

Wilcox County Schools



Employee Handbook 2025-2026

We Believe in You!

Our Mission

“Preparing Productive Citizens”

Our Vision

To Excel Academically, Socially, and Professionally

Our Beliefs

1. Foster high expectations for every student among educators.
2. Ensure the provision of suitable educational programs tailored to individual children.
3. Cultivate moral and ethical values in students to foster mutual respect towards all individuals.
4. Optimize student learning by creating a safe and engaging environment.
5. Recognize and accommodate the diverse learning styles of all students.
6. Utilize student data effectively to identify and address individual needs.
7. Equip students with fundamental academic and life skills to foster their success.
8. Establish effective communication channels between parents and teachers as a vital component.
9. Promote an atmosphere of respect towards all students.
10. Encourage all staff members to embody lifelong learning and ethical conduct as role models.

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Information for all Employees

Benefits Summary

The school system provides the following benefits to employees:

- TRS employer rate will be 21.91%. There is no employer share of PSERS. It is all paid by the employee. The retirement benefit is \$17.00 per month x years of credible service.
- PSERS employees receive a 2% contribution to a 403B.
- Employer portion of health insurance for all employees who participate in State Health is \$1885.00 per month.
- Employer share of FICA (where applicable) – 6.20% of pay.
- Employer share of Medicare – 1.45% of pay.
- Long-term disability – 40% benefit on the first \$30,000 of pay.
- Leave at 1.25 days per month.
- Professional development – On occasion the school system may pay stipends for professional development on non-workdays. This is the exception and not the norm.

Employee Benefits

All employee benefits, except for the State Health Benefit Plan, were evaluated and selected by a benefits committee made up of a cross-section of all employees, including teachers, administrators, nutrition, and bus drivers. The employee benefits are accessible through www.mywilcoxbenefits.com.

The State Health Benefit Plan may be accessed through www.mywilcoxbenefits.com or www.dch.ga.gov.

Paid Parental Leave

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:

- The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
- The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee

paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.

A qualifying life event means:

- The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
- The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
- The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.

The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12-month period is 240 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period. The rolling 12-month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.

Eligible employees requesting paid parental leave must submit the district's designated form to the Superintendent or designee at least 30 school days in advance of the requested leave start date. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice as soon as practicable, which means as soon as both possible and practical, ordinarily within one (1) or two (2) working days of learning of the need for leave. The employee will also provide an explanation of why the 30 days' notice requirement was not practicable.

Please contact your principal if you qualify for paid parental leave.

Emergencies/Weather/Early Release

The Superintendent will make the decision on whether or not to close schools as soon as possible. Tune to WMAZ TV13, WQXY 103.9 FM, or the school system website at www.wilcoxcountyschools.org. Updates will also be placed on the school system's Facebook account. The Superintendent will also use the mass communication system to message every phone number in the school system's database as soon as a decision is reached.

The Safety Plan enacted at all schools will be implemented in the event of an emergency at school.

Employee Types

Full-time employees who are certified and contracted are covered by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-940 (The Fair Dismissal Act of 1975), and are afforded certain rights under the Act. Other employees, including classified, Pre-K, and part-time employees, are employed under Georgia's "at-will" employment law and may be terminated at any time without cause.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Wilcox County Schools is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based upon race,

color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Forms

See <https://www.wilcox.k12.ga.us>.

School Calendar

See <https://www.wilcox.k12.ga.us/community-resources/calendar>.

Sexual Misconduct Training

Every employee is obligated to fulfill the mandated training as per O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.7(c). This annual training must be completed by all employees before August 31 of each academic year, utilizing their compliance.director.org account.

Other Mandated, Yearly Training

Detailed training information will be conveyed via email at the commencement of each academic year. In addition to Sexual Harassment Awareness and Sexual Misconduct Reporting, all certified staff members (teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators) are required to complete the following modules:

- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Child Sexual Abuse & Assault Awareness & Prevention
- Code of Ethics
- Copyright for Schools
- Ethical Use of Social Media
- FERPA Data Privacy
- Human Sex Trafficking
- IDEA Parental Rights
- Internet Safety
- Mandated Reporting
- McKinney-Vento
- Suicide Awareness and Prevention
- Title IX Regulations and Information

Code of Ethics

Every educator is obligated to follow the Code of Ethics established by the Professional Standards Commission. Certified personnel must remain informed about the Code of Ethics and consistently uphold its principles. Violations of the Code of Ethics will be reported to the Georgia Professional Standards

Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

This procedure is established to facilitate the development of controls concerning fiscal matters that aid in the detection and prevention of waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption against the Wilcox County Board of Education. It is the intent of the district to promote consistent organizational behavior by providing guidelines and assigning responsibility for the development of controls and the conduct of investigations. These procedures apply to acts involving employees as well as consultants, vendors, contractors, and any other parties doing business with the district.

Management is responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud, misappropriations, and other inappropriate conduct. Each employee is responsible for reporting any indication of irregularity. Any fraud that is detected or suspected must be reported to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent has the primary responsibility for the investigation of all suspected fraudulent financial acts as defined herein. If the investigation substantiates that fraudulent activities have occurred, final action or resolution will rest with the board.

Investigations related to fraud will be treated with confidentiality. Investigation results will not be disclosed or discussed with anyone other than those who have a legitimate need to know.

Teacher Issues

General Guidelines for Teachers

1. Highly effective teachers demonstrate a range of essential qualities, including proficient classroom management skills, fostering positive expectations for student achievement, delivering well-prepared lessons aligned with standards, consistently engaging students in the learning process, and ensuring comprehensive coverage of all required standards.
2. Actively engage parents in the education process from the early stages and maintain frequent communication. Recognize that parents appreciate positive updates, and their involvement can greatly facilitate your job as an educator.
3. Clearly communicate your expectations to students and maintain consistency in disciplinary measures. By setting clear guidelines and enforcing them consistently, you establish a structured and fair learning environment.
4. Treat students with respect at all times and refrain from using sarcasm. It is essential to differentiate between criticizing a behavior and criticizing the student personally, ensuring that your interactions prioritize respect and support for their growth.
5. Demonstrate a willingness to actively listen and exercise discretion in choosing which issues to address. Prioritize constructive dialogue and focus on significant matters that contribute to the educational environment.
6. Cultivate an atmosphere where all students are treated with the same care and respect that you would desire for your own child. Uphold fairness, empathy, and dignity in all interactions with students.

7. Under no circumstances should you leave your class unsupervised. It is essential to maintain a constant presence in the classroom to ensure the safety and well-being of students.
8. Refrain from placing students in unsupervised situations in the hallway. Provide appropriate supervision and guidance to students at all times to maintain a secure and structured learning environment.

Supervision of Students

When students are not in class, learning is not taking place. Keep students in class; CLASS TIME IS TOO VALUABLE! Follow established procedures for your school.

If you send a student out of the classroom for any reason, he/she must have a signed hall pass.

Encourage students to use the restroom and get water between classes.

School nurses are available, but every situation does not require a nurse visit. Use your professional judgment.

Absenteeism

Just as student attendance is important for academic success, staff members are expected to be consistent in attendance.

1. It is important to acknowledge that occasional absences from work may arise due to various reasons. However, it is crucial to recognize your indispensable role in the overall learning process as the instructor within your classroom. The success of our school system hinges upon the consistent presence of dedicated teachers; therefore, prioritizing the scheduling of doctor's appointments, dental visits, or any other necessary commitments outside of school hours whenever possible is the best-case scenario. Although we endeavor to minimize the occasions where you are required to cover classes for your fellow colleagues, please be aware that in situations where a significant number of teachers are absent, you may be approached to cover a class. While we understand the potential inconvenience this may pose, we are committed to mitigating such occurrences to the best of our abilities, even though complete elimination is not feasible.
2. To notify the school about your intended absence, please inform the office at least one day in advance or as soon as possible. In situations where prior notice is not feasible, make a call to the designated school representative as soon as possible.
3. It is mandatory to complete the required leave forms for all types of absences, including requested leaves. Please refer to the Forms section of this handbook for detailed instructions and necessary documentation.
4. Upon returning to work after a period of sick leave, ensure that you promptly complete a Leave Form. Failure to submit this form may impede our ability to rectify any discrepancies in the type of leave

charged. Consequently, if the form has not been submitted, assistance in resolving the issue at the central office may not be possible.

5. Time away from school is reported to the central office in hourly increments.
6. Use Leave Request Forms to request permission to leave early or come in late.
7. Personal and professional leave must be approved at least three (3) school days in advance. Appropriate forms are available through the office. **Generally speaking, personal leave on days prior to a scheduled holiday is prohibited. Personal leave will not be approved during testing periods except in the case of emergencies.**
8. Prior approval from both your principal and the Central Office is required for professional leave related to instruction and conferences. We value and endorse professional development opportunities that contribute to enhancing classroom instruction. However, it is important to recognize that attending every workshop or conference may not be feasible for everyone. Thus, each request for professional leave will be assessed individually, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding it.
9. Teachers are given 12 sick days per academic year and may carry over unused sick leave from one year to another to accumulate up to 45 days of sick leave. Unused sick leave beyond 45 days is banked and can be used toward retirement. Three full workdays, or 24 hours per year, may be used for personal leave. School Board policies GBRIA, GBRI B, GBRI C, GBRI D, GBRI F, and GBRI G will be adhered to.
10. Each teacher is responsible for preparing a substitute folder and having it on file in the school office. This folder should consist of rosters and seating charts for all of your current classes (remember to make updates as you gain or lose students), a lesson plan, basic class rules you expect of your students, and any other information needed by a substitute. Have this ready by the end of the first week, and update as needed. **However, these plans are only for emergencies.** At all other times, please make current plans available for the substitute.
11. If you would like a particular substitute, please make your preference known to the school designee.
12. Please refer to the board-approved absentee policy.

Chain of Command

It is appropriate and acceptable for teachers to discuss issues with the superintendent or Board members; however, teachers should follow the appropriate chain of command. It is as follows: (1) Department Chair, (2) School Administration, (3) Central Office Director, if appropriate, (4) Superintendent, and (5) Board of Education. For classified staff, the appropriate chain of command is: (1) immediate supervisor, (2) School Administration, (3) Central Office Director, (4) Superintendent, and (5) Board of Education. Superiors cannot address issues and concerns if they are not aware of them. Most issues and decisions can be dealt with professionally if communication lines remain open. Failure to

follow the chain of command undermines the supervisory process and could result in poor evaluations and/or termination of employment.

Classroom Care

Custodians assigned to schools will do most of the cleaning work; however, the building is large and time is limited. Teachers and students should help by keeping paper off the floor and giving proper care to the desks, walls, equipment, etc. Please strive daily to keep your room attractive and orderly to maintain the right classroom atmosphere. At the end of each day, ask students to remove any paper in or around their desks. Before you leave school each day, please ensure that all windows are closed and locked, lights and all electronic equipment are turned off, and the door is locked.

Copier Use

The copiers are available for teacher use. We will do everything possible to keep the necessary supplies for the copiers stocked, but be mindful that these supplies are expensive. Make copies of what are necessary to teach your class, but consider alternatives when possible. Also, consider printing side-by-side and double-sided or using your Interactive Panels or document cameras. Money spent on copies means less money for other areas of instruction.

Dress Code

Faculty and staff dress should reflect the standards set forth in the student dress code. As leaders, we are expected to model appropriate attire for our students. The following guidelines apply to all faculty and staff:

1. Faculty and staff should dress professionally at all times.
2. Jeans may be worn only on pre-approved days, scheduled dress-down days, or when appropriate for specific activities.
3. Casual shorts are not permitted. Any shorts worn must be dressy and of appropriate length. Umbros, gym shorts, jogging shorts, or exercise shorts are not allowed. Coaches may wear khaki shorts that reach the knee.
4. Skirts and dresses must be of appropriate length (defined as touching the knee cap).
5. Tank tops and sundresses are not permitted.
6. Strapped sandals are acceptable; however, beach shoes, shower shoes, bedroom slippers, slides, or Crocs are not allowed.
7. When wearing leggings or jeggings, a shirt that extends to the knee cap must be worn.
8. Caps or hats are not to be worn inside the building.
9. Male employees must refrain from wearing earrings while on the job.
10. Employees must refrain from wearing nose rings and septum piercings.

Educational Associations

Teachers are encouraged to belong to professional educational organizations whose function is the betterment of educators.

Evaluation of Teachers

The Wilcox County School system will implement the GaLEADS evaluation system.

Field Trips and Athletic/Extracurricular Activities Off-Campus

All field trips and off-campus activities must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Trips must have a direct relationship to a course of study, be adequately supervised by school personnel, and receive advance approval from both the school principal and superintendent.
- The club or class organizing the trip is responsible for covering costs unless other financial arrangements are made. Ensure all required field trip forms are completed and submitted to the principal's office before the trip.
- Prepare an Emergency Contact list before any trip or activity. Include the name of each participant (student and adult), a designated contact person, and an emergency phone number. Submit one copy to the office and carry another copy during the trip.
- Coaches and club/competition sponsors should submit a team roster to the school office promptly. Before departing for an away game, provide a list of non-traveling team members or any travelers not on the roster to the school office.
- In case of an emergency, contact the school immediately. If outside of school hours, contact the principal directly.
- Provide a roster of students attending the trip to the office on the day prior to the trip. This ensures accurate recording of absences ("Red-X" coding) and reduces confusion about who is on the trip and who is absent.
- Athletic teams and other competitive groups should provide a team roster and a schedule of dates and times students will be out of class. For tournaments and playoffs, discuss departure times with the administration before finalizing plans.

Getting Along with Others

As educators, we are professionals, and it is expected that we will all act in a professional manner. It is unrealistic to think that a group of co-workers as large as ours will not have occasional misunderstandings. These should be handled in an appropriate and professional manner. Spreading gossip and ill will is unprofessional and unacceptable. Do not air your disputes in a public forum and make every effort to get along with other employees.

Late to School Procedures

All teachers and staff members should be at work and at their assigned area by 7:30 AM each morning. If

you are going to be later than 7:30 AM, telephone the office to inform them. Continually being late to work could result in your being placed on personal leave for the time you are out. If tardiness becomes a problem, then the teacher will be provided with a substitute and told to go back home. Continual tardiness can be a reason for dismissal. You are essential to the learning process!

Leaving School Procedure

Students will be dismissed each day at 3:00 PM (WCES) or 3:06 PM (WCMS/WCHS). Teachers' workday is until 3:30 PM. Many of you come in early and stay late, and your efforts are appreciated. Occasions may occur that require you to leave early or for a short time; if so, do so through the office. Avoid running errands during the school day, including your planning period. When it is necessary to leave campus, obtain the permission of an administrator and sign out in the office. Please do not ask to leave unless it is an important reason.

Movies in the Classroom

Please limit the use of videos in the classroom to short clips as much as possible. Full-length feature films should be avoided unless after the completion of a book/novel. Movies not in the school media center cannot be shown without prior approval from an administrator. Permission should be sought at least one week in advance with a written copy of your lesson plans.

Purchase Orders

All money spent through the school must be requested through the purchase order system. Instructional money from the central office is requested through the system purchase order (PO), and school-level money is requested through the local Check Request. Your principal and school bookkeeper can help you determine which to use. Before you order anything that you want the school system to pay for, you must get a PO number and have the order pre-approved. If you order it without a PO, make sure you are willing to pay the bill out of personal funds when the merchandise is delivered. If you have need for a check to be written out of a school account, see your principal. Plan ahead and your request will be ready when needed. If you cannot have it in on time, plan to make other arrangements to pay the expense.

Discuss and obtain permission for the purchase with your principal or program director (Aleph Fore – Title Programs and PreK, Jay Dailey -CTAE, Matthew Hall – Special Ed, Ginny Clack – PASS). Complete one of your school's POs – your school secretary has these. Make sure to enter the date, vendor, and attn.: quantity, description, unit price, and total. Enter your name as the PERSON ORDERING. Have your principal or program director sign in the first approved by section. Send the PO to the central office for superintendent's approval. Superintendent will approve/deny and submit PO to Gillian McWhorter. When the school submits a purchase order to the Central Office, the order is placed for the item(s) after appropriate levels of approval have been granted. Gillian will place the order. If there are problems with the purchase, Gillian McWhorter will notify you. If there are no problems, Gillian McWhorter will return the PINK and GOLD copy to your school. When you receive the order, verify all items were received. Sign the PINK copy of the PO and return it to Gillian McWhorter through office mail so payment may be made. Accounts Payable has no way of knowing when the items are received at the school unless the person ordering lets the Central Office know. The Central Office will not pay the bill until the school lets them know that the order has been received in entirety.

Staff Use of Cell Phones

Staff members are permitted to have personal electronic devices (cell phones, smart watches, personal computers, tablets, ear buds, etc.) at school but must refrain from using them for personal reasons during class time or when students are under their supervision. Personal electronic device use must not interfere with instructional time and the supervision of the students.

Social Networking and Text Messaging

Teachers are strongly advised against texting students or allowing students to “befriend” them on Facebook® and other social networking sites. Remember, content posted on personal networking sites carries the same weight as if published in a local newspaper. Ethical concerns may arise when these guidelines are disregarded.

1. As employees of the school district, staff are expected to maintain professionalism in all public and online communications, including social media, blogs, forums, and community settings, whether during or outside of school hours.
2. While the district respects each employee’s right to speak as a private citizen on matters of public concern, that right comes with responsibilities. The following expectations apply:
 - a. Employees must not post or share content that disrupts the educational environment, damages working relationships, or erodes public trust in the school district.
 - b. Personal attacks, inflammatory statements, or repeated disparagement of the school board, superintendent, or district leadership may be considered unprofessional conduct, especially when such commentary interferes with school operations or creates a hostile work climate.
 - c. Posts that violate confidentiality (including student, personnel, or operational matters) are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
 - d. Employees should avoid using their district title, school name, or position in a way that suggests official endorsement of personal views.
 - e. Constructive feedback is encouraged through appropriate internal channels and in a manner that reflects professionalism and respect for the school community.
 - f. Staff are not permitted to post pictures of students on their personal social media accounts at any time. The photograph publication waiver applies only to official school websites and school-affiliated social media platforms.
 - g. Staff should not communicate with students via personal text messaging. All communication with students should occur through approved district platforms (such as school email, school-sponsored apps, or classroom communication tools). Exceptions must be pre-approved by administration and should involve group messaging with parent or administrative oversight.

Employees who engage in public discourse that violates these standards may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with board policy and applicable Georgia law.

Solicitation

Employees are prohibited from using email lists or groups to announce events where the sender, their friends, or family would financially benefit (e.g., Tupperware® parties, fundraisers benefiting the employee directly). Notices promoting benevolent fundraising activities for other employees, students,

community members, or worthy causes are permissible. For clarification on specific activities, consult your principal. Violations will result in permanent blocking of the sender's email account from the school system's servers.

Travel Reimbursement

Requests for travel reimbursement must be signed by the school principal or assistant principal. Attach a Google Maps or MapQuest printout verifying mileage to and from the training or workshop, along with an agenda. Deduct normal commuting miles if the employee traveled from home but was expected to commute to work that day. Ensure the training or workshop agenda is included with the reimbursement request. Submit travel requests to the Central Office by the 1st of the following month (e.g., June travel by July 1). Checks are typically processed around the 10th of each month. Failure to submit a properly completed reimbursement request by the deadline will delay reimbursement until the following month. Reimbursement requests older than 90 days will not be honored.

Miscellaneous

Students are not allowed to sign out for any reason without parental permission. School administration shall use discretion in setting forth procedures for sign-outs. Teachers should be sure that lessons are well-prepared, the class starts on time, and the class does not end too soon in order to insure good student discipline. Do not allow students to gather by the classroom door before the bell. Remember, YOU dismiss the class! Teachers are to help supervise the halls and other areas around campus as needed. Be standing outside your door or at your duty station during class change. If students' congregating becomes a problem, report it to the office. The more eyes watching, the less will happen.

Resignation

Notice of resignation must be presented in writing to the principal as soon as practical. The resignation should include a final date of work. Employees under contract should include in the resignation a request to be released from the contract. The Superintendent makes recommendations for release, and the Board of Education acts on those recommendations. Not all requests are granted, depending upon the timing of the request.

Student Issues

Student Attendance Policy

See Student Handbook.

Beginning of the Student's School Day

The Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence may be conducted immediately after the Tardy Bell rings. Each student at Wilcox County Schools has the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. A student will lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Any student choosing not to participate should behave in an orderly manner during the pledge. Participation is optional but encouraged (Board Policy JCAC).

The 1994 Georgia General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 396, mandating a "minute of reflection" at the start of each school day throughout the year. This brief quiet time of reflection should not exceed 60 seconds, and all students assembled are expected to participate in a respectful manner. Disruptive behavior, such as loudness or leaving desks, is unacceptable. It is the teacher's responsibility to instruct students on appropriate conduct during this time and use it as a teaching opportunity.

Any student misconduct during this reflection time will be addressed according to the school's behavior code, similar to other behavioral issues. The quiet time of reflection is not intended nor conducted as a religious service or experience but rather an opportunity for each student to contemplate the day's activities. Administrators and teachers should neither suggest nor discourage prayer during this time. However, if a student inquires about prayer, teachers should inform them that silent prayer is permissible if desired.

Teachers are expected to begin class promptly. By 8:30 AM, attendance should be taken and entered into PowerSchool. This allows the office to promptly notify parents of student absences. Attendance for subsequent class periods should be taken within the first 15 minutes and submitted through PowerSchool. If a teacher suspects students are skipping class, they should inform the office immediately to facilitate locating the students. Timely attendance taking helps deter truancy.

Discipline

1. Consistency in dealing with students is essential for effective teaching. Students notice inconsistency in treatment and discipline.
2. Teachers are expected to maintain proper classroom discipline. Every effort should be made to address discipline issues within the classroom before involving a school administrator. Generally accepted methods of discipline such as extra work, isolation, and detention are permitted and expected. Remember, referring a student to the office means relinquishing control over the situation to the administration.
3. All teachers have the authority and responsibility to maintain proper control over students under their direct supervision and those not under the direct supervision of another teacher.
4. The ability to control and discipline students is crucial in the teaching process. Clearly communicate your expectations to students. Disruptive behavior should be handled appropriately. Sometimes students may try to provoke a reaction; responding calmly and professionally often defuses the situation. The student should still receive consequences for misbehavior while avoiding unnecessary stress. Administrators are available to assist if needed.

5. A referral form should be completed for every discipline issue referred to the office. If a student's behavior warrants removal from your classroom, refer them to the office. Consequences of the referral should be returned to the teacher within 24 hours. If a student refuses to comply with your request to report to the office, call for an administrator to come to your room promptly. Avoid arguing or using sarcasm in front of the class, as it may escalate the situation and is unprofessional. Remember your role as the adult and maintain professionalism.
6. Teachers are expected to contact parents regarding classroom discipline issues, which can often help minimize these problems. If you need a conference with a parent and prefer an administrator to be present, inform your administrators.
7. Reasonable force may be used, in the exercise of lawful authority, to restrain or correct pupils and maintain order. However, new guidelines for Restraint and Seclusion are in place; if unsure, consult your administrators. Refer to the Discipline Policy in the student handbook for further details.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment will be used as a method of discipline under the following guidelines:

1. Corporal punishment shall not be excessive or unduly severe.
2. Corporal punishment must be administered by an administrator in the presence of a principal, assistant principal, or their designated school employee authorized by the Board of Education to administer such punishment.
3. The administering administrator must provide the child's parents, upon request, a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the supervising principal or assistant principal. However, such explanation shall not be admissible as evidence in any subsequent civil action resulting from the corporal punishment.
4. Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a child whose parents or legal guardian has filed with the school principal a statement denying permission for corporal punishment on the day of the pupil's enrollment.

Corporal punishment will only be used:

1. When there is no parent-signed denial form on file in the office, students may occasionally choose between corporal punishment and In-School Suspension (ISS) at the discretion of the administrator.
2. Only in the presence of an administrator or other designated school employee.
3. Only with the principal's paddle or an appropriate substitute, and always on the buttocks. Students should never be held or restrained while being paddled. Corporal punishment is to be used as a disciplinary tool, not the only tool. Teachers should be aware that some parents have requested that corporal punishment not be used on their children.

Teachers should not threaten students with corporal punishment. It must not be excessive, cruel, or unusual. Principals may administer corporal punishment at their discretion to maintain discipline over

pupils under their care, ensuring it is not excessive or unduly severe.

Student Relations

A positive relationship between students and teachers is crucial. Suggestions include:

1. Be fair and consistent.
2. Be reasonable and tolerant, yet firm when necessary.
3. Recognize and commend students for their achievements.
4. Provide constructive criticism without embarrassing or ridiculing students.
5. Delegate responsibility to students.
6. Avoid pre-judging students based on assumptions.
7. Clearly explain rules, standards, and expectations to students.

Student Accidents

If a student is injured under your supervision, notify the office immediately. An accident report detailing the incident must be completed by the end of the day.

Be Involved with Our Schools

One of the best ways to build trust with your students is to show interest in the activities they participate in at Wilcox County Schools. It can mean a lot to a student to know you saw them in a performance, game, or practice and acknowledged their effort. Make an effort to attend extracurricular events where your students are involved. Even stopping by a practice for a brief 10 minutes as you leave school can make a difference to them.

Students with Disabilities

All students can learn, and teachers should have high expectations for every student. Students receiving special education or Section 504 accommodations must receive those accommodations. **All teachers MUST adhere to modifications outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP).**

Assemblies

Faculty members are required to attend all assemblies and assist in maintaining proper order.

Lockers

High school students may be assigned lockers. The office will maintain a list of student names, their locker assignments, and combinations.

Media Center

Please refer to the Student Handbook for details.

Lunchroom Procedure

Teachers are expected to monitor students as they exit hallways, return from the restroom or lunchroom, or during lunch if on duty. Even when not on duty, teachers are authority figures and should assist with discipline and behavior at all times. Teachers should refrain from removing plates and eating utensils from the lunchroom (carry-out boxes are available). Eating in classrooms is prohibited; break rooms and the lunchroom are encouraged for meals. Students should not remove food from the lunchroom unless authorized by an administrator.

Grading Policy

Refer to the Student Handbook for details.

Instructional Assistance

Teaching is our top priority. Teachers are encouraged to seek ways to enhance instructional techniques to benefit our students. Since students learn differently, teachers may need to adapt teaching styles and remain flexible. The administration is committed to supporting teachers in this area. Mr. Wade Burnette, Curriculum Director, is available to provide assistance. Fellow teachers are valuable resources for sharing effective teaching techniques and strategies for reaching students. Teachers should communicate when instructional support is needed.

Lesson Plans and Curriculum Guides

Administrators should have access to teachers' lesson plans according to each building's protocols. Teachers should use up-to-date Curriculum Guides, Frameworks, Curriculum Maps, and Standards during teaching. English, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and CTAE (Vocational) teachers are utilizing the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). Refer to www.georgiastandards.org for details. Teachers are required to cover all standards.

Grading Scale

The following scale will be used in assigning grades:

90-100: A (Satisfactory)

80-89: B (Needs Improvement)

70-79: C

Below 70: U (Unsatisfactory/Failure)

Teachers will record and report students' grades in the PowerSchool grade book program. All files are

stored and backed up on the server. For security, teachers are encouraged to keep backups of grades in a secure location. Grades should be updated regularly and dated according to when the grade was given, not when it was entered into the computer. A student's grade will reflect a running average throughout the school year. Parents can view their child's grades through the school system website (www.wilcoxcountyschools.org). It is the teacher's responsibility to verify grades. Teachers should closely monitor averages and ensure parents have confidence in the grades their students are earning. Assign a zero (0) for any work not completed to reflect the urgency of making up missed assignments.

Continuous Grading

All courses at Wilcox County High School are one semester long. The school returned to a block schedule beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. One unit of credit will be earned for a passing grade in semester-long courses at the end of the semester. No partial units can be earned. Continuous grading will be used for classes throughout the school year. One unit of credit will be earned for a passing grade at the end of the school year for each year-long course.

Grading System

Educational progress and accomplishments must be evaluated and recorded in terms of numerical grades to ensure uniformity across all courses.

The following criteria will establish this uniformity:

1. Final course averages may not exceed 100%.
2. Passing grades range from 70 to 100.
3. If a teacher posts grades for a class and a student has not completed a missed assignment, the grade must be recorded as zero initially. The grade should be updated once the assignment is completed to avoid sudden drops in grades for students and parents.
4. To qualify for the honor roll, students must maintain an average of 90 or above for the grading period. When averaging grades with fractions, round up to the next whole number if the fraction is .5 or higher, and use the whole number for all further calculations; round down if the fraction is less than .5.
5. To be considered an honor graduate, students must maintain an overall high school average of 90 or above.
6. Courses requiring a Georgia Milestones End Of Course Test will have this test count for 10% of the final grade, with the average of all other coursework counting for 90%, unless waived by the State Board of Education.
7. Students served by the Hospital Homebound Program until the end of the semester may receive a grade of I (incomplete) with the principal's permission.
8. Students who miss semester exams or end-of-semester work must receive numerical grades (including zeros for missed work). All missed work, including exams, can be made up within three working days after the end of the semester with permission from the principal.
9. Comments on report cards should accurately reflect the grade received.
10. A Held Report Card List will be maintained in the school office at the end of each semester. Teachers must obtain principal permission before adding a student to this list prior to report card

distribution.

11. Teachers are responsible for verifying all final grades.

12. Tests, Homework, and Absences

All student absences will be categorized as either excused or unexcused. Missed class work or tests during an absence must be completed to receive credit. Students receive a zero on missed work and tests until they are made up. Upon returning from an absence, students must present a note signed by a parent/guardian or a doctor's statement explaining the absence. Excuse notes should be submitted on the first day back, and excuses will not be accepted more than three school days following the return.

Tests and missed work should be made up within three days of returning to school or as arranged by the teacher (typically one day for each day absent beyond two days) to receive full credit. Students are responsible for making up all missed assignments. If a student is present when a test or assignment is announced, they are expected to be prepared to take the test or submit the assignment on the day they return, even if they were absent the previous day. Students suspended home for disciplinary reasons will receive zeros for missed work.

Hospital Homebound

Students with valid medical conditions may qualify for Hospital Homebound services. Please contact Mr. Matthew Hall for further information.

Homework

Homework is an integral part of the educational process and should be assigned regularly in reasonable amounts. Assignments should benefit students without overwhelming them with excessive workloads.

Graded Student Work

All student work must be graded. It is important to inform parents of their child's grades, and parent signatures may be required on graded assignments.

Reporting to Parents

A grade report will be provided to parents at the mid-point and end of each nine-week period. The school's report card will inform parents about their child's academic progress, attitude/conduct, and attendance. Teachers are encouraged to send individual class progress reports home as needed.

Parents have daily access to their child's grades and attendance through PowerSchool. If parents inquire about a password, they should be directed to the office. Encouraging parents to use this resource helps them stay informed about their child's progress early on, preventing issues later. Teachers must be able to justify all grades given based on recorded test grades, daily grades, etc. Grades should never be deducted as a disciplinary measure.

Parent Relations

Building a strong teacher-parent relationship is crucial for effective teaching. Consider the following in teacher-parent relationships:

1. Be patient and courteous.
2. Take time to thoroughly discuss problems and suggest solutions.
3. Empathize with and acknowledge the parent's concerns.
4. Support and foster parental efforts.
5. Keep parents well-informed.

Faculty and Individual Meetings with Parents and Others

All faculty members are required to attend meetings scheduled by the county and individual school administration, unless special permission is granted by the principal beforehand. This includes, but is not limited to: IEP Meetings, Section 504 Meetings, RTI Meetings, Parent Conference Days, and Open House.

Records and Reports

All records and reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. Final school year paychecks will only be issued once all records are satisfactorily completed to the administration's standards. Permanent records should never be removed from the record room unless properly signed out on the designated sheet atop the filing cabinets. Records must be returned by the end of the day and should never be left overnight in classrooms or taken home, per State Board of Education policy.

General Information

Announcements

Announcements will commence at the beginning of 1st period. To ensure inclusion, any announcement requests must be submitted to the office by 7:55 AM daily. While efforts are made to minimize interruptions to instructional time, occasional later announcements may be necessary. Announcements must pertain solely to school-sponsored activities. It is imperative that students pay attention during announcements to avoid missing important information. Items for the school bulletin should be submitted to the office; submissions received before school will be included in that day's bulletin, with others added as time permits.

Visitors on Campus and in the School

In compliance with Georgia law and to bolster student safety, any individual not categorized as a student, school employee, school board member, approved volunteer adhering to school guidelines, or an authorized invitee must check in at the designated location upon entering the campus. This check-in process requires providing a reason for their presence at the school. Spouses and relatives must also

report through the office before proceeding to classrooms.

School Closing Procedure

The primary criterion for school closure during inclement weather will be the safety of students. Conditions such as heavy rain, and occasionally snow and ice, may render primary and secondary roads unsafe. If health and safety are compromised, school dismissal may occur. The superintendent will decide on school closures as soon as possible. Communication of this decision will be disseminated via the school website, social media, and mass Communications platform. Updates will be available on the school system's website, www.wilcoxcountyschools.org, as soon as possible.

Fire Drills and Alerts

Principals will schedule regular fire drills, severe weather drills, and intruder drills annually. Classroom teachers are responsible for familiarizing students with drill procedures and conducting drills in a calm and orderly manner. During drills, the fire alarm will sound continuously, and the principal will signal the "all clear." Refer to the student handbook for additional details.

Funds Collected

Teachers are mandated to collect various funds and are accountable for safeguarding these funds until they are receipted by the principal through the bookkeeping office. Funds should not be left unsecured in desks or other places. State law necessitates that principals account for all funds collected and deposit them within one school day. Therefore, teachers must deliver all funds collected in school or through fundraising projects to the principal via the bookkeeping office. The principal or bookkeeper will issue receipts for money turned in and provide a detailed financial report. All funds should be submitted to the bookkeeper by 12:00 noon daily. Due to auditor requirements, a deposit summary detailing all monies deposited into activity and athletic accounts must be on file, including student names, amounts collected, and total balances. See Forms for more information.

Lending Money

Employees are discouraged from lending money to students for any reason. If a student requires financial assistance, please direct them to an administrator.

Fund Raising Projects

All fundraising projects within any school must receive approval from the principal and superintendent, and all requests must be submitted in writing. If you assign a student a task involving selling items for a fundraising project, ensure the student is trustworthy. The administration will not assume responsibility for collecting money on your behalf. Students cannot be compelled to sell items as a condition for club

membership. Items sold on school premises must benefit school-related groups. Personal profit from sales to students is prohibited. Sales activities should not disrupt the learning environment. Class time is designated for learning, not for selling or purchasing items. Never send a student to another class to purchase fundraising goods.

Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages

Teachers should uphold the community's perception of educators as individuals of high integrity. Please exercise discretion when consuming alcoholic beverages in public settings. For health and safety reasons, the Wilcox County Board of Education prohibits employees from using tobacco products during normal working hours on Board of Education property, during transit to and from school-sponsored activities involving students, and while supervising school activities away from Board property.

Drug-Free Schools

Refer to the Student Handbook for details.

Civil Rights Law

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin (Title I of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990), or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Employees, students, and the general public are hereby informed that the Wilcox County School System does not discriminate in educational programs, activities, or employment policies. The following individuals have been designated to coordinate efforts to implement this nondiscriminatory policy:

- Perkins Act: Jay Dailey
- Title VI & ADA: Aleph Fore
- Title IX: Aleph Fore
- Section 504: Matthew Hall

For inquiries regarding the application of the Perkins Act, Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and ADA to the policies and practices of the school system, contact the designated personnel above at the Superintendent of Schools office. Alternatively, inquiries can be directed to the Georgia Department of Education, Twin Towers East, Atlanta 30334; the Regional Office for Civil Rights, Atlanta 30323; or the Director, Office for Civil Rights, Education Department, Washington, D.C. 20201.

Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

(a) Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her school.

b) Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

(c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Listed below are definitions for "sexual abuse" and "sexual misconduct":

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showed or displayed sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Wrote sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spread sexual rumors (i.e., said a student was gay or a lesbian).
5. Spied on students as they dressed, showered, or used the restroom at school.
6. Flashed or "mooned" students.
7. Touched, excessively hugged, or grabbed students in a sexual way.
8. Forced a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talked or asked about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
10. Talked repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Made fun of students' body parts.
12. Called students sexual names.

Due Process and Student Grievance

See Student Handbook and school system website: www.wilcoxcountyschools.org.

Student Civil Rights (Board Policy JCA)

See Student Handbook.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

This is to inform you of the latest procedure to follow in the case of suspected child abuse. Board policy JGI-EP and JGI are included for your information.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (JGI-EP)

An administrator or a counselor is the appropriate person to make reports of suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Family and Children Services. All school personnel suspecting child abuse and neglect shall make complaints to an administrator or a counselor. The administrator or counselor should take minimal individual investigative steps before reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the county's Department of Family and Children Services. The system superintendent shall be notified of all referrals on child abuse and neglect received. When reports of suspected child abuse and neglect are made in good faith, reporting is legal under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and does not constitute a violation of it so long as the following factors are taken into account:

1. The seriousness of the threat to the child's health and safety.
2. The need for the information from the child's education records to protect the child's health and safety.
3. Whether the information is being disclosed to persons who are in a position to deal with the emergency.
4. Whether time is of the essence in dealing with the emergency.

Student Welfare-Child Abuse Reports (JGI)

School officials having reason to believe that children within their care under 18 years of age have been abused by a parent or caretaker are required to report the incident to a child welfare agency providing protective services or to an appropriate police authority. Anyone making such a report in good faith is entitled to immunity. Abuse includes physical injuries, neglect, and exploitation defined as where a child's parents or caretaker allows or permits the child to engage in prostitution or allows or permits the child to engage in sexually explicit conduct.

Complaints and Grievances - Board Policy GAE

The Board shall encourage the administration to:

1. Discover and practice effective means of resolving differences that may arise among employees and between employees and administrators.
2. Reduce potential areas of grievance.
3. Establish recognized channels of communication between the staff, administration, and the Board.

The members of the Board shall encourage parents with concerns about a student/teacher or student/principal problem to contact that teacher or principal and try to work the problem out. If a satisfactory solution is not reached with the parent in a reasonable length of time, then the member of

the Board shall request, in writing to the Superintendent, a follow-up of the concern.

The channels of communication established shall provide for the following:

1. Grievances should be discussed with the immediate supervisor or principal (if possible).
2. Teacher and other school employees may appeal a ruling of an immediate supervisor, principal, or other administrator to the Superintendent. If a grievance is carried to the Superintendent, a short-written notation signed by both parties should be on file.
3. All school employees may appeal a ruling of the Superintendent to the Board.
4. All hearings of grievances before the Superintendent or Board will be conducted in the presence of the Administrator who made the ruling which is the subject of the grievance.

It is the Board's desire that grievance procedures provide for prompt and equitable adjustment of differences at the lowest possible administrative level and that each employee be assured an opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of grievances and concerns without fear of intimidation or reprisal as a result of having presented a grievance for review. Aleph Fore is Title IX Coordinator, and the Section 504 Coordinator is Wade Burnette. Grievances in these areas should be filed with the proper coordinator.

Forms Used at Wilcox County Schools

The following forms are commonly used throughout the year. Copies of the forms can be found in each school. If you pick up the last copy of something, let the office know so more can be made.

- Employment Application: Certified
- Employment Application: Classified
 - These forms must be completed for all positions.
- Professional Learning Log
 - This is to be used to document any professional learning you take part in throughout the year. Include classes during workdays, the time you meet with your Study Group, college classes, classes at RESA, workshops, professional conferences, and other similar activities. Due by the last day of post-Planning.
- Accident Report
 - Complete any time you or students are injured at school, regardless of how minor it may seem.
- Bus Discipline Referral Form
 - Bus Drivers complete this form each time you refer a student to the office.
- Bus Driver Annual Physical Exam Form
 - Must turn in before school starts in order to drive a bus.
- Bus Driver Pre/Post Trip Inspection Form
 - Complete this form each time you drive a bus.
- Check Request (School)
 - Complete this form to request payment for items pre-approved by the principal to be paid out of school accounts.
- Classroom Repair Request
 - Complete when you have needs that our custodial staff cannot fix. Turn in to your principal as needed.
- Deposit Slip
 - Complete this form to provide details of money provided to benefit students (club dues, yearbooks, school store purchases, etc.). Check with your school to determine exact procedures.

- Discipline Referral Form
 - Complete this form each time you refer a student to the office.
- Evaluation Forms
 - These are used at least annually to evaluate Bus Drivers, Custodians, Bookkeepers, Paraprofessionals, Teachers, and Administrators.
- Field Trip Application/Bus Request Form
 - Complete if you are requesting to take students off-campus.
- Field Trip Permission Form (Sample)
 - You must have one copy completed by each student you take on a field trip. Carry these with you on the trip.
- Field Trip Roster
 - This is a sample format that must be completed any time you take students off-campus. If you use your format, make sure it contains all needed information. File a copy with the office before departing and carry one copy with you on the trip.
- Fund Raising Request
 - Used to obtain permission to conduct a fund-raiser for school-sponsored groups. Turn into the office.
- Inventory Check List
 - Each teacher should complete a classroom inventory for his/her room and/or lab. Use the back or attach additional sheets if needed. Due by the last day of Post Planning.
- Job Descriptions
 - These are provided for informational use.
- Nurse Card
 - Use each time you send a student out of your room.
- Professional Leave Request
 - Complete when you wish to be absent for matters related to school. This is in addition to the form requesting the school pay for your trip. Turn in to the office.
- Personal Leave Request
 - Same as Professional Leave Request. Complete when you wish to be absent for reasons other than sick or professional. Turn in to the office.
- Parent/Teacher/Agency Contact Form
 - Complete this form each time you hold a conference with a parent. Keep on file for your records.
- MTSS Forms
 - These are used to document and advance students along the Tiers of Intervention.
- Student Book Issue List
 - Used to record book numbers issued to students. Have this available as needed.

Confirmation of Receipt and Understanding

This page is designed to confirm that each teacher has received a copy of the Teacher Handbook for the academic year [insert year] and understands its contents.

Receipt Acknowledgment:

- I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Teacher Handbook for the academic year 2025-2026.
- I confirm that I have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Teacher Handbook, and I received and understand WCSS' paid parental leave policy.

Signature: _____ Printed: _____

Date: _____