 days; may refer to CHOICES Intervention Program in lieu of out-of-school suspension; mandatory parent conference prior to student's return from suspension or CHOICES to develop disciplinary contract.</p> <p>Second Offense: Suspension permissible 1-10 days, recommendation to a disciplinary tribunal and referral to law enforcement.</p> <p>Note: (Maintain documentation of parent conference, disciplinary contract and chronic disruptor notification, CHOICES Program referral and Prevention and Intervention services.)</p> <p>Maximum penalties may be exceeded if injuries result; refer to law enforcement agency with jurisdiction. School official will develop behavior contract at mandatory parent conference.</p>

5.2	A student shall not threaten to cause physical injury or mental anguish to any student or guest or any individual not employed by the school but approved to be on the school grounds or during a school function.	Same disposition as 5.1.
5.3	Battery: A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or mental anguish to any student or guest or any individual not employed by the school but approved to be on the school grounds or during a school function.	Same disposition as 5.1.
5.4	Aggravated Battery: (State Code) A student shall not maliciously cause or intend to cause bodily harm to another person by depriving him/her of a member of his/her body, by rendering a member of his/her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his/her body or a member thereof.	Automatic/Immediate 10-day suspension. Mandatory referral to Student Disciplinary Hearing; mandatory referral to law enforcement.
The Rockdale County Board of Education ("Board") believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying of a student by another student is strictly prohibited.		
<p>Rule 6: Bullying</p> <p>A student shall not bully or attempt to bully another student. This applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school-related functions, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a school system.</p> <p>Any teacher or other school employee who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal or his/her designee. Any teacher or other school employee who sees a bullying incident is expected to immediately intervene or seek assistance.</p> <p>Upon notification, the principal or his/her designee shall promptly investigate the matter as outlined in the regulation as established by the Superintendent to determine whether bullying has occurred. Students, parents, guardians, and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying verbally or in writing to an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other staff member or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's hotline 1-877-SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL-AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY</p> <p>Acts of bullying shall be addressed by a range of age-appropriate interventions, counseling, or disciplinary actions as stated in the RCPS Student Behavior Code of Conduct. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.</p> <p>Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student.</p> <p>Students and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting information at each school and by including such information in the RCPS Parent Handbook. The policy and the RCPS Student Code of Conduct shall be on the district website.</p>		

Retaliation towards participants of a bullying investigation shall be strictly forbidden. Reports of retaliation will be investigated and addressed by the school administration.		
6.1	<p>Bullying: Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by apparent present ability to do so; any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or any intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate attention, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm. “Visible bodily harm” means bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim and may include, but is not limited to, substantially blackened eyes, substantially swollen lips or other facial or body parts, or substantial bruises to body parts; 2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education; 3. Is severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or 4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. <p>Retaliation towards participants in an investigation related to reporting bullying is strictly prohibited.</p> <p>Note: Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual in nature and may overlap with prohibited harassment under Rule 18.5.</p>	<p>Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. Maximum penalties may be exceeded if injuries result; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction. School official will develop behavior contract at the mandatory parent conference.</p> <p>For third instance of bullying involving students in grades 6-12, assignment to Alpha Academy as a minimum, but more severe punishment, or long-term suspension, or expulsion may be applied.</p>
6.2	Teasing: No student shall intentionally tease or aggravate another person either verbally or physically so that the person is distracted from learning.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. Parent conference.
6.3	A student shall not place a person in reasonable fear of substantial harm to his or her emotional or physical well-being or substantial damage to his or her property.	Same disposition as 6.1.
6.4	A student shall not create a hostile threatening, humiliating, or abusive educational environment.	Same disposition as 6.1.
6.5	A student shall not interfere with a student having a safe school environment that is necessary to facilitate educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.	Same disposition as 6.1.
6.6	A student shall not perpetuate bullying by inciting, soliciting, or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional, psychological, or physical harm to another person.	Same disposition as 6.1.

6.7	A student shall not retaliate against another student for reporting bullying.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days; may refer to CHOICES; mandatory parent conference to develop discipline contract; max penalties may be applied if injuries result.
6.8	<p>Cyber Bullying applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is directed specifically at a student or school personnel; 2. Is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and 3. Creates a reasonable fear of harm to the student's or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. <p>Electronic communication includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic, or photo optical system.</p>	Same disposition as 6.1.
Rule 7: Weapons and Dangerous Instruments		
7.1	A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit a knife with a blade less than 2 inches in length, an ice pick, or any other bladed instrument unless authorized by the teacher. (See 7.3 for knife with larger blade.)	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction; may recommend long-term suspension to expulsion. All incidents shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee.
7.2	A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit any firearm. A firearm is considered to be any weapon (including a starter gun, shotgun, stun gun, Taser or other hunting or sporting gun) which will or is designed to or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device, including, but not limited to, bombs, grenades, rockets, mines, or any other explosive material. Antique firearms are not included in this term when used for class work as authorized by the teacher. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751)	<p>Automatic referral to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction; mandatory referral for a Student Disciplinary Hearing with mandatory recommendation for expulsion for one calendar year.</p> <p>All incidents shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent may modify the</p>

	expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis.
7.3 A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit any object which could reasonably be considered a hazardous object, to include but not limited to such items as dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, metal knucks, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chukka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or sword canes, or machetes or any weapon of like kind. This paragraph excludes any of these instruments used for classroom work as authorized by the teacher.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days; mandatory referral to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction; may recommend long-term suspension to expulsion. All incidents shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent may modify the expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis.
7.4 A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit tear gas, mace, pepper spray, or any other similar agent.	Same disposition as 7.1.
7.5 A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit explosive type materials to include but not limited to bullets of any type, firecrackers, caps, or cap pistols, smoke or odor bombs.	Same disposition as 7.1.
7.6 A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit any object which could reasonably be considered a hazardous object, to include but not limited to BB or pellet guns, airsoft guns, loaded canes.	Same disposition as 7.1.
Rule 8: Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages, Stimulant Drugs, Controlled Substances or Medications	
8.1 A student shall not share nor be involved in transmission of his/her over-the-counter medication with anyone else. (ex. NoDoz, Vivarin, asthma medicines, energy/diet pills, supplements, aspirin, herb pills, etc.) Note: Transmit/Transmission is defined as buying, selling, receiving and/or delivering, sharing (the act of “changing hands” of a substance). Note: A student using over-the-counter medication is required to complete a “Permission to Dispense Medication” form and leave the medication in the office or clinic. The student shall be supervised when taking this medication. Medication must be brought in the original container. A student can be punished for failing to complete and return the form.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. Maximum penalties may be exceeded if injuries result.
8.2 A student shall not possess or attempt to possess, buy or attempt to buy, use, or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, inhalant, anabolic steroid, or any drug requiring a prescription controlled by the Georgia Board of Pharmacy not prescribed to the student, or bath salts or synthetic drugs, or substance	Level II - Automatic 5 Days OSS. Student to remain in home school. Referral to Seven Challenges, a short-term drug and alcohol treatment program offered at RCPS, or another program at the parent’s

	represented to be a drug. This prohibition shall include: unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, being under the influence of any controlled drug, narcotic substance, or any mind-altering substance or intoxicant (illegal or legal), specifically including any product with cannabidiol (CBD), whether hemp or cannabis and regardless of the amount of THC in the product or the extent to which it is legal or illegal under state law.	expense, which is equivalent to The Seven Challenges Program. Level III - For repeated offenses: Automatic referral to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction; automatic 10-day suspension (pending hearing); notify Superintendent's office or designee; referral for a student behavior hearing.
8.3	A student shall not possess, consume, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage of any kind or any substance represented to be alcohol.	Same disposition as 8.2. Note: All incidents shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee.
8.4	A student shall not sell, attempt to sell, transmit, or attempt to transmit drugs or substances represented or thought to be drugs by the buyer, on school property, or at a school function, or on any property used by the school with the permission of the owner or within 1,000 feet of school property.	Automatic referral to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction and ten days out-of-school suspension with mandatory referral for a Student Disciplinary Hearing.
8.5	A student shall not sell, attempt to sell, transmit, or attempt to transmit alcohol or substances represented or thought to be alcohol by the buyer, on school property, or at a school function, or on any property used by the school with the permission of the owner, or within 1,000 feet of school property.	Same disposition as 8.4.
8.6	A student shall not possess, use, sell, transmit, or solicit, or attempt to possess, use, sell, transmit, or solicit any drug-related paraphernalia which includes, but is not limited to, pipes, water-pipes, clips, rolling papers, or any other items directly related to drug use.	Up to ten days suspension and referral to law enforcement agency at discretion of principal.
Rule 9: Disregard of Directions or Commands		
9.1	A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable directions or commands of teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, principals, administrators, school bus drivers, or other authorized personnel when on school grounds or during a school activity, function, or event off school grounds, or while under school supervision.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
9.2	A student shall not attempt to evade school personnel or attempt to avoid a conference or search by school personnel. Note 1: General searches of school property (including personal items found in or on school property) may be conducted at any time when there is reasonable cause for school employees to believe that something which violates a law or school rule is located on school property. Note 2: A student's person may be searched by school employees when there is reasonable cause to believe that the student has on his/her person	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. Referral to CHOICES program. Parent notification.

illegal items that may interfere with the school program. (Refer to Board of Education's policy #JCAB).	
9.3 A student shall not refuse to identify himself/herself or give false identity upon request of teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, school food service personnel, principals, administrators, school bus drivers, or other authorized personnel.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days.
Rule 10: Unexcused Absences and Tardiness	
<p>10.1 A student shall not be unlawfully absent or truant from school or fail to comply with compulsory attendance under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1.</p> <p>Note: Lawful absences are defined by Georgia law as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal illness or when attendance would endanger their health or the health of others. 2. Illness or death in the immediate family. 3. Celebrating a religious holiday. 4. Absences mandated by other governmental agencies such as court order or pre-induction physical for the armed services. 5. Conditions that render attendance impossible or hazardous to health or safety. 6. Registering to vote or voting for a period not to exceed one day. 7. Absences for a student whose parent is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for, or is on leave from, overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat supporting post. Such student shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five (5) school days per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to such parent's deployment or during such parent's leave. 	<p>1-4 Unexcused Absences: Disciplinary actions determined by the local school i.e., parental notification from teacher, parental conference with school administrator, etc.</p> <p>5 Unexcused Absences: Referred to local Attendance Support Team. Parent conference required; contract signed.</p> <p>10 Absences: Principal may require a medical excuse for subsequent absences.</p> <p>10 Unexcused Absences: Referred to the school social worker. Possible referral to Juvenile Court or Department of Family and Children's Services.</p> <p>Please refer to the RCPS Attendance Protocol for further information.</p>
10.2 A student shall not skip any class.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
10.3 A student shall not be chronically tardy to school or to class.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
10.4 A student shall not leave campus without permission.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
10.5 A student shall not be in an unauthorized and/or unsupervised location.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
<p>Rule 11: Dress and Grooming</p> <p>The principal or other duly authorized school official shall determine whether any mode of dress or grooming results in a violation of the spirit or intent of the following rule. The spirit and intent of this rule is to</p>	1st offense - Student warning and parent contact.

<p>maintain an atmosphere, at all times, conducive to learning by having all students dress in conformity with the accepted standards of the community, including but not limited to the following standards.</p> <p>A student shall not dress or groom to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise cause disruption or interference with the operations of the school. Obscene pictures or symbols or the depiction of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, or contraband shall not appear on clothing, nor shall inflammatory, provocative, lewd, profane, or suggestive language or symbols appear on clothing. Clothing identifiable with any gang shall not be worn. Hats, rollers, visors, caps, do-rags, and bandannas are not allowed. Wallet chains are not allowed.</p> <p>A student shall not dress in an immodest or extreme fashion. Examples of such extreme prohibited items include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoeless See-through clothing Bare midriffs Spandex pants/skirts “Tank” tops/Halter tops Extremely baggy pants “Short-shorts”/Mini-skirt Bedroom slippers Skirts & shorts above the knee Pajamas Spaghetti straps Lack of cleanliness in person or dress (clothes must be clean and in good repair) <p>This is not to be an all-inclusive list.</p> <p>Low-cut blouses, low-cut dresses, or low-cut shirts are not appropriate for school. Any shirt or blouse that is sleeveless must have a collar and any shirt or blouse that is collarless must have sleeves. Under no circumstances can shirts be worn in such a way as to conceal oversized/extremely baggy pants. A student’s waist must always be visible . Leggings or Jeggings may not be worn without a skirt or shirt that reaches the knee.</p> <p>Pants must be worn at waist level.</p> <p>Hats, scarves, and other headpieces will not be worn within the school building unless approved for special occasions by the principal or the principal’s designee. Head wraps, scarves, or dress worn in observance of a cultural or religious tradition/belief are acceptable.</p>	<p>2nd offense - Automatic two-day in-school suspension, mandatory parent contact, and mandatory Behavior Contract.</p> <p>3rd offense - Automatic two-day out-of-school suspension, mandatory parent conference, and review of Behavior Contract.</p> <p>4th offense - Automatic three-day out-of-school suspension, mandatory parent conference of possible alternative placement.</p> <p>5th offense - Referral to Student Disciplinary Hearing for chronic behavior violation(s).</p>
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<p>Shorts, skirts, culottes, split skirts, or dresses must be reasonable in length and appropriate for school.</p> <p>Jewelry, clothing, or other items that have pictures, logos, lettering, writing, or other symbols that the principal considers vulgar, profane, offensive, suggestive, or disruptive, or that reflect sexual or obscene overtones, or that advertise any alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances are prohibited. Spiked jewelry, clothing, shoes, or chains are not permitted.</p> <p>Wearing any clothing, jewelry, or other item symbolizing gang affiliation is prohibited.</p> <p>Uniforms for cheerleaders and drill team participants are permitted in the classroom.</p> <p>Shoes are required for safety and hygiene reasons and may be worn with or without socks.</p> <p>Earrings or other jewelry of such size or style that, in the opinion of the principal or the principal's designee, would interfere with learning, would cause a disruption of the educational environment, or would be a health or safety hazard, are prohibited. Body piercing jewelry (or the facsimile of) on any visible area of the body (including the tongue) other than the ear is prohibited.</p>	
<p>Rule 12: Parking and Traffic Violations on Campus A student shall not abuse school parking regulations nor operate a motor vehicle in such a way as to cause damage to public or private property located on school grounds or in such a way as to endanger life or limb of persons utilizing school facilities, driveways, or parking areas.</p>	<p>Suspension permissible 1-5 days for repeatedly violating rule. Driving privileges may be restricted.</p> <p>Note: As determined by the principal, a student's vehicle may be removed from a campus of Rockdale County Public Schools at the owner's expense for repeated campus vehicle violations.</p>
<p>Rule 13: Refusal to Accept Disciplinary Action A student shall not refuse to accept assigned consequences and/or fail to serve assigned consequences.</p>	<p>Suspension permissible* 1-10 days Long-term suspension or expulsion for second violation</p>
<p>Rule 14: Use of Profane, Vulgar, or Obscene Words, Gestures, Pornographic/Vulgar Photographs or Materials, or other Actions Which Disrupt School System Operations</p>	
<p>14.1 A student shall not use or publish electronically or in writing, profane, vulgar, or obscene words, gestures, or other action that disrupts school system operations.</p>	<p>Suspension permissible 1-10 days; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction. May recommend long term suspension on a case by case basis.</p>

14.2	A student shall not curse or verbally abuse any person, including remarks intended to demean a person's race, religion, sex, creed, national origin, disability, or intellectual ability.	Same disposition as 14.1.
14.3	A student shall not possess, view, create, or distribute any illegal materials or such items as pornography, any materials demeaning another person, or containing lewd, profane, vulgar, or obscene words, gestures or actions or gang-related materials or photographs. This rule includes materials both in person, stored within a school-provided online platform, and stored on any electronic device.	Same disposition as 14.1.
14.4	<p>Gang-Related Activity - Includes any of the following activities which can or may cause danger/disruption to the school environment and threaten the safety of students, faculty, or other employees of the school system. Gang activities include those behaviors exhibited while using any online environment within the school, or while using school-provided online environments in any location. Behavior includes but is not limited to gang affiliation: exhibiting gang affiliation, as evidenced by a common identifying sign, symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic.</p> <p>Exhibiting gang affiliation and/or engaging in any gang-related activity is not permitted. For the purpose of this handbook, a gang is defined as any group or association of three (3) or more persons, whether formal or informal, as evidenced by a common name or common identifying sign, symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic, that encourages, solicits, promotes, condones, causes, assists, or abets any illegal or disruptive activity.</p> <p>Students shall not use any speech or commit any act or omission in furtherance of the interests of any gang-related activity, including, but not limited to the following Code of Conduct Violations.</p>	<p>1st offense: Suspension permissible 1-10 days. Automatic referral to law enforcement. Mandatory parent conference. Mandatory behavior contract (specific to gang-related activity) before returning to school.</p> <p>2nd offense: Mandatory ten-day home suspension. Automatic referral to law enforcement. Automatic Student Disciplinary Hearing.</p>
14.41	A student shall not display or create gang signs and symbols on personal and/or school property.	
14.42	A student shall not wear clothing that symbolizes gang affiliation (shirts, hats, bandanas, belts, jewelry, etc.).	
14.43	A student shall not display gang hand signs, tattoos/brands, or other actions/items which symbolize gang affiliation.	
14.44	A student shall not deface school buildings and structures with gang graffiti, symbols, or messages.	
14.45	A student shall not solicit/recruit membership or participation in gang activity.	
14.46	A student shall not perform or participate in any act of violence which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation and gang recruitment, which can adversely affect the educational process.	
Rule 15: Gambling on School Property or at a School Function		Suspension permissible 1-10 days.

<p>A student shall not gamble or assist others to gamble on school property or at a school function, using school-provided/sanctioned online platforms, or through any school issued electronic device.</p>	
<p>Rule 16: Misbehavior on Bus A student shall not violate any bus rules of Rockdale County Public Schools. All rules and recommended dispositions in the Discipline Code of Conduct shall apply to students on school buses, at school bus stops, or in vehicles used by the school to transport students. Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices with or without headphones or ear buds during the loading and unloading process. Students should keep electronic equipment packed away when preparing to board and when getting off the bus. Use of electronic devices while onboard the bus with headphones or ear buds is permitted if it does not interfere with the driver's operation of the school bus. Using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the driver's operation of the bus. Students must maintain silence at all railroad crossings until the driver has crossed and gives the all clear.</p>	<p>At the principal's discretion and in cooperation with the Transportation Department, suspension from bus and/or school is permissible. Principal may refer to a Student Disciplinary Hearing.</p>
<p>Rule 17: Criminal Law Violations</p>	
<p>17.1 Violent Criminal Offenses: An enrolled student may not remain on any Rockdale County Public Schools campus if he/she has been found by official action to have committed an offense in violation of a school rule that involved one or more of the following violent criminal offenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aggravated battery (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-24) • aggravated child molestation (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-4) • aggravated sexual battery (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-22.2) • aggravated sodomy (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-2) • armed robbery (O.C.G.A. § 16-8-41) • first degree arson (O.C.G.A. § 16-7-60) • kidnapping (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-40) • murder (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-1) • rape (O.C.G.A. § 16-6-1) • voluntary manslaughter (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-2) or • terroristic threat (O.C.G.A. § 16-11-37) 	<p>Automatic/Immediate 10-day suspension. Mandatory referral to Student Disciplinary Hearing. School may recommend threat assessment administered by School Social Worker in cases involving terroristic threats; automatic referral to law enforcement that has jurisdiction.</p>
<p>17.2 A student may not remain on campus if the student has been charged with a criminal law violation if the student's presence endangers the safety of other students or causes disruption to school operations.</p>	<p>Suspension permissible 1-10 days; may refer to Student Disciplinary Hearing.</p>
<p>Rule 18: Sexual Misconduct or Inappropriate Display of Affection</p>	
<p>18.1 A student shall not indecently expose himself or herself, or engage in any inappropriate heterosexual or homosexual act on school property, using school-provided/sanctioned online platforms, or through any school issued electronic device, during school functions, or on any property used by the school with permission of the owner, or while under school supervision.</p>	<p>Suspension permissible* 1-10 days; must refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction; may refer to Student Disciplinary Hearing on a case-by-case basis.</p>

18.2	A student shall not molest or rape another person on school property, during school functions, or on any property used by the school with permission of the owner, or while under school supervision.	Automatic 10-day suspension; recommendation for expulsion; refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.
18.3	A student shall not engage in any form of inappropriate bodily contact or display of affection.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. May recommend long term suspension on a case by case basis.
18.4	A student shall not engage in inappropriate activities such as mooning (pulling one's own pants down) or anklng (pulling another student's pants down) or deliberately entering a restroom with the purpose of engaging in affectionate or inappropriate behavior(s).	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. May recommend long term suspension on a case by case basis.
18.5	<p>A student shall not engage in sexual harassment toward any person on school property, including school buses, or at a school function, or on any property, using school-provided/sanctioned online platforms, or through any school issued electronic device, used by the school with permission of the owner. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:</p> <p>A. An employee conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e. <i>quid pro quo</i> harassment).</p> <p>B. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, an objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to an education program or activity (i.e. a hostile environment claim. (See Examples listed in Board Policy JAA (Equal Educational Opportunity).</p> <p>C. "Sexual Assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v).</p> <p>D. "Dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10).</p> <p>E. "Domestic violence" as defined in 24 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8).</p> <p>F. "Stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30).</p> <p>A.</p>	Refer to Board Policy JAA (Equal Educational Opportunity) for procedures and available punishments for allegations related to Sexual Harassment.
18.6	A student shall not engage in acts of lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the student's own body; lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the body of another person.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction; may refer to a Student Disciplinary Hearing
Rule 19: Rude and Disrespectful Behavior		Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. May refer to CHOICES; develop

A student shall not use profane, vulgar, obscene, or abusive language, talk back, “sass,” or intentionally argue in a demanding or disruptive manner with any school employees or while using any online environment within the school or while using school-provided online environments in any location or persons attending school-related functions or otherwise show disrespect for school employees or others attending school-related functions.	discipline contract for repeatedly violating rule.
Rule 20: Tobacco/Smoking-Related Offenses	
20.1 A student shall not possess tobacco paraphernalia, such as but not limited to lighters, pipes, cigarette papers, and matches.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
20.2 A student shall not possess tobacco products including cigarettes, tobacco, and snuff in any form on the school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity while under school supervision.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. In lieu of suspension successful completion of Seven Challenges.
20.3 A student shall not use tobacco products, including cigarettes, in any form on the school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity while under school supervision.	Same disposition as 20.2
20.4 A student shall not possess, use, sell and/or transmit electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizer or nicotine delivery system products or paraphernalia.	Same disposition as 20.2.
Rule 21: Cheating, Plagiarism, or Academic Dishonesty A student shall not cheat on tests, examinations, projects, homework, or reports by giving or receiving unauthorized assistance nor be involved in plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty. This rule includes all acts of cheating, plagiarism, or academic dishonesty committed in person or through electronic devices regardless of whether the device is personal, or school issued.	0 grade
Rule 22: Altering Records, Misrepresenting Information, Forgery	
22.1 A student shall not alter or misrepresent information on school records or forms, (including electronic records/forms), forge signatures or statements, or make false statements, written, oral or electronically.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
22.2 A student shall not alter or attempt to alter grades in a teacher’s grade book, records, or any permanent records.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days.
22.3 A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days. May recommend long-term suspension.
Rule 23: Misuse of Computer, Network, Internet, or Intranet Acceptable Use	
All of Rockdale County Public Schools ("RCPS") are networked so that they may provide technologies that allow students and staff members to share information and access data or information inside their school. Each school has been provided with technology necessary to allow students and teachers access to the internet. We believe the system-wide networks (intranet) and access to the internet will greatly enhance and support research activities and provide additional educational opportunities for students and teachers. Regulation IFBG-R describes the acceptable use procedures of the Rockdale County Public Schools' system-wide network and internet connections available in all schools. All students, parents, teachers, and staff members will be required	

to sign Form IFBG-F1 or IFBG-F2 acknowledging that they have read and agree with the system's intranet and internet network acceptable use policies before they access the intranet or internet in any fashion or they are issued an RCPS electronic device.

Internet Safety

It is the policy of RCPS to:

1. Prevent user access over its computer network to (or transmission of) inappropriate material via the internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communication;
2. Prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity;
3. Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and,
4. Comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)] and the Federal Education Rights and Protection Act (FERPA) [20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99].

Adoption

The Rockdale County Board of Education adopted this Internet Safety Policy to be in compliance with CIPA and FERPA rules at a public meeting, following procedural policy adoption protocol.

23.1	No student shall use a computer or any electrical device, the computer network, the Internet, or any intranet by such activity as importing, exporting, viewing, distributing, printing, or creating inappropriate, illicit, or illegal materials including but not limited to pornography; any materials demeaning another person or containing lewd, profane, or vulgar words, pictures, gestures or actions; or any records, files, or materials to which the student should not have access.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days and prosecution under laws of Georgia; may refer to law enforcement that has jurisdiction. May revoke school computer access and request restitution for damages.
23.2	No student shall use a computer, any electronic device, the computer network, the Internet, or any intranet to create disruption of school operations or the normal use of a computer, the computer network, the Internet, or any intranet.	Same disposition as 23.1.
23.3	A student shall not engage in computer electronic device theft, digital trespass, digital invasion of privacy, digital forgery or digital password disclosure.	Suspension permissible* and prosecution under O.C.G.A. § 16-9-93; may refer to law enforcement that has jurisdiction.

Rule 24: Loitering, Trespassing, or Breaking and Entering

24.1	A student shall not enter the premises of a local school other than his/her home school, except for scheduled classes or school system-sponsored and/or approved activities, unless prior permission is received from an administrator of the school to be visited.	Suspension permissible* 1-10 days; may refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction. Note: Remaining on or returning to campus while on suspension will result in referral to police for trespassing.
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24.2	A student shall not enter any school building or school system facility on weekends or after school hours without authorization from school officials.	Same disposition as 24.1.
24.3	A student shall not loiter on any school campus or school system property.	Same disposition as 24.1.
24.4	A student shall not enter or read school records, including computer files, software, and other related materials, without authorization from school officials.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days. May refer to law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction and revoke user access to Internet on campus.
Rule 25: Other Misbehavior The administration of the school system and the local school reserve the right to punish behavior which is subversive to good order and discipline in the Rockdale County school system, even though such behavior is not specified in the preceding written discipline rules.		
Rule 26: Misbehavior While Off School Property If a student engages in misbehavior, while a student is not on school property or at a school function, activity, or event, which directly or potentially has an adverse effect on the good order, discipline, and welfare in the school, the school may take disciplinary action(s) against that student. This rule includes any disruptive activities carried out online through any electronic device (school issued or not), both on campus and off campus.		Same as for violation of rule(s) while on campus.
26.1	If a student engages in misbehavior which could result in the student being charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school, the school may take disciplinary action against that student.	Suspension permissible 1-10 days; long term suspension or expulsion.
Rule 27: Cumulative Offenses Multiple violations of the Student Discipline Code of Conduct committed simultaneously or accumulated during the school year may result in out-of-school suspension or a recommendation for a Student Disciplinary Hearing and recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.		
27.1	Students who exhaust a Behavior Contract developed with school administrators may be recommended for a Student Disciplinary Hearing.	May recommend long-term suspension or expulsion.
*May Recommend Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion.		

PART II (A) ~ Procedural Rules

Rule 28	Definitions
Rule 29	Application of These Rules
Rule 30	Punishment Short of Suspension or Expulsion
Rule 31	Coverage
Rule 32	Principal's Investigation
Rule 33	Limitation on Principal's Power to Suspend or to Request a Hearing
Rule 34	Summary Suspension
Rule 35	Short-Term Suspension

Rule 36	Sending a Suspended Student Home during the School Day
Rule 37	Informing the Parents in Cases of Summary and Short-Term Suspension
Rule 38	Initiating Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion
Rule 39	Scheduling Student Disciplinary Hearing
Rule 40	Group Hearings
Rule 41	Role of Parents or Attorney
Rule 42	For Health or Safety
Rule 43	Disrupting School Operations

Definitions of Disciplinary Actions

Rule 28 | Definitions

28.1 Parent Conference

In instances where violations of the Student Discipline Code occur, the local school administration may require a parent conference before a student can return to school.

28.2 Detention

A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official for a limited period other than normal school hours (including Saturday detention).

28.3 Suspension

A. In-school Suspension

Suspension of a student may be made to in-school suspension rather than to out-of-school suspension. On days assigned to in-school suspension, the student will be excluded from privileges consistent with the duration of the suspension. Loss of privileges includes, but is not limited to, participation in athletic events (games/practices), afterschool activities, field trips, or any other school-related functions not related to classroom instruction.

B. Out-of-school Suspension

For serious infractions of the Student Discipline Code, a student may be given "at home" suspension which means the removal of the student from the school campus and exclusion from school-sponsored activities during the suspension. Out-of-school suspension is a "short-term suspension" for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days. Out-of-school suspensions are not subject to appeal. The Superintendent, at his or her discretion, may conduct an administrative review of any objections to out-of-school suspension and take corrective action if warranted.

On days a student is assigned to out of school suspension, the student will be excluded from privileges consistent with the duration of the suspension. Loss of privileges includes, but is not limited to, participation in athletic events (games/practices), afterschool activities, field trips, or any other school-related functions.

C. Long-term Suspension

Long-term suspension means the removal of a student from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days but not beyond the current semester.

28.4 Student Disciplinary Hearing

A review by a local school system tribunal of alleged facts in cases of student misconduct. The hearing tribunal will recommend appropriate disciplinary action following a review of cases presented.

Specific Discipline Code violations by students, violations of Rule 27, or suspensions of more than fifteen (15) days (including in-school and out-of-school) may result in a student being referred for a hearing before a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee.

28.5 Expulsion

Removal of a student from the school system for an extended period of time beyond the current semester by the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee or permanently by the Board of Education.

28.6 Important Information

- A. Students suspended out-of-school or expelled are not allowed on school campus, including school buses, or at school functions.
- B. A student shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the Student Discipline Code at all times when the student is in route to or from or is present at school, a school function or activity, a school-related activity, or any event at which the student in any way is a representative of the school system.
- C. Expelled or long-term suspended students will not be allowed to earn academic credit toward graduation or toward the establishment of credit for extracurricular or interscholastic activities which results from their enrollment during their suspension and/or expulsion in home study programs, non-accredited private schools, private schools, or other public schools within the state or outside the state unless the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee or the Board of Education in imposing the suspension and/or expulsion otherwise orders. On re-enrollment of a long-term suspended or expelled student, the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee or the Board of Education may review and grant a request for academic credit to be used toward graduation and/or credit to be used for extracurricular or interscholastic activities provided the credit was earned in an accredited school.
- D. Students who are currently expelled or long-term suspended from another public school system may not enroll in the Rockdale County Public Schools until the period of suspension or expulsion has ended. Students who are currently suspended or expelled from a private school must submit to a pre-admission hearing at the local school to determine whether they are under suspension or expulsion for an offense which would have resulted in a suspension or expulsion had they been enrolled in the Rockdale County Public Schools when they committed the offense. If the student's conduct would have justified suspension or expulsion from the Rockdale County Public Schools, the student may not

enroll in the Rockdale County Public Schools until such time as the suspension or expulsion from the private school is completed.

- E. In all instances of infractions of the Student Discipline Code which involve violations of the law or criminal acts, students will automatically be referred to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction.
- F. Students and parents shall recognize their responsibility to know the contents of this Student Discipline Code and to ask faculty or staff members for any clarification.
- G. Students found guilty of being accessories to any violation of school rules are subject to the same penalties as students who are actively involved in committing such offenses.
- H. Before any student who has been long-term suspended or expelled can re-enroll in a Rockdale County public school, the student must participate in a conference with the principal or local school administrator designated by the principal. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student shall be invited to this conference. At this conference, the student's discipline problem(s) will be reviewed, and a notice of the meeting shall be placed in the student's permanent record file.

28.7 Interrogations and Searches

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student lockers, locker rooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums, hallways, commons areas, stadiums and stadium areas, classrooms, parking lots, school buses, and other similar areas of school facilities, or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. The term "unauthorized" means any item dangerous to the health or safety of students or school personnel, or disruptive of any lawful function, mission, or process of the school, or any item prohibited by Board of Education policy or school rules available beforehand to the student. A student's failure to permit searches and seizures will be considered grounds for disciplinary action, which may include involving the local police agency in emergency situations as determined by the school administrator.

- A. Personal Searches - A student's person and/or personal effects (i.e., purse, book bag, mobile device, etc.) may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. If a pat-down search of a student's person is conducted, it will be conducted in private by a school official of the same gender and with an adult witness present, when feasible. If the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student has on his/her person an item immediately dangerous to the student or to others, the student should be isolated, police notified, and appropriate disciplinary action administered. A Student Search Report Form must be completed regarding any personal search.
- B. Automobile Searches - Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exteriors of student vehicles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a school authority has reasonable grounds for suspecting that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside. Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without

notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. A Student Search Report Form must be completed regarding any automobile search.

- C. Locker Searches - Student lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. Periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities for any reason, at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. However, notice to expect periodic general inspections must be communicated in writing (student handbook) to the students prior to the issuance of the locker. Searches of specific lockers or locker areas may be conducted as needed. A record should be made of each general search. Any illegal materials found during a locker search should be reported by completing a Student Search Report Form.
- D. Canine Searches - School facilities may be searched by trained canines, as described in Policy JCAB and JCAB-R.
- E. Seizure of Illegal Material - If a search yields illegal or unauthorized material, such findings shall be turned over in person to either the principal or legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

Rule 29 | Application of These Rules

29.1 Punishment short of suspension or expulsion shall be handled according to the procedures set out in Rule 30. Such punishment may be administered by teachers or principals.

29.2 Punishment involving summary or short-term suspension shall be handled according to the procedure set out in Parts II (A) and II (B). Such punishment may be administered by principals.

29.3 Punishment involving long-term suspension or expulsion shall be handled according to the procedures set out in Parts II (A) and II (C). Such punishment may be administered by a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee or by the Rockdale County Board of Education.

29.4 Removal of dangerous students shall be handled according to the procedures set out in Part III.

Rule 30 | Punishment Short of Suspension or Expulsion

Teachers and principals have the authority to take customary and reasonable measures to maintain proper control and discipline among students placed under their care and supervision. Such measures may include the use of reasonable force, in the exercise of lawful authority to restrain or correct pupils and maintain order.

Rule 31 | Coverage

Alleged misconduct shall be dealt with by the principal:

31.1 Whenever a teacher considers a problem of classroom discipline to be so serious as to warrant the principal's attention; or

31.2 Whenever the alleged misconduct constitutes a violation of the rules in Part I; or

31.3 Whenever the principal deems it advisable that he/she deal personally with the alleged misconduct.

31.4 Whenever a teacher exercises authority under sub-paragraph "A" above, the teacher shall notify the principal in writing as to the act or acts complained of together with all facts of said misconduct as the teacher knows them.

Rule 32 | Principal's Investigation

In dealing with alleged misconduct, the principal shall investigate the incident and hear all available accounts of it. The student shall be encouraged to raise any defense he/she thinks relevant. If the student requests that other witnesses be questioned, the principal should talk to them if possible. If the student makes a reasonable claim of other defensive matter that, if true, would free him/her from blame, but is not immediately available, the principal should postpone disciplinary action for a reasonable time until such evidence may be presented to him/her.

Rule 33 | Limitation on Principal's Power to Suspend or to Request a Hearing

If the principal investigates a student's alleged misconduct and decides to take disciplinary action, the principal must investigate and take action on all alleged misconduct known to him/her at that time. Consequently, the most serious action the principal can take on his/her own authority for any and all misconduct by a particular student, known to him/her at any one time, is to give a ten (10) day suspension [See Part II (B)]. If the principal thinks additional penalties appropriate, he/she may request that a Student Disciplinary Hearing be set.

PART II (B) ~ Rules Applicable to Summary and Short-term Suspensions

Rule 34 | Summary Suspension

If the principal witnesses any serious student misconduct and he/she thinks that immediate removal of the student(s) is necessary to restore order or to protect persons on the school grounds, the principal may suspend the student immediately for not more than ten (10) school days.

In such cases the principal is not required to conduct the investigation described in Rule 32 before he/she suspends, but the principal shall carry out such an investigation and decide on further disciplinary action, if any, at least by the end of the school day following the summary suspension.

Once a principal has decided to suspend a student summarily, the principal shall follow the procedures described in Rule 36 for sending a student home during the school day.

Rule 35 | Short-Term Suspension

A short-term suspension denies a student of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for up to ten (10) school days. The principal may revoke a short-term suspension only after investigating the misconduct and only for the following reasons:

35.1 A violation of the school board rules prohibiting serious student misconduct listed in Part I; or

35.2 Misconduct of the same type as that prohibited by the rules governing serious misconduct stated by these rules; or

35.3 Misconduct that is prescribed by rules adopted by the school board covering minor misconduct.

Rule 36 | Sending a Suspended Student Home during the School Day

When a student is suspended out-of-school, the principal shall attempt to reach the student's parents or legal guardian (hereinafter the term parents includes legal guardian) to inform them of the school's action and to request that they come to the school for their child. If the parents are unable to come for their child, or if the principal cannot reach the parents, the student must remain on school property until the close of the school day (except that a high school student may be sent home if there is a parent at home).

Notwithstanding the above requirement that a suspended student be released only to a parent, the principal may order students to leave the school premises immediately when he/she is faced with mass violations to school rules and it is not possible to keep the students on school grounds and restore order to protect people on the school grounds. Even in this case, distance to home and the age and gender of the individual student may require keeping the student until the parents can be contacted.

Rule 37 | Informing the Parents in Cases of Short-Term Suspension

In enforcing short-term suspensions, the principal or designee will abide by the following regulations:

37.1 If the principal did not witness the misconduct or rule violation, he/she should make an investigation to gather the facts.

37.2 After investigating, the principal should call the student before him/her and advise the student of the charges, unless the student is unwilling to discuss the matter with the principal. If the student is unwilling to discuss the matter with the principal, the principal has fulfilled due process requirements. Likewise, if the student admits the charges, no further hearing is required.

If the student denies the charges, the principal should explain to the student the evidence known to school personnel, and then permit the student a reasonable opportunity to state his/her version of the facts. The principal must permit the student to call witnesses within reason to support his/her position.

37.3 The student's parents or legal guardian should be notified by phone, and in writing, in instances where a student is suspended. A copy of this notification should be forwarded to the Superintendent. The letter should describe the misconduct, state the rule violated, and the principal's reasons for his/her actions.

37.4 A principal may suspend a student without affording him/her the informal hearing if the student is obviously intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, or when his/her presence poses a danger to persons or property. In such cases, however, a local school hearing should be held as soon as possible.

PART II (C) ~ Rules Applicable to Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion

Rule 38 | Initiating Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

38.1 Action Prior to Recommending Long-term Suspension or Expulsion

When the principal has determined that long-term suspension or expulsion is a probable recommendation, the case will be referred to the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee. Major purposes of this committee are to ensure that all aspects of the case are treated, that the rights of the student are protected, and that the best interests of all concerned parties are being served.

38.2 Expulsion Procedures

A Rockdale County student may be subject to expulsion for conduct prohibited by the Rockdale County Student Discipline Code only after action by a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee. The student must have been afforded notice and the opportunity for a hearing prior to any such expulsion becoming effective. An expulsion may be imposed by a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee, notwithstanding that the student has been previously suspended by the principal, Superintendent, or other officials under rules governing suspensions of from one (1) to ten (10) days. When expulsion under this policy is proposed, adequate notice by the appropriate authorized official to the student and his/her parents at their last known address will include:

- A. A copy of the Rockdale County Student Discipline Code which describes the rules alleged to have been violated by the student.
- B. Names of witnesses or those who will present the school system's findings in the violations.
- C. The maximum penalty which may result from the alleged misconduct.
- D. The time and place of the Student Disciplinary Hearing.
- E. A statement that before expulsion can be invoked, the student has the right to a Student Disciplinary Hearing, attendance at which may be waived if the student and parents agree by signing a statement to that effect. The student and his/her parents should notify the school and school system within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of notice as to whether they will waive the hearing. If no notification is received, the hearing schedule will be observed.
- F. A statement that the student may examine evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and have legal counsel if desired.
- G. A copy of the hearing procedures.
- H. A statement that parents or guardians may waive the right to a hearing before the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee and accept in lieu of a hearing the punishment recommended by the principal. A form by which the parents or guardians can exercise such waiver will be enclosed with instructions.

38.3 Procedures for Conducting the Student Disciplinary Hearing

- A. Hearing Officer

The Superintendent shall appoint an individual to serve as Hearing Officer for Student Disciplinary Hearings. The Hearing Officer shall assure that a properly constituted Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee is convened, that appropriate notices are issued to all parties concerned, and that appropriate policies of the Board of Education are followed in the conduct of Student Disciplinary Hearings and shall preside at the Student Disciplinary Hearings.

The Hearing Officer is not a member of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee and does not take part in the committee's decision making. Further, the Hearing Officer shall be responsible for all aspects of preparation for, conduct of and follow-up after all Student Disciplinary Hearing Committees and any appeals therefrom.

B. Composition of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committees

Each Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee will be composed of three (3) members. Members will be administrators not associated with the school attended by the student, and they will be drawn from a pool of previously selected personnel who understand the role of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee in discipline and expulsion.

C. Powers of Student Disciplinary Hearing Committees

Students appearing before a Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee are presumed innocent. The principal or other school official shall have the burden of proof regarding rule violations and showing good cause for further discipline or expulsion. The burden of proof shall be a preponderance of the evidence standard, which means the evidence establishes more likely than not, a rule violation occurred. The principal will be given the right to open and to conclude.

Student Disciplinary Hearing Committees may set a punishment different than that requested by the principal or the school official. The Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee will base its decision on evidence presented at the hearing. A decision will be rendered as soon as possible following the hearing but in no event later than ten (10) days after the hearing. The Committee's decision will be reduced to writing in a letter form, which will be mailed to the student's parents or legal guardians, at the address on file, and within ten (10) days of the hearing. The letter will specify what further disciplinary action is prescribed.

D. Record of the Hearing

A tape recording and/or transcription will be made of the hearing.

E. Time and Place of the Hearing

Adequate notice (minimum of three (3) school days) will be given before the Student Disciplinary Hearing. Notice is considered to have been given when such notice is deposited in the U.S. mail, sent by certified mail with adequate postage affixed, addressed to the last known address of parent or guardian. Postponement may be granted by the Superintendent or designee for good cause.

F. Examination of Witnesses

Members of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee, the principal or other school officials, the school system's attorney, the student or his/her parents or legal counsel may question witnesses about matters relevant to the charges against the student and the disposition of the matter. Hearsay evidence is permissible, but a finding of guilt cannot be based solely on hearsay evidence. The Hearing Officer has the authority to limit long or irrelevant questioning or evidence.

G. Disposition of the Case

The Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee will reach its decision on whether the student is found guilty of the charges by a majority vote. The committee's decision will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. If the student is found innocent, the matter is terminated.

H. Appeals

An appeal of the decision of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee may be made to the Rockdale County Board of Education. A pending appeal to the Board of Education will not ordinarily prevent the beginning of the expulsion if such has been prescribed by the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee. Using his/her discretion, the Superintendent may decide to suspend enforcement of an expulsion, pending the outcome of appeals to the Board of Education. No new evidence may be presented to the Board of Education on appeal. All considerations on appeal will be based on the record of the proceedings of the Student Disciplinary Hearing; however, the Board of Education may request that a student and his/her parents appear in person or by attorney for questioning concerning their contentions when the appeal is officially considered by the Board.

Appeals to the Board of Education of the decision of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee may be made in writing to the Superintendent as the Executive Secretary of the Rockdale County Board of Education. Notice of appeal and written arguments must be filed no later than twenty (20) calendar days following the decision of the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee. The Board of Education shall review the record and shall render its decision in writing as soon as possible but no later than ten (10) days from the date of the appeal, excluding weekends and public holidays.

The decision will be reduced to writing in letter form which will be mailed within ten (10) days of the hearing. A student or principal may appeal the action of the local Board of Education to the state Board of Education. The penalty need not be postponed pending the outcome of the appeal. Such an appeal shall be in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160 and regulations of the state Board of Education governing such appeals.

Rule 39 | Scheduling Student Disciplinary Hearing

The Student Disciplinary Hearing will be scheduled and held within ten (10) school days of the beginning of suspension of a student or the occurrence of the incident causing the request for a hearing, whichever is later, unless postponement is requested. In cases where the student requests postponement and it is granted, the student will remain suspended until the hearing is held. In the event the Student Disciplinary Hearing is rescheduled

beyond the ten (10) days at the request of the school system, the student will be given an appropriate school placement after the tenth day pending the hearing.

Rule 40 | Group Hearings

When students are charged with violating the same rule, and have acted in concert, and the facts are basically the same for all students, a single hearing may be conducted for them if the Superintendent believes that the following conditions exist.

40.1 A single hearing will not likely result in confusion,

40.2 No student will have his/her interest substantially prejudiced by a group hearing for that student, and

40.3 The students charged with violating the same rule agree to a single hearing and waive their right to a confidential hearing.

If, during the hearing, the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee finds that a student's interest will be substantially prejudiced by the group hearing, the Committee may order a separate hearing for that student.

Rule 41 | Role of Parents or Attorney

The parents or legal guardian should be present at the Student Disciplinary Hearing and have an opportunity to make a statement to the Student Disciplinary Hearing Committee on their feelings about the proper disposition of the case and to answer questions. If the parents cannot be present or if the student or his/her parents think that the student's interests can be protected better by the presence of an attorney at the hearing in addition to his/her parents or guardian, the student may have an attorney present at their own expense. If the Superintendent thinks that the presence of the school board attorney will be helpful at the hearing, the Superintendent may request the school board attorney's presence.

PART III ~ Rules for Removal of Dangerous Students

Rule 42 | For Health or Safety

Any student who has a dangerous communicable disease that poses a substantial threat to the health or safety of the school community may be removed from school by the principal on the approval of the Superintendent until such student no longer poses such a threat.

Rule 43 | Disrupting School Operations

A student who has been charged with the unlawful selling of narcotics or such other serious violation of criminal laws may be removed from the school by the principal, upon the approval of the Superintendent, when it is necessary to protect other students or avoid substantial disruption to school operations. The school must be able to show that the continued presence of the student endangers other students or would substantially disrupt school operations. As soon as the student no longer poses such a threat, he/she shall be reinstated.

Student Placement Protocol (Case Management Meeting)

Students who have been out of school due to incarceration or detention often need a period of transition before returning to their home school. A protocol has been established for determining whether a student returning from a period of incarceration or detention due to alleged or adjudicated criminal or delinquent conduct should be placed in an alternative school program or returned to the student's home school. RCPS offers an alternative school program that affords these students an opportunity to rebuild their academic and social skills so that the transition to their home school will go smoothly. The primary considerations in making this determination are the educational needs of the returning student and the safety of other students and staff.

In many cases, the conduct at issue is very serious, ranging from property offenses to serious sexual violations or other violent acts. Students adjudicated for these offenses may be placed on a safety plan by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) or the Juvenile Court. These plans may impose certain restrictions on the returning student; for example, the student may not be allowed to be around children of a certain age or may have to be supervised by an adult at all times.

In some cases, these students have been expelled or suspended from RCPS or another school system or private school and the term of suspension or expulsion has not yet been completed. This brings other questions into play, such as whether the student should be excluded altogether for the remainder of the expulsion or suspension or offered an alternative placement (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2).

Before these students return to school, they will be referred to a case management meeting. In this meeting the case management committee will gather and review all appropriate information, including any information that the student's parents may wish to provide, and make a placement determination. Parents may be present for this review and may provide input. Attorneys will not be allowed to attend.

The protocol described above may be used in other types of student placement situations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or his designee. All placement determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis. Various factors including, but not limited to, age, length of incarceration, nature of charges, existing discipline order, potential safety concerns, disruption of education process, and present/prior discipline history may be used in making placement determination at all levels.

RCPS is authorized to refuse to readmit or enroll any student who has been suspended or expelled for being convicted of, being adjudicated to have committed, being indicted for, or having information on file for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act under O.C.G.A. § 15-11-28 which would be a felony if committed by an adult. If refused readmission or enrollment, the student or the student's parent or legal guardian has the right to request a hearing pursuant to the procedures provided for in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-754.

If a student receives services under IDEA or Section 504, the school assignment decision will be subject to a final review and approval by the student's individualized education program team or Section 504 team to ensure that the assigned school is able to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.