

**BEN HILL COUNTY SCHOOL
DISTRICT
2025 - 2026
STUDENT HANDBOOK**
with
**Code of Conduct for Primary,
Elementary, Middle, and High
School**



www.ben-hill.k12.ga.us

INSIDE FRONT COVER

LEFT BLANK

INTENTIONALLY

Ben Hill County Schools Directory

Ben Hill County Schools
 Superintendent
 Stephen Harden
 509 W. Palm St., Fitzgerald
 (229) 409-5500

Schools

Ben Hill County Board of Education

Ben Hill Preschool
 Haley Luckie, Coordinator
 406 W. Suwanee St., Fitzgerald
 (229) 409-5598

Ben Hill Primary
 Christy Jacobs, Principal
 John Hadden, Assistant Principal
 221 JC Hunter Dr., Fitzgerald
 (229) 409-5592

Ben Hill Elementary
 Benja Luke, Principal
 Christopher Alexander, Assistant Principal
 328 Lobinger Ave., Fitzgerald
 (229) 409-5586

Ben Hill Middle School
 Michael Heitzman, Principal
 Martellis Curtis, Assistant Principal/Athletic
 Director
 134 JC Hunter Dr., Fitzgerald
 (229) 409-5578

**Fitzgerald High School College & Career
 Academy**
 John Gamble, Principal
 Payton Dix, CEO
 Dr. April Dockery, Assistant Principal
 Will Oliver, Assistant Principal
 Jason McDonald, Athletic Director
 553 Ocilla Highway, Fitzgerald
 (229) 409-5530

Chief Financial Officer
 Natalie King

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Instructional MTSS
 Laken Rodgers

**Director of Safety, Title IX, Tribunal Hearing Officer, Workers' Compensation,
 New Teacher Induction Program, Civil Rights Data Collection, School
 Climate Surveys, & Central Office Liaison for School Nurses**
 Roger Merritt

Director of Transportation & Human Resources
 Dr. Tracy Barnes
 130 Benjamin H. Hill, S.E., Fitzgerald
 229-409-5525

**Director of Federal Programs (Title Part A, Part C, II, III, IV A, IV B, V &
 McKinney Vento); TKES/LKES; Grants Management; Student &
 Staff Attendance, GaRTAP, Counselor/Mental Health Support**
 Jaquetta Brown

Director of Technology
 Matt Smith

Assistant Director of Technology
 Brandelyn House

**Director of Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) &
 Dual Enrollment Programs**
 Kristy Henderson

Coordinator of Assessment & Accountability
 Dr. Lisa Stone

**Coordinator of Special Education, Behavior MTSS, 504 Plans, &
 Gifted Programs (PreK-5)**
 Dee Wessel

**Coordinator of Special Education, Behavior MTSS, 504 Plans, &
 Gifted Programs (Grades 6-12)**
 Kelly Singletary

School Social Worker
 Kim Minshew

Coordinator of School Nutrition
 Casey Cross

BHCS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS



Chairman Jeremy Cox
District 5



Vice Chairman Andy Johnson
District 7



Shirley Brooks
District 1



Theresa Davis
District 4



David Garrison
District 2



Austin Futch
District 6



Tyler Clemons
District 3

BHCS Student Handbook	1
School-Based Supplemental Handbooks	1
Philosophy of Ben Hill County Schools	1
Mission Statement	1
Vision Statement	1
Belief Statements	1
Cognia Accreditation	1
Effect of the Student Handbook	2
Statement of Authority of the Principal	2
Statement of Authority BHCS to Ban Individuals	2
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION	3
Admission, Withdrawals, and Transfers	3
Admission	3
Admission of Suspended/Expelled Students	3
Board Policy JBCD: Transfer and Withdrawals	4
Intradistrict Transfer Rights	7
Alternative Education Program	7
Attendance	7
State Law of Attendance	7
State School Board Policy on Absences and Excuses (Code JB)	8
BHCS Board Policy JB: School Attendance	9
Absences, Excuses, and Early Dismissals	11
Georgia's Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA)	12
Perfect Attendance	12
Students Found Truant	12
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act	12
Board Policy JR: Student Records	12
FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)	13
Mandatory Notification of Rights Under the Federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment	13
Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policies Prohibition of Harassment of Students	14
Reporting Procedures, Investigations, and Consequences	15
Non-Discrimination	15
Board Policy IDFA: Gender Equity in Sports	15
Immunization Administrative Procedures	16
School Bus Transportation	18
Out-of-District Transportation	18
Video Cameras on Buses	18
Bus Drop-off Procedures	19
Bus Behavior	19
Bus Changes	19
Bus Procedures	19
Primary & Elementary Procedures for Bus Discipline are as Follows:	19
Middle/High School Procedures for Bus Discipline Are As Follows:	20
Special Education	21
Student Code of Conduct	21
Board Policy JCDA	21
Chronically Disruptive Students	23
Gang-Related Behavior	23
Definitions	24
Behavior Dispositions & Resolutions	24
Suspension Procedures	25
In-School-Suspension (ISS)	25
Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS)	25
Alternative School (ALT) -	25
Behavioral Rules	25
Student Technology	35
Technology Responsible Use & Digital Citizenship	35

General Procedures and Precautions	36
Taking Devices Home	36
Damaged, Lost, or Stolen Devices	36
Violations and Consequences	37
Daily Device Procedures by Grade	37
Ben Hill Preschool, Ben Hill Primary, & Ben Hill Elementary School	37
Ben Hill Middle School	37
Fitzgerald High School College and Career Academy	37
Collecting Student Devices	37
Internet Use Agreement	38
Board Policy IFBGE: Internet Safety	39
TITLE I	42
Complaints and Grievances	42
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	43
Parent Involvement	43
Teacher Qualifications	44
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	45
Academic Information	45
Artificial Intelligence	45
Attendance Regulations	45
BHCS Clear Backpack Policy:	45
Definitions	46
No Extra Credit	47
Gifted Program	47
Grade Distribution	47
Grade Scale	47
Grades: Ben Hill Middle School	47
FHSCCA Specific Information	48
Advanced Placement - Honors Courses - Dual Enrollment	48
Career Pathways	48
Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education (CTAE) Work-Based Learning	48
Core and Elective Credit - High School Required	49
Credit Recovery	49
Dual Enrollment Program	49
Dual Enrollment Withdrawal Policy	50
Eligibility for Interscholastic Activities	50
Finals (Semester Exams)	50
Graduation	50
Graduation Requirements	51
Georgia Governor's Honors Program	51
Homecoming Court	51
Honor Graduate	52
Hope Program	52
JROTC - Army	52
Accelerated Career (Formerly Option B)	52
Promotion & Retention	52
Quality Points System	53
Seal of Endorsement	53
Senior Superlatives	53
Star Student	53
Top Ten	53
Valedictorian and Salutatorian	54
Youth Apprenticeship Program	54
Make-Up Work	54
Plagiarism	54
Promotion & Retention	54
Retention Appeals	55
Progress Reports/Report Cards	55

School-Sponsored Non-Instructional Activities (Absences)	55
Accident or Illness	56
Addressing Concerns	56
After-School Activities	56
Arrival & Dismissal Times - Procedures	56
Ben Hill Primary School	56
Ben Hill Elementary School	57
BHMS	57
FHSCCA	57
Athletic Medical Release	57
Cell Phone & Accessory Use and Possession	58
Counseling Services	59
Mental Health	59
Disaster Alerts	59
Dress Expectation for Students	59
BHP & BHES Dress Code	60
FHSCCA & BHMS Dress Code	60
Driving to School & Parking Regulations	62
Due Process Rights of Students Search & Seizure Policy	63
Electronic Device Usage by Students	64
Extracurricular Activities & Athletics	64
Fundraising	64
Law Enforcement Officials (Notification of)	64
Lunchroom Information	65
Materials	66
Medication at Schools Procedures	66
Parent Classroom Observations	67
Parent Portal	68
Personal Belongings	68
Photo Use Per Permission	68
Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence	68
Board Policy JRB: Parents' Bill of Rights	68
Recess/Unstructured Break Time (BOE Policy IEDA)	69
School Property and Student Debts	70
State Assessments	70
Video and Audio Recording	71
Visitors	71
SCHOOL START TIMES	71
SCHOOL EARLY RELEASE TIMES	71
SCHOOL CALENDAR: 2025 - 2026	72
Affirmation of Receipt of Student Handbook	73

BHCS Student Handbook

The handbook will be updated throughout the year. Changes and additions will be made to the handbook online. The online handbook will be the official handbook.

School-Based Supplemental Handbooks

Individual schools may provide a supplemental handbook alongside the County Handbook to address their specific policies, procedures, and community needs. These handbooks align with district guidelines while offering localized details tailored to each school's unique environment.

Philosophy of Ben Hill County Schools

Education is vital to the American Democratic commitment. The mastery of basic skills, the development of the ability to reason, and character development must be fundamental components of the educational process in America's schools. Just as essential as these components are the advancement of the value of living in a free-enterprise system. The goal of education in America is to produce knowledgeable individuals who can make decisions for themselves as free members of a democratic society.

Mission Statement

Empowering ALL students for success.

Vision Statement

One Family committed to student success every day.

Belief Statements

In Ben Hill County Schools, we believe...
 Growth for all students is possible and expected...
 Success is achieved when all students reach their potential...
 Students deserve the best of all our efforts and resources...
 Respectful relationships among all stakeholders create a positive learning experience...
 Learning requires a commitment from all educators, students, parents, and other stakeholders...
 "Community" encompasses all of Ben Hill County: its schools, citizens, and resources...
 ALL MEANS ALL!

Cognia Accreditation

Ben Hill County Schools is proud to be fully accredited by Cognia, a global nonprofit organization recognized for its rigorous standards and commitment to continuous school improvement. Through a comprehensive Engagement Review conducted by trained evaluators, BHCS demonstrated a strong commitment to student-centered learning, leadership for learning, and a culture of collaboration. The district received an Index of Education Quality (IEQ) score of 316, well above the Cognia network average, affirming that our schools meet high expectations for educational quality. The review highlighted strengths such as community partnerships, wraparound support services, and a robust system of professional learning communities. This accreditation validates the district's dedication to equity, innovation, and ongoing reflection in pursuit of student success.

Effect of the Student Handbook

The policies and rules outlined in the Ben Hill County Schools Student Handbook are regulatory in nature and do not create legal or vested rights. The Board of Education, superintendent, and school principals reserve the right to change, suspend, or revoke any policy, rule, or procedure at any time without obligation to previous versions. Final administrative authority rests with the principal, who will make decisions—whether disciplinary or administrative—based on the best interests of the individual student, the broader student body, and the educational mission of the school and district.

Statement of Authority of the Principal

The principal serves as the school's designated leader and is responsible, along with the staff, for maintaining a safe and orderly environment. For disciplinary issues not specifically addressed in this handbook, the principal may implement appropriate actions in the best interest of the school and the student(s) involved.

A student or potential student who poses a threat to the safety of individuals or property may be denied entry or removed from class by the principal, superintendent, or their designee, pending tribunal action.

Statement of Authority BHCS to Ban Individuals

Ben Hill County Schools' number one priority is the safety of all students, staff members, and visitors. Individuals who pose a risk to the safety of others through disruptive behaviors may be banned from all Ben Hill County School Property.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Admission, Withdrawals, and Transfers

Admission

Registration must be made at each school with the registrar.. Their custodial parent/ legal guardian's residence address assigns students to a school.

The legal custodial parent should accompany a student to register the student in school. Parents/guardians registering students must be the parent on the birth certificate and must have custody documents from the court or a notarized affidavit. The person bringing the student to be registered for school is the person who can withdraw that student at a later time unless legally acceptable arrangements are made for someone else to do so. Parents/guardians must bring the following items with them when registering a student: parent/guardian-valid picture ID (license, work ID, military); child's birth certificate; child's social security card; withdrawal form/report card; child's immunization records (Georgia Form 3231). Note: We will request records from the previous school; however, we must have all documentation to complete registration.

Residency must also be established to enroll the student. TWO PROOFS OF RESIDENCE SUCH AS ANY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING must be presented upon registration:

- Copy of receipt for monthly rental/mortgage payment.
- Copy of rental agreement/mortgage payment.
- Copy of water, telephone, or cable bill.
- Copy of property tax bill.
- Copy of homeowner's insurance policy/receipt.
- Income tax form with your address.

If the family (and child) lives with a person who rents or owns the home, an affidavit or notarized statement from the renter or owner to the effect that the family (and child) lives with them is required. School personnel may verify this information.

If legal custody of a child is split between two parents, in addition to the documents listed above, the school needs a certified copy of the most recent court order identifying each parent's respective award of physical custody. Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of any changes to the court order.

Change of Address

If a student is already enrolled in a Ben Hill County School and changes residence within the county at any time during the year, the parent/guardian must also fill out an Address Verification Form. Schools must have this form before changing any addresses of students.

Admission of Suspended/Expelled Students

A placement committee will determine whether students returning from a Regional Youth Detention Center will be placed at their home schools or in the Alternative Program.

The position of the Ben Hill County Board of Education is that the admission into the school system of a resident student who has been suspended from another school system for disciplinary reasons may have an immediate and direct adverse impact on the discipline or general welfare of the school. In accordance with Georgia law, the Board reserves the right and may decide not to admit a resident student to the

school system who has been suspended or expelled from another school system during the period of suspension or expulsion. This includes students enrolling in Youth Detention Centers (YDC).

Board Policy JBCD: Transfer and Withdrawals

I. Definitions:

- A. **Emancipated Minor** - An individual under the age of eighteen who is no longer under the control or authority of his or her parents or guardians by operation of law or pursuant to a petition filed by the minor with the juvenile court as provided in state law. Emancipation by operation of law occurs when a minor is validly married or as otherwise prescribed by law. Emancipation by petition is granted by a judge in juvenile court after the judge determines emancipation is in the best interest of the minor.
- B. **Unemancipated Minor** - Any minor not otherwise emancipated as described above.
- C. **Other Person**- An adult at least 18 years of age or an emancipated minor at least sixteen years of age residing within the school system who is not the parent or guardian of a child but stands in loco parentis (i.e., to assume the duties and responsibilities of a parent such as providing food, shelter, clothing or medical care.)
- D. **Withdraw** - The removal of a student from the official role of a school.
- E. **Critical Records** - Educational records of a student as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670.
- F. **Case Management Consultation** - A consultation conducted by a school social worker, school counselor, or a designated school administrator of the receiving school and shall involve the transferring student and such student's parent or legal custodian. The purposes of the case management consultation shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) Determining whether any services are necessary for such student, including, but not limited to, referrals for special education or behavioral health services; and (ii) Facilitating the continuation of services such student was receiving at his or her previous school or schools, if any.

II. Requirements for Student Transfer

- A. The parent or legal custodian of a student seeking permanent enrollment in a grade higher than the third grade in any receiving school in this state shall as a prerequisite to such permanent enrollment execute a document:

Disclosing to the receiving school whether the student:

- Has ever been adjudicated delinquent of the commission of a class A designated felony act or class B designated felony act, and, if so, the date of such adjudication, the offense committed, the jurisdiction in which such adjudication was made, and the sentence imposed;
- Is currently serving a short-term suspension, a long-term suspension, or an expulsion from another school, the reason for such discipline, and the term of such discipline;
- Is currently the subject of a notice of a disciplinary hearing; or,
- Is currently or has ever been the subject of any:

- Notice of a report of criminal action;
- Notice of chronic disciplinary problem; Disciplinary and behavioral correction plan; or, Report of the commission of a prohibited act;

AND Either:

- Present a certified copy of such student's critical records from each sending school he or she attended during the previous 24 months; or,
 - Receive written confirmation from such receiving school that it has received such student's critical records.
 - If the receiving school does not receive such student's critical records from each sending school such student attended during the previous 24 months, the receiving school shall be authorized to temporarily assign such student to remote learning until such critical records are received, or the case management consultation is completed.
 - If a student provisionally enrolled in a receiving school is found to be ineligible for enrollment pursuant to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2, or is subsequently found to be so ineligible, he or she shall be dismissed from enrollment in such receiving school until such time as he or she becomes so eligible.
- B. Any document provided by a receiving school to a student or such student's parent or legal custodian to request permanent enrollment or provisional enrollment in such receiving school or to authorize the release of education records to such receiving school shall include:
- A list of class A designated felony acts or class B designated felony acts;
 - A list of the prohibited acts identified in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184; and,
 - A description of each of the following:
 - Notice of a disciplinary hearing pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-754;
 - Notice of a report of criminal action made pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-756;
 - Notice of chronic disciplinary problem made pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-765;
 - Disciplinary and behavioral correction plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-766; and,
 - Report of the commission of a prohibited act made pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184.
- C. Each time a transferring student's education records, including, but not limited to critical records, are transferred to a receiving school, such student's parent or legal custodian shall be notified in writing by the receiving school of the transfer of such records and shall, upon written request made within five (5) school business days of the date of such notice, be entitled to receive a copy of such records from the receiving school. Within five (5) school business days of the receipt of a copy of such records, such student's parent

or legal custodian may make a written request for and shall be entitled to a meeting with the principal of the sending school or of the receiving school or his or her designee for the purpose of correcting the content of such records as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-667. The parties may mutually agree for such meeting to occur at a date and time outside of such five-day period.

Each sending school in this state shall immediately release a student's complete education record to any parent, legal custodian, receiving school, or another person or entity legally authorized to receive such records upon request by such requestor and under no circumstances later than 5:00 P.M. on the third business day following the date of such request.

- D. In the event that any portion of such student's education record is not maintained in electronic format, the sending school shall transfer all of the student's education records available in electronic format in compliance with paragraph (A) of this subsection and shall, no later than 5:00 P.M. on the third business day following the date of such request, notify the requestor when copies of the remainder of such student's education records will be ready for retrieval.

E. Agency-Placed Students

When a student is being placed by the Georgia Department of Human Services or other state agency into a new home or facility that would require a change in school or school system, the school system in which that student is attending school shall consult with the student's custodian to ascertain whether the student should be maintained in the school of origin or assigned to the appropriate school in the new school system in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

III. Requirements for Student Withdrawal

- A. If a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old student who has not completed all requirements for a high school diploma wishes to withdraw from school, the student must have the written permission of his or her parent or legal guardian prior to withdrawing. The principal or designee will make a reasonable attempt to hold a conference with the student and parent or guardian to share the educational options available, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1(e).
- B. If a parent or guardian does not follow established procedures for withdrawing a student who should be withdrawn under the state enrollment and withdrawal rule, the superintendent or designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent or guardian if the school system plans to withdraw the student.
- C. A student shall not be withdrawn due to excused absences defined in State Board Rule 160-5-1-.10 (JB-StudentAttendance) and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 (a)
- D. A student shall not be withdrawn while participating in a Hospital/Homebound Instruction Program in accordance with the requirements of the program.
- E. In the event that a child student does not for a period of thirty (30) consecutive days attend the public school in which he or she is enrolled or provisionally enrolled and:
- (i) The parent or guardian of such student does not notify the school of such student's

withdrawal from such school; (ii) The parent or guardian of such student does not notify the school of such student's enrollment or intent to enroll in a home study program or another school; (iii) Such student is withdrawn from a public such school without a declaration filed pursuant to subsection (c) of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690; or (iv) The student has complied with number one above except completion of required conference the school shall refer the matter to the Division of Family and Children Services of the Georgia Department of Human Services and the RESA student affairs officer of the regional educational service agency in which such student resides to determine if the withdrawal was to avoid educating such student and if such student has enrolled in a home study program or another school.

- F. All student withdrawals shall be made and documented in accordance with the requirements of the state enrollment and withdrawal rule and state law.

Disputes regarding the handling of records requests that involve the School District will be referred to the appropriate Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) to be reviewed by their Student Affairs Officer. The contact information is as follows:

Coastal Plains Regional Educational
Service Agency 245 N. Robinson Street
Lennox, Georgia 31637
Telephone: (229) 546-4094
Facsimile: (229)
546-4167 Website:
www.cpresa.org

Intradistrict Transfer Rights

Because there is only one school per grade in Ben Hill County, parents are notified that there is no intradistrict transfer option available to their child.

Alternative Education Program

Students assigned to alternative school will attend at the designated location. Coursework will be provided at the designated school location.

Attendance

State Law of Attendance

The Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) 20-2-690.1 Mandatory attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program shall be required for children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays. Such mandatory attendance shall not be required where the child has successfully completed all requirements of a high school diploma.

Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children during the ages of mandatory attendance as required in subsection (a) of this code section shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program; and such child

shall be responsible for enrolling in and attending a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program under such penalty for noncompliance with this subsection as is provided in Chapter 11 of Title 15, unless the child's failure to enroll and attend is caused by the child's parent, guardian, or other person, in which case the parent, guardian, or other person alone shall be responsible; provided, however, that tests and physical exams for military service and the National Guard and such other approved absences shall be excused absences. The requirements of this subsection shall apply to a child during the ages of mandatory attendance as required in subsection (a) of this Code section who has been assigned by a local board of education or its delegate to attend an alternative public school program established by that local board of education, including an alternative public school program provided for in Code Section 20-2-154.1, regardless of whether such child has been suspended or expelled from another public school program by that local board of education or its delegate, and to the parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of such child. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require a local board of education or its delegate to assign a child to attend an alternative public school program rather than suspending or expelling the child. (b) Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school system notifies the parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or another person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence without response, the school system shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other people by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Public schools shall provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each child enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance under this Code section for children and their parents, guardians, or other persons having control or charge of children. The parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child or children shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties; children who are age ten years or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.

After two reasonable attempts by the school to secure such signature or signatures, the school shall be considered to be in compliance with this subsection if it sends a copy of the statement via certified mail, return receipt requested, to such parent, guardian, other person who has control or charge of a child, or children. Public schools shall retain signed copies of statements through the end of the school year.

Local school superintendents in the case of private schools or home study programs and visiting teachers and attendance officers in the case of public schools shall have authority, and it shall be their duty to file proceedings in court to enforce this subpart.

State School Board Policy on Absences and Excuses (Code JB)

Local boards of education shall adopt policies excusing students from school under the following circumstances:

- Personal Illness
- Serious illness or death in a student's immediate family
 - (An immediate family member is defined as a parent; sibling; child by blood, adoption, or marriage; spouse; grandparent or grandchild.)
- Court Order
- Religious Holidays
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- One day to register or vote in a public election.
- Parent(s) being deployed or returning from military duty (up to five days).

The Ben Hill County Board of Education will allow absences from students visiting prospective colleges to be counted as excused absences if the student receives approval from school administrators before the visitation. Students shall be counted present when serving as a Page of the General Assembly.

NOTE: School boards are allowed to require appropriate documentation in order to determine if an absence is an excused absence.

Ben Hill County Board of Education believes regular school attendance is essential to a quality education. Each school shall intervene early when students begin to accumulate absences. These interventions shall include telephone calls, letters, home visits, and conferences informing of absences and resource referrals to parents offering assistance in resolving attendance problems. If attendance problems continue, it will warrant referral to the Ben Hill County social worker for truancy and possible follow-up with a referral to the review board of the District Attorney's office if the problem is not corrected. It is suggested that parents contact the school counselor if a student is ill and will be out for several consecutive days.

BHCS Board Policy JB: School Attendance

Compulsory school attendance is required of all children between the ages of six and sixteen residing within the State of Georgia. The responsibility of ensuring the regular attendance of a school-age child lies with the parent, guardian, or other person with whom the child resides [O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1]. All children enrolled for twenty days or more in a public school prior to their seventh birthday shall become subject to all the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 690 – 702 [O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150]. The State of Georgia considers any child subject to compulsory attendance as **truant when they accumulate more than five days of unexcused absences.**

In responding to student attendance issues, the Ben Hill County School District (the "School District") shall comply with all requirements of state law, applicable State Board of Education rules, and the protocol developed by the student attendance and school climate committee.

I. Excused Absences

It is the policy of the Ben Hill County Board of Education (the "Board of Education") to excuse students from school for the following reasons:

- A. Personal illness or when attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others.
- B. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
- C. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- D. The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
- E. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.

- F. Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day.
- G. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, will be granted up to five (5) days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.
- H. A student whose parent or legal guardian is currently serving or has previously served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces or in the Reserves or National Guard on extended active duty may be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five (5) school days per school year, not to exceed two (2) school years, for the days missed from school to attend military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation prior to the absence. The documentation must come from a care provider at or sponsored by a U. S. Veterans Affairs medical facility or from an official of an event sponsored by a veterans organization that qualifies as a 501 (c)(19) tax-exempt corporation under the IRS Code.

The principal may in certain circumstances require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

School days missed as a result of out-of-school suspension shall not be counted as unexcused for the purpose of determining student truancy, but shall be counted as unexcused for all other purposes.

No student shall be expelled due solely to absenteeism.

II. Students Counted Present

Students shall be counted present under the following circumstances:

- A. When they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
- B. A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to his or her foster care shall be counted present and shall not be counted absent, either excused or unexcused, for any day or portion of a day missed from school.
- C. Students who participate in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H shall be counted present in the same manner as an educational field trip. Participation in a program or activity sponsored by 4-H shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school.
- D. A student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program shall be counted present and given full credit for the school day in which he or she served as a volunteer poll worker, up to two (2) school days per school year.

III. Grades and Absences

Final course grades of students shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met:

1. Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.

2. Make up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily.

IV. Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences: Notification

- A. The School District shall provide notice to the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student (hereinafter referred to as "parent") when the student has five (5) unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense. After two (2) reasonable attempts to notify the parent, the School District will send written notice via first class mail or via certified mail, return receipt requested; and,
- B. Prior to any action to commence judicial proceedings to impose a penalty on the parent for failing to comply with compulsory attendance law, the School District will notify the parent by certified mail, return receipt requested; and,
- C. Each school within the School District shall provide to the parent of each student enrolled a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By September 1 of each school year or within thirty (30) school days of a student's enrollment, the parent will be asked to sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance with the local Board policy. In responding to student attendance issues, the school system shall comply with all requirements of state law, applicable Georgia State Board of Education rules, and the protocol developed by the student attendance and school climate committee.

Absences, Excuses, and Early Dismissals

Students are expected to be in attendance in Ben Hill County Schools in accordance with compulsory attendance laws and for the number of full-length days prescribed by law. A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school hours except for illness or other providential cause unless with the written permission of the teacher, principal, or their duly authorized school official.

No student shall encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this policy. Absences will be considered either "excused" or "unexcused."

Pre-approved Absences

Absences for EARLY DISMISSAL and OUT-OF-TOWN trips, which are approved by the administration before the absence occurs, will result in the student being allowed to make up work and not receive a zero on work missed. In case of an emergency, parents must make arrangements within a reasonable period of time.

Excuses

Excuses for absences shall be furnished in writing, ***must be*** signed by the student's parent or guardian, and shall specifically state the dates and reasons for the absence. Excuses written by parents will be accepted for up to (5) five absences. Any absence thereafter will require an excuse from a medical professional or other medical documentation (as required by the principal or designee).

Early Dismissal

For the academic advantage of a student being in school, a student should not be taken out of school during the school day, including the latter part of the day. When necessary, a student can leave during the school day if a parent, guardian, or other approved person comes to school to get him/ her. The person picking up the student must sign him/her out at the school office. Arrangements for early dismissal should be made by a written note or in person. When dismissed early from school, students are counted absent

for classes missed and are subject to all absentee policies. Early dismissals require a note signed by a parent/guardian, including a phone number for verification, or a parent must be present to sign the student out with an official ID.

The principal or a designee will evaluate all excuses to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Students can make up work when absences are excused or pre-approved. **Absences due to out-of-school suspension shall not be counted as unexcused.** Work missed due to **unexcused absences** may be made up at the principal's or his designee's discretion under extenuating circumstances. All **make-up work must be completed within five (5) school days** of the student's return to school unless the school principal or his or her designee allows the student additional time to complete such make-up work. **Previously assigned work should be completed on the day the student returns to school** unless an administrator has determined this would make it an unreasonable expectation of the student.

In order for any absence to be excused, the student must present written documentation within five (5) school days after returning to school.

Georgia's Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA)

During the 2015 Georgia General Assembly, significant changes were made to the Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA). Effective July 1, 2015, state law will no longer require schools to submit noncompliance data for students with excessive unexcused absences and certain discipline infractions. Schools will simply have to certify that a student is enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school to be eligible for a driver's license or learner's permit. Students will no longer have their driver's license or learner's permit suspended for excessive unexcused absences or discipline infractions. Schools will now issue a Certificate of Enrollment form to certify that a student is eligible for a driver's license or learner's permit. The Certificate of Enrollment Form replaces the Certificate of Attendance and the Certificate of Eligibility of Driving Privileges form.

Perfect Attendance

To determine perfect attendance, students shall have no unexcused tardies to school, no unexcused early dismissals from school, and be present on campus all day each school day.

Students Found Truant

In the event of being reported or found truant pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-698, 20-2-699, and/or 20-2-700, the student, along with their parent/guardian, will be immediately referred for a CHNS hearing, even if they have not yet reached seven absences.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

Board Policy JR: Student Records

It is the policy of the Board of Education that the School District (shall comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act of Georgia (the Act) and any other applicable laws. For the purposes of this policy, a "parent" is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. An "eligible student" is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

The Superintendent shall implement procedures whereby every principal is directed to develop a

means to notify, on an annual basis, parents and eligible students, including parents or eligible students who are disabled or who have a primary or home language other than English, of their rights under the FERPA and the Act, either through a student handbook distributed to each student in the school or by any means that are reasonably likely to inform them of their rights. A parent or eligible student will be permitted to inspect, review and/or obtain a copy of the student's education records upon reasonable notice and payment of reasonable copying costs.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Confidentiality of student records shall be preserved while access is provided to parents, eligible students, and school officials with legitimate educational interests, as described in the annual parent notice.

With the exception of directory information as defined below, personally identifiable information will not be released by the school district from an education record without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student, except to the extent authorized by the FERPA and its implementing regulations at 34

C.F.R. § 99.31.

The Board of Education designates the following information as "directory information:"

- a. Student's name;
- b. Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
- c. Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
- d. Dates of attendance at schools within the School District;
- e. Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
- f. Video, audio, images or recordings of athletic, school or School District-sponsored events, such plays; and,
- g. Grade level.

Unless a parent or eligible student makes a timely request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated as directory information for the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request.

Mandatory Notification of Rights Under the Federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors ("eligible students") certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection, and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the following rights:

1. To consent before students are required to submit a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)
 - a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
 - b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 - c. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 - d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incrimination, or demeaning behavior;
 - e. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;

- f. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 - g. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
 - h. Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility.
2. To receive a notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –
 - a. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 - b. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 - c. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
 3. To inspect, upon request and before administration or use -
 - a. Protected information surveys of students;
 - b. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
 - c. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

The Ben Hill County School District will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Ben Hill County School District will directly notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Ben Hill County School District will also directly notify parents and eligible students, such as through U.S. Mail or email, at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in the following activities:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.
- Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the following:
- Family Policy Compliance Office; U.S. Department of Education; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policies Prohibition of Harassment of Students

The Ben Hill County Board of Education policy is to maintain a learning environment free from harassment because of an individual's race, color, sex, or disability. The Board of Education prohibits all such forms of harassment. Therefore, it shall be a violation of this policy for any student, teacher, administrator, or other school system employee, through conduct or any form of communication of a sexual nature or regarding race, color, or disability, as defined below, to harass school system students.

A violation exists if a school system policy for any teacher, administrator, or other school personnel of this district to tolerate sexual harassment, racial harassment, or disability harassment, as defined by this policy, by a student, teacher, administrator, other school personnel, or by any third parties who are participating, observing, or otherwise engaging in activities, including sporting events and any other extra-curricular activities, under the auspices of the school system.

The Ben Hill County School System will act to promptly investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment because of race, color, sex, or disability; to promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further harassment; and if it determines that unlawful harassment occurred, to promptly and appropriately discipline any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy, and/or to take other appropriate action reasonably calculated to end the harassment.

Reporting Procedures, Investigations, and Consequences

Any student who believes that he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment, racial harassment, or disability harassment by a student, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel of the school system or by any other person who is participating in, observing, or otherwise engaging in activities, including sporting events and other group activities, under the auspices of the school system should report the alleged acts to a principal, guidance counselor, or other individual designated to receive such complaints who will immediately report to the Superintendent. Filing a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment, racial harassment, or disability harassment will not reflect the individual's status nor affect future grades, course assignments, or other educational decisions. Any teacher, administrator, or other school officials who has or receives notice that a student has or may have been the victim of sexual harassment, racial harassment, or disability harassment by a student, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel of the school system, or by any other person who is participating in, observing, or otherwise engaged in activities, including sporting events and other extra-curricular activities, under the offices of the school system, is required to immediately report the alleged acts to the principal of the school which the student attends and/or the following appropriate school district official:

- A. Allegations of sexual harassment or race harassment should be made to the principal of the school which the alleged student victim attends and to the Superintendent as Equal Opportunity Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator designated in the student handbook;
- B. Allegations of disability harassment should be reported to the principal of the school which the alleged student victim attends and to the Director of Special Education who is the Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator named in the student handbook.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate the misconduct allegations and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment, racial harassment, or disability harassment shall be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated by the Superintendent. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including the possibility of discharge. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject the student to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances.

The investigation shall be conducted as are other non-discrimination investigations conducted in accordance with Board Policy Descriptor Code JAA/GAAA.

Submission of a good faith complaint or report of sexual harassment, racial harassment or disability harassment will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, learning, or working environment or work assignments.

Non-Discrimination

The Ben Hill County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, race, ethnic origin, color, or sex/gender in its educational programs and activities, athletic programs, or employment practices as required by the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II); Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 (Title VI), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), and the Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315.

Board Policy IDFA: Gender Equity in Sports

In compliance with the Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315 (the "Act"), no student in the Ben Hill County School District (the "School District") shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic or intramural athletics offered by the School District.

As a part of achieving this goal, the School District annually shall notify all of its students of the name, office address, and office telephone number of the employee designated to coordinate its efforts to comply with the Act. Such notification shall be included in a student handbook containing the code of conduct and distributed to all students.

The School District shall have in place a process consistent with state and federal law to implement the purposes of this policy. A complaint process will provide for prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints, including those brought by a parent or guardian on behalf of his or her minor child who is a student, alleging any action which would be a violation of the Act. Complaints of discrimination on the basis of gender in athletic programs shall be handled in accordance with Board Policy JM (Equal Educational Opportunities).

The School District shall comply with the requirements concerning gender equity in sports, including complaint procedures, records retention, and the filing of any and all reports required by the Georgia Department of Education and the Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act.

All donations of services or items, including booster club support, to any athletic program, shall be accepted or rejected in accordance with the Board of Education's policy concerning donations to the School District.

Questions, concerns, or complaints relating to the nondiscrimination policies and practices of the Ben Hill County School System should be addressed to the following official:

Roger Merritt
509 West Palm Street
Fitzgerald, GA 31750
roger.merritt@benhillschools.org
(229)-409-5500

Immunization Administrative Procedures

No child shall be admitted to Ben Hill County Schools unless the child has submitted a certificate of immunization. Before starting the school year, all students born on or after January 1, 2002, and entering or transferring into 7th grade will need proof of a whooping cough booster and meningococcal shot. Also, effective July 1, 2021, children 16 years of age and older, who are entering the 11th grade (including new entrants), must have received one booster dose of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) unless their initial dose was administered on or after their 16th birthday.

The Certificate of Immunization is a form provided by the Department of Human Resources. It is issued by a physician licensed under the laws of Georgia or by a local board of health (Health Department). The principal/superintendent may grant a 30-calendar day waiver of the immunization certificate provided the physician or the Health Department that the immunizations are in the process provides documentation.

A certificate for a child receiving all required vaccines must have a date of expiration that relates to the date the next required immunization is due or the date on which a medical exemption must be reviewed. A new certificate must be obtained and submitted to the school or facility within 30 days of expiration. Children whose parents fail to renew said certificates within the time allotted shall not be permitted to continue in attendance.

Effective with the school year 2007-2008, for entrance into grade six in Georgia Schools, a child must have two (2) doses of the Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine on or after the first birthday.

Requirements for hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella vaccines may be waived with serologic proof of immunity. Requirements for varicella vaccine may also be waived with a history of medical diagnosis of the disease or a parent or guardian description of the disease that has been interpreted as valid by the certifying authority.

Tetanus and pertussis booster are needed at age 14 or entry into high school (grade 9). The principal/superintendent may grant a maximum of 90 calendar day waiver with the documentation provided by the physician or the Health Department:

1. Specifying that an immunization sequence has been started and that this immunization time schedule can be completed within the 90-day waiver period,
2. Provided confirmation is received during the waiver period from the Health Department or physician that immunizations are being received as scheduled, and
3. Provided the student under waiver is a transfer student (moves to Georgia from another state) or a student entering kindergarten or first grade from out of state.

The waiver may not be extended beyond 90 calendar days, and upon expiration of the waiver, the child shall not be permitted to attend school unless the child submits a certificate of immunization.

If the parent/legal guardian objects to immunization of the child on the grounds of religious beliefs, the parent/guardian must furnish a notarized affidavit that certifies that the immunization requirement conflicts with the religious beliefs.

Immunization may be required by the system should a disease be in an epidemic stage in the school/system. During an epidemic or a threatened epidemic of any disease preventable by an immunization required by the Department of Human Resources, children who have not been immunized may be excluded from the school until (1) they are immunized against the disease unless they present valid evidence of prior disease, or (2) the epidemic or threat no longer constitutes a significant health danger.

Out-of-state students must meet all requirements for Georgia Immunization, and the documentation must be provided on the Georgia Certificate of Immunization Form as provided by Rule 290-5-4-.04 or a Certificate of Immunization indicating medical exemption as provided by Rule 290-5-4.05. Code Section 20-2-771 and Chapter 290-5-4 (Rules of DHR and PH)

Please direct your questions to the child's school nurse.

School Bus Transportation

The Ben Hill County School System operates school buses during the week for all students who desire to participate in the transportation program. However, this service, which is determined by the conduct of the student rider, may be discontinued. A student is expected to behave by following school rules. For safety purposes, a student who misbehaves and threatens the safety of students and/or staff will be reported to the School Administration. ***School Administration in coordination with the Director of Transportation will determine if the misbehaving student keeps or loses bus privileges. This decision is final.***

To ensure the safety of students and staff, the progressive discipline plan (Bus Discipline Procedures) will be followed for students participating in transportation provided by the Ben Hill County School System. School Administration, in coordination with the Director of Transportation, will determine the disciplinary action needed for each incident based on the severity and number of offenses, which may result in the loss of bus privileges. Each decision is final.

Please speak with your child about his/her behavior on the bus. Help us help you get your child to school safely. Ben Hill County School buses have video equipment on each bus. Videos are used to help deter bad behavior and to identify those who threaten school buses/children/drivers, etc.

Out-of-District Transportation

The Ben Hill County School System Transportation Department will not transport students to and from school if they live outside of Ben Hill County. Parents will be responsible for providing their children transportation to and from school if they live outside Ben Hill County.

Video Cameras on Buses

The Ben Hill County School System has installed a video camera on all regular route buses. All students who travel on system buses are recorded as they board and disembark from the buses and ride to and from school and other locations. All SD cards from this recording equipment are the property of the Ben Hill County BOE. The camera is there for safety purposes and to assist the driver and principal with discipline problems on the bus. The camera records for about twelve hours, then stops and begins recording again. This might mean that something will not be recorded during this time. In addition, sometimes the equipment does not work properly even though every effort is made to maintain it in working order. The SD card may be pulled from the recorder by the transportation director, or a person authorized by the transportation director at the request of school administration due to an issue on the bus. The transportation director will notify school administration once the requested video has been extracted from the SD card. Once extracted from the SD card, the video will be available to school administration for viewing.

Parents are not allowed to view videos due to the privacy rights of other students.

The SD card may be pulled if an alleged disciplinary incident occurs involving, but not limited to, the following: a fight on the bus; illegal drugs/weapons on the bus; verbal abuse/ disrespect/ sexual harassment of the driver or another student; any act of physical violence upon another person; sex acts or sexual touching of any type; principal/ driver believes there to be a problem that the driver has not seen or heard; and/or altercation that results in law enforcement being called to the bus for assistance.

All SD cards should be stored in the transportation department and in student records, if needed. They will be held until the school year ends and then be destroyed. The SD card may be used as evidence in disciplinary hearings if requested by the principal or tribunal panel.

Bus Drop-off Procedures

Your child will be dropped off at the designated bus stop address provided by the transportation department. All PreK, Primary and Elementary School students should have a parent/guardian at the bus stop to receive their child in the afternoon. If there is no one present to receive the child, this could result in the child being returned to their designated school. A parent/guardian is responsible for writing a note with their signature requesting a change in transportation for their child to be dropped off. The location indicated in the note must be a Ben Hill County School System scheduled bus stop.

Bus Behavior

All students who utilize the county's bus transportation system must observe appropriate school behavior. The school bus and the bus stop are extensions of the classroom. The same rules that apply on a school campus apply on a school bus and at the bus stop. Bus transportation is provided as a privilege to all students who attend Ben Hill County's public schools. A student may lose his/her privilege to ride the school bus by failing to obey the system's rules. Students should respect their bus driver, bus monitor and cooperate with his/her instructions or requests. Students should remain in their assigned seats when the bus moves and keep their hands and feet out of the aisles and off other riders and their property.

Bus Changes

If a student needs to make a transportation change, he/ she must present a written request signed by the parent to the office, and the office must approve it before the change is made. All transportation changes must be made at minimum, an hour in advance prior to the school's dismissal time. This will apply whether the transportation is by car or by school bus.

Bus Procedures

School Administration at the school administers disciplinary action for bus misbehavior. School buses and bus stops are considered extensions of the school campus. All rules that govern student conduct while on school campus/property apply while students are on the school bus or at the bus stop. School principals have the authority to impose an immediate suspension for serious offenses. The principal may also add any other disciplinary action deemed necessary at the school level, up to suspension from school. School bus drivers do not provide discipline consequences for the children, although they have the prerogative to assign seats or move a child from one seat to another to solve a discipline problem. The bus driver is in charge of the school bus and they have the authority to communicate and enforce the school bus rules. If disciplinary action is needed, a bus discipline referral can be submitted to school administration.

Primary & Elementary Procedures for Bus Discipline are as Follows:

1. Offense 1: The driver will talk with a student or may reassign him/her to a new seat on the bus. The driver will contact the school administrator if this does not correct the misbehavior. The driver will document these actions.
2. Offense 2: School Administration will counsel the student and warn the student. The student will be placed on probation. The driver will provide documentation of action taken during the first offense. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted.
3. Offense 3: Student will be suspended from riding the bus for one (1) day.
4. Offense 4: Student will be suspended from bus riding for three (3) days.
5. Offense 5: Student will be suspended from bus riding for five (5) days.
6. Offense 6: The student will be suspended from bus riding for 10 days.
7. Subsequent offenses will warrant 10 or more days' removal from the bus. The principal may also add any other disciplinary action deemed necessary.

Middle/High School Procedures for Bus Discipline Are As Follows:

1. Offense 1: Student will be placed on probation. The driver will provide documentation of action taken during the first offense. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted.
2. Offense 2: Student will be suspended from riding the bus for one (1) day.
3. Offense 3: Student will be suspended from bus riding for three (3) days.
4. Offense 4: Student will be suspended from bus riding for five (5) days.
5. Offense 5: Students will be suspended from bus riding for 10 days.
6. Subsequent offenses will warrant 10 or more days' removal from the bus. The principal may also add any other disciplinary action deemed necessary.

In addition to any other rules governing students' behavior on school buses, every student who rides a school bus should understand that the following behaviors are specifically prohibited:

- A. Any "act of physical violence" defined under Georgia law as follows:
 - a. Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another (which is referred to in this Handbook as "Type One Physical Violence"); or
 - b. Intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another unless such physical contacts or physical harms were in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Georgia Criminal law at O.C.G.A. Section 16-3-21 (which is referred to in this Handbook as "Type Two Physical Violence").
- B. Bullying as defined elsewhere in the Handbook;
- C. Physical assault or battery of other persons on a school bus;
- D. Verbal assault of other persons on a school bus;
- E. Disrespectful conduct toward the bus driver or other persons on the school bus;
- F. Other unruly behavior on a school bus;
- G. Using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including, but not limited to, cell phones; pagers; audible radios; tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication system or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
 - a. Personal belongings should be left at home. The school bus driver is not responsible for a student's belongings, including those left on the bus.
- H. Using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

If a student engages in physical acts of violence, either Type 1 or Type 2, the student will be subject to the disciplinary consequences explained under the other relevant sections in this Handbook.

If a student is found to have engaged in bullying or in physical assault or battery of another person on a school bus, the parent or guardian of the student shall be required to participate in a meeting with appropriate school officials to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. The contract may include but is not limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

Special Education

Ben Hill County Schools follows all federal and state laws regarding the discipline of students with disabilities, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) regulations.

All students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct provided in this handbook. However, students with disabilities may require individualized disciplinary considerations based on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). School staff will evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis to ensure responses are appropriate and legally compliant.

Parents and students must sign an acknowledgment form confirming their understanding of the rules. Students with disabilities are held to the same expectations unless specific IEP modifications apply. Disciplinary procedures apply to all students with disabilities who violate the Code of Conduct.

At enrollment and during annual IEP meetings, parents are informed of the rules regarding behavior, discipline, suspension, and expulsion. The student's case manager or lead teacher provides procedural safeguards and explains relevant discipline procedures.

When needed, students may receive a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) as part of their IEP. These supports are intended to address and prevent recurring behavioral challenges.

Student Code of Conduct

Board Policy JCDA

It is the desire of Ben Hill County Schools that all students should have every possible opportunity to take advantage of instructional programs that will allow them access to the best possible education. Any distractions from a favorable teaching and learning environment lessen this opportunity. Students are expected to adhere to standards of behavior that will facilitate a positive learning environment for themselves and other students and to respect each other, school district employees, and school property. They are also expected to comply with student behavior policies adopted by the board of education and to obey student behavior rules established by individual schools.

Parent involvement is the most desirable avenue for correcting behavioral problems and will be used when possible. Parent conferences may be used in conjunction with other forms of discipline. Parents shall be involved in periodic revisions of the Code of Student Conduct. Further, the General Assembly of Georgia requires this code of conduct to include language encouraging parents and guardians to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties for underage sexual conduct and other crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult. Parents/guardians should familiarize themselves with the policy's provisions and discuss them with their children.

This Code of Student Conduct shall be available to each student and parent in the district, including newly-enrolled students. Parents should sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of the code.

This code shall be available online, and any updates will be posted online as soon as approved. A printed copy will be provided at the beginning of each school year and thereafter upon request. Any online changes supersede printed copies.

Federal and state laws and regulations that are in conflict with this code or its application shall take precedence.

The rules listed in this policy apply to all Ben Hill County Schools. The dispositions listed are recommended maximums. This is not all-inclusive, and a student committing an act of misconduct not

covered by this policy will be subject to the discretionary authority of the principal. More severe punishment may be necessary. Notwithstanding the recommended maximum dispositions, a principal, acting through and with the concurrence of the superintendent or superintendent's designee, may refer a student to a disciplinary tribunal or to the Board of Education for disciplinary action arising out of the violation of any of these rules upon such referral, and after proper notice and hearing, appropriate action may be taken.

The Ben Hill County Board of Education allows the use of corporal punishment. It may be used in lieu of suspension at the administrator's discretion. See Board Policy JDA.

The policy represents a **progressive discipline** process. Factors taken into account in determining dispositions include but are not limited to:

- Student's History
- Degree of premeditation, impulse, or self-defense
- Age
- Disability
- Evidence
- Willingness to cooperate
- Seriousness of the offense

Because of these factors, the punishment imposed may vary from student to student for the same offense.

Students accused of violating this code should be advised of the violation and given a reasonable opportunity to present their position. Any student in excess of 10 cumulative days of suspension per semester for disciplinary reasons may be recommended to the Board of Education for expulsion.

School administrators have the authority to suspend or recommend students for expulsion for violation of reasonable rules or regulations. While suspended or expelled, a student cannot loiter on any Ben Hill County Board of Education property or participate in any school activity.

The system may assign to the alternative program, expel, or refuse admission to any student who engages or has engaged in behavior – either on or off campus – which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

If a student enrolls in another school system's alternative education program before the expiration of the placement, the placement will continue at the Ben Hill Alternative Program.

Students with disabilities suspended or expelled from regular transportation are not automatically assigned to a special education bus. Placement on special transportation, when extenuating circumstances are present will be decided individually by the IEP committee.

As per O.C.G.A. 20-2-768, Ben Hill County Schools 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 filed for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act 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 Code Section 20-2-754.

Chronically Disruptive Students

A teacher shall have the authority, consistent with local board policy, to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or the principal's designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. The principal or the principal's designee shall respond when a teacher refers a student by employing appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with local board policy.

A teacher shall 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, where the student's behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct, provided that the teacher has previously filed a report pursuant to Code Section 20-2-737 or determines that such behavior of the student poses an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher. Each school principal shall fully support the authority of every teacher in his or her school to remove a student from the classroom under this code section. Each school principal shall implement the policies and procedures of the superintendent and local board of education relating to the authority of every teacher to remove a student from the classroom and shall disseminate such policies and procedures to faculty, staff, and parents or guardians of students.

Ben Hill County Schools' procedures for dealing with chronically disruptive students are included in the district's behavior support process, the Student Support Team (SST/ RTI). Behavior plans may be included in the SST process. The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures pursuant to OCGA 20-2-738, enabling a teacher to remove from class a student who repeatedly or substantially disrupts the class.

For more information, visit the following webpage:

<http://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2010/title-20/chapter-2/article-16/part-2/subpart-1a/20-2-738>.

Gang-Related Behavior

Gangs pose a serious threat to the safety and well-being of our school community. Ben Hill County Schools (BHCS) has a zero-tolerance policy regarding gang-related activities. We are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Any violation of this policy will be addressed promptly and with the utmost seriousness. Any involvement in gang-related behavior, including but not limited to, the following actions, is strictly prohibited:

1. **Formation and Membership:** Any group of three or more students with a common name, sign, symbol, or attire that engages in criminal gang activity.
2. **Solicitation and Recruitment:** Encouraging or coercing others to join a gang.
3. **Symbols and Apparel:** Wearing, displaying, or possessing items associated with gang affiliation, including specific colors, jewelry, or insignia.
4. **Communication:** Using verbal or non-verbal gestures, handshakes, slogans, or drawings to signify gang membership.
5. **Social Media Activity:** Posting images or messages that depict or promote gang activity, including symbols, hand gestures, weapons, or drugs.
6. **Property Defacement:** Tagging or vandalizing school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans.
7. **Intimidation and Threats:** Threatening or intimidating others on behalf of a gang, or requiring payment for protection.

Definitions

Bus Suspension – The local school administrator suspends the student from all school buses for a specified period. The student is expected to attend school, but the parents are responsible for providing transportation to school.

Detention – Students attend a work/study session outside regular school hours. Students arrange for transportation.

Expulsion – Expelled from all public school property and activities or events for a period of time. Only tribunal waiver, tribunal, or action of the Board of Education takes this action. The student may be expelled for an accumulation of offenses and a major offense. During the term of expulsion, the student is not allowed on the school campus or at any school activity or school-sponsored event for Ben Hill County Schools or any other Georgia public school.

Students might be

1. Expelled for less than a calendar year, but not permanently expelled.
2. Permanently expelled.

In-School Suspension – The student is removed from the regular classroom setting for a specified period of time and assigned to a designated classroom on campus to complete the school day. Classwork assignments are sent to the student by the teachers. School transportation is provided.

Long-Term Suspension – The student is suspended out of school for more than ten (10) days. The student may be suspended for an accumulation of offenses and a major offense. Absences are discussed in policy JBD. During the term of suspension, the student is not allowed on the school campus or at any school activity or school-sponsored event for Ben Hill County Schools or any other Georgia public school.

Non-Prescription Drug(s) – Over-the-counter drug(s) not authorized by a registered physician and not prescribed for the student. Student use is prohibited except in accordance with local school policy.

Prescription Drug(s) – Use of drug(s) (medication) authorized by a registered physician and prescribed for the student. Parents should inform the school about the use of medically prescribed drugs. Procedures for using prescription medication at school are found in Board policy.

Short-Term Suspension – The student is suspended out of school for up to ten (10) days by the local school administrator. The student may be suspended for an accumulation of offenses and a major offense. Absences are discussed in policy JBD. During the term of suspension, the student is not allowed on the school campus or at any school activity or school-sponsored event for Ben Hill County Schools or any other Georgia public school.

Behavior Dispositions & Resolutions

- 02 – Detention 2 or more days – State Reported
- 10 – Corporal Punishment – State Reported
- 20 – In-School-Suspension – State Reported
- 30 – Out-of-School Suspension – State Reported
- 40 – Expulsion – State Reported
- 50 – Suspended From Bus – State Reported
- 61 – Assigned To Alternative Program for Disruptive Students – State Reported
- 70 – Court or Juvenile System Referral – State Reported
- 151– Clean-Up Duty
- 152– Conference – Parent
- 153– Conference – Student/Warning
- 154– Detention 1 day
- 155– Detention Saturday
- 156 – Isolation or Time-Out
- 157 – Parent Notified
- 158 – Parking Permit Revoked/Fine

- 159 – Refer to School Counselor
- 160 – Refer to Social Services
- 161 – Restitution
- 162 – Parent Conference Required Before Returning to Class
- 199 – Other Discipline Actions

Suspension Procedures

In-School-Suspension (ISS)

- Used for Minor/Major Discipline Issues 1 to 3 Days
- Used for Detention Time Out – Class Period or Special Events
- Used for Temporary Holding until Parent Arrives
- Student can serve no more than 10 days a semester
- Ride the bus to and from school
- Must complete all classroom assignments
- May be given additional days for inappropriate behavior or lack of completing assignments
- Students may be referred to Alternative School for continued behavior issues, while serving ISS the student can participate in extracurricular practice or activities; this is at the discretion of the coach or activity sponsor.
- The student can attend all extracurricular activities that are hosted by BHMS/FHSCCA.

Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS)

- Used for Major Chronic Behavior Issues
- Students have three (3) school days to make up assignments for the full grade; after five (5) days, a student will receive no more than a grade of 70 – zero given after the sixth school day for all missed assignments.
- Student can serve no more than 10 days of home suspension for each semester
- Student will be tribunal after 10 consecutive days of home suspension and referred to the Alternative School.

Alternative School (ALT) -

- Tribunal hearing/decision or parents must sign a waiver to be enrolled.
- Students will serve 1 semester or full school year.
- Students charged with off-campus felonies will be assigned ALT School until his/her case is resolved.
- Students that fail to follow the rules of the ALT School will be tribunal again for expulsion.
- Failure to meet attendance and mastery of assignments may result in additional time at the ALT School
- An exit meeting must occur between a school administrator, a parent, the student, and an Alt School teacher before the student can return to their home school.

Behavioral Rules

The rules listed in this policy apply to all Ben Hill County School students. The dispositions listed are recommendations. This list is not all-inclusive, and a student committing an act of misconduct not covered by this policy will be subject to the discretionary authority of the administration. More severe punishment may be administered.

Rule 01: ALCOHOL – State-reported

Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or use of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol. This includes possession,

sale, use, transmission, manufacture, purchase, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or possessing related paraphernalia during a school activity, function, or event on or off school grounds or while under school supervision.

1. Alcohol Level 1 - Unintentional Possession
2. Alcohol Level 2 - Under the influence without possession
3. Alcohol Level 3 - Sale, purchase, transportation, possession, consumption of alcohol

Up to 10 day's suspension with possible referral to law enforcement; possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the policies of the Ben Hill County Board of Education.

Rule 02: ARSON – State Reported

Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device. Possession of fireworks or incendiary devices will be reported as "Possession of Unapproved Items." The use of such items is arson.

1. Arson Level 2 - Arson without property damage, including trash can fires, without damage to property
2. Arson Level 3 - Intentional damage due to an arson-related activity or the use of an incendiary device.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement, possible referral for alternative placement, possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies. Restitution will be made.

RULE 03: BATTERY – State Reported

Actual and intentional touching or striking of another person against their will or intentionally causing bodily harm to an individual. Includes an attack with a weapon or one that causes serious bodily harm to the victim. This code should be used only when the attack is severe, serious enough to warrant calling the police or bringing in security, where the intent is to do bodily harm to someone.

1. Battery Level 1- Battery with no injuries
2. Battery Level 2- Battery with mild or moderate injuries
3. Battery Level 3- Battery with severe injuries; three or more offenses in the same school year.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Physical Violence Against an Employee (OCGA 20-2-751.6 (a))

1. Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature.
2. Intentionally making physical contact, which causes physical harm to another unless such physical contacts were in defense of themselves as provided for in OCGA 16-3-21 (b).

Mandatory disposition of ten (10) days suspension pending tribunal hearing; referral to law enforcement.

Rule 04: BREAKING AND ENTERING/BURGLARY – State Reported

Unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime. This applies to school buildings or activities related to a school function.

1. B&E/Burglary Level 3 - Any incident involving breaking and entering/burglary

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 05: COMPUTER TRESPASS – State Reported

Unauthorized use of a computer or computer network intending to delete, obstruct, interrupt, alter, damage, or in any way cause the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s), or data.

1. Computer Trespass Level 2 - Computer Misuse.
2. Computer Trespass Level 3 - Unlawful use of computer or altering records.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement, possible referral for alternative placement, possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 06: DISORDERLY CONDUCT – State Reported

Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students, staff, or others. Includes disruptive behaviors on the school buses.

1. Disorderly Conduct Level 1 - Creating or contributing to a moderate disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but does not pose a threat to the health or safety of others.
2. Disorderly Conduct Level 2 - Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but does not threaten the health or safety of others; may represent a repeat action.
3. Disorderly Conduct Level 3 - Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment or poses a threat to the health or safety of others. Level 3 may be used for students that violate this policy three or more times during the same school year.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement, possible referral for alternative placement, possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 07: DRUGS, EXCEPT ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO – State Reported

Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics. This includes being under the influence of drugs or substances represented as drugs. Code includes over-the-counter medications if abused by the student. It also includes intentionally smelling or inhaling fumes from any substance (for example, glue or solvents) to become intoxicated. The code does not include tobacco or alcohol.

1. Drugs Level 1 - Unintentional Possession
2. Drugs Level 2 - Any medication prescribed to students or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school
3. Drugs Level 3 - Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug, narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used to prepare or use drugs or narcotics.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement, possible referral for alternative placement, Possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 08: FIGHTING – State Reported**BEN HILL COUNTY SCHOOLS HAS A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR FIGHTING**

Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and confrontations, tussles, or other minor confrontations.

1. Fighting Level 2 - Fighting
2. Fighting Level 3 - Fighting with injuries; three or more fights in the same school year;

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies. More severe measures may include restitution for damages, immediate expulsion referral, or law enforcement officials' notification.

Rule 09: HOMICIDE – State Reported

Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, killing of one human being by another, killing a person through negligence.

1. Homicide Level 3 - Any incident involving homicide referral to law enforcement officials and referral to the Board of Education with a recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 10: KIDNAPPING – State Reported

Unlawful seizure, transportation, or detention of a person against their will or a minor without the consent of their custodial parents or legal guardian.

1. Kidnapping Level 3 - Any incident involving kidnapping

Referral to law enforcement officials and referral to the Board of Education with a recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 11L: THEFT – PETTY – Ben Hill

Taking, carrying, leading, or riding away with property of another person of a value of less than \$25 without the threat of violence and no law enforcement notification.

1. First/Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 199.

Rule 11: THEFT/LARCENY – State Reported

The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of another person's property without threat, violence, or bodily harm. This includes pocket-picking, purse or backpack-snatching if left unattended, theft from a building, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a coin-operated machine, and all other types of larcenies. The Larceny / Theft code should be used only when theft is serious enough to warrant calling the police or bringing in security.

1. Larceny/Theft Level 1 - Unlawful taking of property between \$25 and \$100
2. Larceny/Theft Level 2 - Unlawful taking of property between \$100 and \$250
3. Larceny/Theft Level 3 - Unlawful taking of property with a value exceeding \$250; three or more offenses in the same school year

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the policies of the Ben Hill County Board of Education.

Rule 12: MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT – State Reported

Theft, or attempted theft, of a motor vehicle. Code includes car, truck, motorcycle, dune buggy, RV, or self-propelled theft. Referral to law enforcement officials and referral to the Board of Education with a recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools are according to the policies of the Board of Education

Rule 13: ROBBERY – State Reported

Taking, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization, under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence or by putting the victim in fear.

1. Robbery Level 2 - Robbery without a weapon
2. Robbery Level 3 - Robbery with a weapon

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 14: SEXUAL BATTERY – State Reported

Unlawful sexual behavior or contact with force or threat of force or where the victim is incapable of giving consent. The age of the student will be taken into account.

This code will be used only when the incident is severe enough to warrant calling in law enforcement.

1. Sexual Battery Level 3 - Any incident involving Sexual Battery

Short or long-term suspension and referral to law enforcement officials; possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the policies of the Ben Hill County Board of Education.

Rule 15: SEXUAL HARASSMENT – State Reported

Deliberate, repeated, and unsolicited physical actions, gestures, or verbal or written comments of a sexual nature, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. Includes any

unwelcome sexually oriented communication or behavior that makes an individual feel afraid, offended, or uncomfortable.

1. Sexual Harassment Level 1 - Unwelcome comments not directed towards individual
2. Sexual Harassment Level 2 - Unwelcome comments directed towards individuals
3. Sexual Harassment Level 3 - Violation of sexual harassment policy; three or more offenses in the same school year.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools pursuant to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies. Other disciplinary options may be used in extreme cases.

Rule 16: SEX OFFENSES – State Reported

Unlawful sexual behavior or contact without force or threat of force where the victim is capable of giving consent. Code includes indecent exposure and obscenity. Includes viewing or downloading pornographic content onto communication devices on school-owned or personal devices.

1. Sex Offenses Level 1 - Inappropriate sexually-based physical contact
2. Sex Offenses Level 2 - Inappropriate sexually - based behavior
3. Sex Offenses Level 3 - Consensual sexual activities; three or more offenses in the same school year

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement, possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the policies of the Ben Hill County Board of Education.

Rule 17: THREAT/INTIMIDATION – State Reported

Any threat through written or verbal language or act, which creates a fear of harm or conveys a serious expression of intent to harm or violence without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

1. Threat/Intimidation Level 2 - Physical, verbal, or electronic threat which creates fear of harm
2. Threat/Intimidation Level 3 - School-wide physical, verbal, or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies. More severe measures may include restitution for damages, immediate expulsion referral, or law enforcement officials' notification.

Rule 18: TOBACCO – State Reported

Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco, tobacco substitutes, or tobacco-like products or paraphernalia on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on transportation to or from school. Students under school supervision (club meetings, field trips, club trips/activities, sports activities, etc.) shall not use or possess tobacco in any form.

Tobacco Level 1 - Unintentional possession of tobacco products

Tobacco Level 2 - Intentional use or possession of tobacco products

Tobacco Level 3 - Distribution or sale of tobacco products; three or more offenses in the same school year

Tobacco

1st Offense – 3 days of OSS & Tobacco Contract

2nd Offense – 5 days of OSS & Charged with Illegal Possession

3rd Offense – 10 days of OSS, Charged with Illegal Possession, & referred to Tribunal

Subsequent Offenses - long-term suspension and referral to law enforcement officials; possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools pursuant to the policies of the Ben Hill County Board of Education.

Rule 19: TRESPASSING – State Reported

Entering or remaining on a public school campus or School Board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry. This includes students under suspension or expulsion.

1. Trespassing Level 2 - Unauthorized presence on school property
2. Trespassing Level 3 - Refusing to leave school property; three or more offenses in the same school year.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 20: VANDALISM – State Reported

The willful or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it.

1. Vandalism Level 2 - Minor damage or defacement of property
2. Vandalism Level 3 - Malicious destruction or property damage; three or more offenses in the same school year.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Appropriate restitution will be made for all damages and costs related to repairs.

More severe measures may be taken, including immediate referral for expulsion or notification of law enforcement officials.

Rule 22: WEAPONS/KNIFE – State Reported

The possession, use, or intention to use any type of knife, including a pocket or pen knife, to inflict harm on another person or intimidate anyone.

1. Weapons/knife Level 1 - Unintentional possession of a knife or knife-like item with no intent to harm or intimidate
2. Weapons/knife Level 2 - Intentional possession of a knife or knife-like item with no intent to harm or intimidate
3. Weapons/knife Level 3 - Intentional possession or use of a knife or knife-like item with the intent to harm or intimidate.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 23: WEAPONS/OTHER – State Reported

The possession, use, or intention to use any instrument or object that is used or intended to be used in a manner that may inflict bodily harm (does not include knives or firearms).

Includes but is not limited to razor blades, straight edge razors, brass knuckles, blackjacks, bats, clubs, nunchucks, throwing stars, stun guns, tasers, BB/Orbeez Guns, etc.

1. Weapons/Other Level 2 - Unintentional possession of a weapon, other than a knife or firearm, or simile of a weapon that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm
2. Weapons/Other Level 3 - Intentional possession and use of any weapon, other than a knife or firearm, in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm.

Up to ten (10) days suspension with possible referral to law enforcement. Possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 25: WEAPONS/HANDGUNS – State Reported

Possession of a firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by using a single hand; and any combination of parts from which a firearm described above can be assembled. This definition does not apply to items such as toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, and pellet guns.

1. Weapons/Handgun Level 3 - Intentional or unintentional handgun possession.

All Offenses - Any student determined to have brought a firearm to school shall be referred to law enforcement and recommended to the tribunal for expulsion from school for not less than one

year, subject to modification on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Education. If the student is allowed to return after expulsion, their placement will be at the alternative program.

Rule 26: WEAPONS/RIFLES/SHOTGUN– State Reported

The term “rifle” means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for every single pull of the trigger. The term “shotgun” means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore, either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for every single pull of the trigger.

1. Weapons/Rifle/Shotgun Level 3 - Intentional or unintentional possession of a rifle/shotgun
All Offenses - Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school shall be referred to law enforcement and recommended to the tribunal for expulsion from school for not less than one year, subject to modification on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Education. If the student is allowed to return after expulsion, his/her placement will be at the alternative program.

Rule 27: SERIOUS BODILY INJURY – State Reported

Bodily injury, which involves a substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. Any behavior that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ, and causes substantial risk of death.

1. Serious Bodily Injury Level 3 - Any incident involving the infliction of “bodily harm” that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ, and causes substantial risk of death.

Referral to law enforcement officials and referral to the Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools pursuant to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 28: WEAPONS/OTHER FIREARMS – State Reported

Firearms other than handguns, rifles, or shotguns as defined above. Includes any weapon (including started gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e., bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellants, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. (NOTE: This does not include toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or Class-C common fireworks).

1. Weapons/Other Firearms Level 3 - Any incident involving other firearms
 Referral to law enforcement officials and referral to the Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools pursuant to the Ben Hill County Board of Education policies.

Rule 29: BULLYING – State Reported

Pattern of behavior, which may include written, verbal, physical acts, or through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology occurring on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm or visibly bodily harm.

Includes but is not limited to a pattern of unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or using any type of electronic means to harass or intimidate.

1. **Bullying Level 1** - First incident of bullying
2. **Bullying Level 2** - Second incident of bullying

3. **Bullying Level 3** - Repeated acts occurring on school property or school equipment that is a willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, or apparent means to do so, any display of force that puts the victim in fear of harm, any written, verbal or physical act that threatens, harasses, or intimidates; causes another person physical harm; interferes with a student's education; so severe and pervasive intimidated or threatens educational environment.

For Grades PreK-5:

Punishment at the discretion of the administrator. The student's age/level of maturity or development should be considered concerning the offense.

For Grades 6-12:

1. 1st Offense - parent conference, referral to the school counselor, and three (3) days suspension or other appropriate punishment at the discretion of the administrator
2. 2nd Offense - five (5) days suspension
3. 3rd Offense - assignment to an alternative program. More severe punishment may be necessary in some cases.

Rule 30-L: ATTENDANCE – Ben Hill Reported

Attendance issues of a minor nature, including unexcused tardiness to school or class, being in areas designated in the student handbook or by school officials as being off limits, failure to be in an assigned place of instruction at the assigned time without a valid excuse, or urging others to violate this rule.

Attendance Related Level 0 – Ben Hill Reported

First/Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 – 199.

Rule 30: ATTENDANCE RELATED – State Reported

Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardies, including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, out of the assigned area, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions.

1. Attendance Related Level 1 - Any incident involving attendance
2. Offense Level 1 – Action must be State Reported Disposition – Includes Detention 2 Days, Corporal Punishment, ISS, OSS, Expulsion, Bus Suspension, Referral to Alt School, or Referral to Court.

Rule 31-L: DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS – Ben Hill Reported

Minor violations of the Student Dress Code as outlined in the student handbook.

1. Dress Code Violation Level 0 – Ben Hill Reported - Minor
 - a. First/Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 – 199.

Rule 31: DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS – State Reported

Violation of school dress code that includes standards for appropriate school attire.

1. Dress Code Violation Level 1 - Non-offensive or non-suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags, or other articles of personal appearance.
2. Dress Code Violation Level 2 - Offensive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags, or other articles of personal appearance.
3. Dress Code Violation Level 3 - Offensive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags, or other articles of personal appearance. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school dress code policy three or more times during the same school year.

All Offenses – Action must be State Reported Disposition

1. Includes Detention 2 Days, ISS, OSS, Expulsion, Bus Suspension, Referral to Alternative Program, or Referral to Court

Rule 32-L: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY - CHEATING – Ben Hill Reported

Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on school assignments that affords one an unfair advantage of a minor nature.

Academic Dishonesty Level 0 – Ben Hill Reported

First Offense: - Redo assignment with a maximum lower grade, alternative assignment, and/or possible grade of 0.

1. Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 – 199.

Rule 32: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY – State Reported

Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assignments, or exams.

1. Academic Dishonesty Level 1 - Intentional receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assessments, and assignments
2. Academic Dishonesty Level 2 - Intentional plagiarism or cheating on classroom assignments or projects
3. Academic Dishonesty Level 3 - Intentional plagiarism, cheating on major exams, statewide assessments, projects, or falsifying school records - includes forgery. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on academic dishonesty three or more times during the same school year.

First/Subsequent Offenses: - Up to ten (10) days suspension, redo assignment with a maximum lower grade, alternative assignment, and possible grade of 0.

Rule 33-L: STUDENT INCIVILITY – Ben Hill Reported

Failure to comply with reasonable directions of a Ben Hill County Schools employee when on the school grounds or during a school activity off school grounds. This can include cursing, talking back, “sassing,” intentionally arguing in a demanding or disruptive manner, or otherwise showing disrespect for any persons present at school or school-related functions. Violations include harassing, intimidating with words or actions, and verbally abusing others. This includes non-violent verbal confrontation, willful disobedience, and disrespectful behavior.

Student Incivility Level 0 – Ben Hill Reported

1. First/Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 – 199.

Rule 33: STUDENT INCIVILITY – State Reported

Insubordination or disrespect to staff members or other students; includes but is not limited to refusal to follow school staff member instructions, use of vulgar or inappropriate language, and misrepresentation of the truth.

1. Student Incivility Level 1 - General disrespect or failure to follow instructions
2. Student Incivility Level 2 - Blatant insubordination; profanity directed toward school staff or peers; intentional misrepresentation of the truth
3. Student Incivility Level 3 - Blatant and repeated insubordination or intentional misrepresentation of the truth; three or more offenses in the same school year.

All Offenses Level 1-3 – Action must be State Reported Disposition – Includes Detention for two (2) Days, Corporal Punishment, ISS, OSS, Expulsion, Bus Suspension, Referral to Alternative School, and Referral to Court.

Rule 34-L: –POSSESSION OF UNAPPROVED ITEMS – Ben Hill Reported

Distracting paraphernalia not specifically required by a teacher for educational uses. These will be confiscated and may not be returned.

1. First/Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 – 199.

Rule 34: POSSESSION OF UNAPPROVED ITEMS –State Reported

The use or possession of any unauthorized item disruptive to the school environment.

1. Possession of Unapproved Items Level 1 – Possession of unauthorized items. Includes but is not limited to possession of toys, mobile devices, gadgets, personal items, gum, candy, etc.; includes possession of pepper spray, Beats (Headphones), Air buds, Air Pods, Headphones, etc.
 - a. Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous

2. Possession of Unapproved Items Level 2 - Use of unauthorized items (i.e., toys, mobile devices, or gadgets).
 - a. Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be constructed as dangerous. Includes but is not limited to the use of toys, mobile devices, gadgets, personal items, etc.; includes the use of pepper spray without injury.
3. Possession of Unapproved Items Level 3 - The use or possession of unauthorized items, including but not limited to toy guns or other items that can be construed as dangerous or harmful to the learning environment, including the possession of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks. The use of matches, lighters, incendiary devices, or fireworks should be coded as Arson; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to unapproved items. Includes but is not limited to possession of matches, lighters, fireworks, bullets, stink bombs, and CO2 cartridges; includes using pepper spray with injury.

All Offenses Level 1-3 – Action must be State Reported Disposition – Includes Detention two (2) Days, Corporal Punishment, ISS, OSS, Expulsion, Bus Suspension, Referral to Alt School, or Referral to Court

Rule 35: GANG RELATED – State Reported

Any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire which engage in criminal gang activity. The solicitation of others for gang membership, defacing school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans, threatening or intimidating on behalf of a gang, or the requirement of payment for protection or insurance through a gang. Includes wearing or possessing gang-related apparel or communicating verbally/ nonverbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang.

1. Gang-Related Level 2 - Wearing or possessing gang-related apparel; communicating verbally or nonverbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang. Possession or wearing of gang-related clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or using colors to convey gang membership or affiliation; gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc., to convey gang membership or affiliation; committing any other illegal act or other violation of school policies in connection with gang-related activity.
 - a. Level 2: Three (3) to five (5) days suspension. Punishment may be administered to the fullest degree if an activity involves physical harm.
2. Gang Related Level 3 - Soliciting students for gang membership, tagging or defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang; requiring payment for protection, insurance, otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity; inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity. Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to gang activity.
 - a. Level 3: Up to ten (10) days suspension; referral to law enforcement; possible referral for alternative placement; possible referral to Board of Education with recommendation for expulsion from Ben Hill County Schools according to the policies of the Ben Hill County Board of Education.

Rule 36: REPEATED OFFENSES – State Reported

Collection of offenses that occur on multiple school days that may lead to a state reportable disciplinary action.

1. Repeated Offenses Level 1 - Collection of minor incidents
2. Repeated Offenses Level 2 - Collection of moderate incidents
3. Repeated Offenses Level 3 - Collection of severe incidents

Disposition at administrator discretion up to and including alternative placement.

Rule 37: BUS MISCONDUCT

Bus misconduct of a minor nature. See the next section for dispositions for more serious bus misconduct infractions.

1. First/Subsequent Offenses: – Consequences will be age appropriate. Possible action consists of behavior dispositions and resolutions codes 151 – 199.

Rule 42: ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICE

Are prohibited on the campus or inside the school buildings of the Ben Hill County School System as these instruments are used for various recreational activities, including, but not limited to, smoking tobacco oil as well as illegal drugs such as THC, CBC, and Marijuana. Suspected THC vapes will be tested and vapes that test positive for THC will be disciplined under **Rule 7: DRUGS**.

Level 1 = 1st Offense – 3 days of OSS & Vaping Contract

Level 2 = 2nd Offense – 5 days of OSS & Charged with Illegal Possession

Level 3 = 3rd Offense – 10 days of OSS, Charged with Illegal Possession, & referred to Tribunal

Student Technology

Technology Responsible Use & Digital Citizenship

Statement of Responsibility

Using student devices and the network is a privilege. The student is responsible for what he or she says and does on the network. It is important for the user to stop and think before communicating and to show respect for others and their ideas. Students must assume that none of their data is private or confidential. Any communication or data may be reviewed by the district and/or school administration. Periodic checks may be made by designated staff to ensure that students have not removed required apps or added inappropriate content.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

It is expected that Parents/Guardians talk with their children about digital citizenship. This includes discussing the dangers and consequences of cyberbullying, inappropriate use, and other misuse of the Internet. Parents/Guardians must expect their child to use technology appropriately at school and at home.

School and District Responsibilities

- BHCS provides internet access to its students at school.
- BHCS provides internet filtering/blocking of inappropriate materials in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) while using BHCS devices.
- BHCS reserves the right to review, monitor, and restrict information stored on or transmitted via district-owned equipment and investigate inappropriate resource use.
- Student devices may be randomly selected by any staff for remote or physical device inspection.

Student Responsibilities

- Students will use BHCS technologies in a responsible and ethical manner.
- Students will appropriately use all technology resources to not damage school equipment. "Damage" includes, but is not limited to, the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the student's negligence, errors, or omissions.
- Students will help BHCS protect the district network and devices by contacting school personnel about any security problems they encounter.
- Students will not share their username/login credentials or passwords with anyone.
- Students will not allow others to use their assigned devices.
- If a student should receive an electronic message containing inappropriate or abusive language, or if the subject matter is questionable, he/she will inform a teacher or other staff member.
- Students will turn in the device to their school at the end of each school year unless specifically authorized by the district to do so earlier.
- Students who graduate early, withdraw, are suspended or expelled, or terminate enrollment in BHCS for any reason, must return the device on or before the termination date. The district will report the device as stolen if not returned, as described above.

- Students will mute the sound on their devices during the instructional day unless otherwise permitted. Headphones or earbuds may be allowed or required for certain applications and settings.
- Students will refrain from recording classroom instruction or day-to-day activities that take place in the classroom without the knowledge of the teacher.

General Procedures and Precautions

- Students are responsible for maintaining their devices and keeping them in good working order.
- Cords should be inserted carefully into the device to prevent damage and stored in a way that does not stress the cords.
- Devices should not be placed near magnets; magnets may damage computerized equipment.
- Devices should not be exposed to excessive heat or severe cold temperatures.
- Students are responsible for securely storing devices in designated areas when not in use. If a device is found in an unsupervised area, it will be taken to the Media Center. Leaving a device in an unsupervised area is considered negligent and a violation of the handbook, which will result in administrative action.

Taking Devices Home

Only FHSCCA students will take the device home. Students must bring the device to all classes unless specifically instructed not to do so by their teachers.

Devices Left at Home

If a student leaves the device at home, he/she is responsible for completing coursework as if the device were present.

Charging your Device's Battery

Student devices must be brought to school each day fully charged as devices should last the entire school day on a single charge. Student chargers should come to school each day.

Home/Off-Campus Connectivity

Students can access wireless internet networks on their devices off campus. BHCS provides internet filtering outside of the district's network. These filters ensure that the content retrieved online by students aligns with Federal and State guidelines for Internet use in school and coincides with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Damaged, Lost, or Stolen Devices

Devices that are damaged or lost will incur an negligence fee of fair market value

Damaged Devices

Report damaged computer devices immediately. Students should notify their teacher or the media specialist at their school. If you cannot see them face-to-face, please call or email them to the school or district office below. Include your name, grade, asset tag number, and description of the problem or damage to the device.

The school media specialist/paraprofessional reports damaged devices to the Technology Department.

- All repairs will be performed by BHCS or its authorized agent. Students should not ever attempt to repair devices.
- Repairs due to device failures will be repaired by the District, and a loaner device, if available, will be provided to the student to borrow.

Lost Devices

Report lost computer devices immediately. Students should notify their teacher or the media specialist at their school.

- Devices that are not brought to school for three consecutive days will be considered lost.
- Devices lost will incur a negligence fee of the current market value.
- Chargers lost will incur a negligence fee of \$25.

Stolen Devices

Device theft must be reported to a school administrator or media center staff member immediately or immediately. A police report will be filed to document the theft of a student's device. Action will be taken by the District and/or local law enforcement to recover stolen devices.

Violations and Consequences

The discipline procedures in the BHCS Student Code of Conduct address all levels of offenses, including stealing and destruction of school or personal property. This applies to all BHCS property, including school-assigned technology devices. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, students may lose device usage rights and/or network privileges, be suspended, or, in extreme cases, be expelled.

Daily Device Procedures by Grade

Ben Hill Preschool, Ben Hill Primary, & Ben Hill Elementary School

Students will have an iPad or laptop checked out and assigned through the Media Center. The student's device will either travel with them or remain in their designated teacher's classroom and will be charged and housed in a cart in their homeroom classroom. The device will remain on campus with the flexibility to allow students to take home their laptop, charger, and case at the administration's discretion.

Ben Hill Middle School

Each teacher will have a class set of devices in their classroom in a cart. Teachers will assign students a specific laptop and charger to use in class daily. Students will not travel with devices or take the devices home. Students in accelerated classes may take their devices home each day as assigned homework must be completed at the advanced pace or as requested by parents or guardians.

Fitzgerald High School College and Career Academy

Each student will have a laptop and charger checked out and assigned to them through the Media Center. The student's devices will travel with them daily to all classes. All FHSCCA students will take their devices home each day and are responsible for bringing the device back charged for daily instruction.

Collecting Student Devices

- Device accessories (such as charging cords, cases, & electronic pens) that are furnished by the school must be returned at the end of the school year, with only normal wear and no device modifications.
- Teachers will check student devices multiple times during the school year and will report any signs of damage to school administrators and the district technology dept.
- If a student transfers, withdraws, is suspended or expelled, or terminates enrollment at BHC schools for any reason, they must return the device with all accessories on the termination date. If the device is not returned, it will be assumed to have been stolen. Action will be taken by the BHCS District to reclaim the device and accessories.

Internet Use Agreement

It shall be the policy of the Ben Hill County Board of Education (the "Board of Education") that the Ben Hill County School District (the "School District") shall have in continuous operation, with respect to any devices using School District-provided network resources:

- A. A qualifying "technology protection measure," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA) and Section 2-3 of the "Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024."
- B. Procedures or guidelines developed by the Superintendent, administrators and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measure to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in Section 1703(b)(1) and (2) of CIPA. Additionally, those measures will also include staff behavior on School District-provided devices and services. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:
 1. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matters on the Internet;
 2. Educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, cyberbullying awareness, and response, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act;
 3. Prevent unauthorized access, including hacking, denial-of-service, credential theft, and other unauthorized activities by minors and staff;
 4. Prevent the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors and staff; and,
 5. Restrict minors' access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(2) of CIPA.

The School District's technology resources are provided for educational and instructional purposes that promote and are consistent with the instructional goals of the Ben Hill County School District or are for the business operations/use by School District staff. Students and employees accessing network services or any device utilizing those services shall comply with IFBGE and any handbooks provided by the School District. The School District reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose the contents of any user's files, activities, or communications without the consent of the user.

The Board of Education will, through its administrative staff, provide an Internet screening system which blocks access to a large percentage of inappropriate sites. It should not be assumed, however, that users are completely prevented from accessing inappropriate materials or from sending or receiving objectionable communications.

Additionally, access to the Internet and computer resources is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, users violating the Board of Education's acceptable-use policy shall be subject to revocation of these privileges and potential disciplinary action, including termination of contract/employment for vendors and employees.

As a guiding framework for this, the Board of Education will adopt and maintain a procedure that

outlines and mandates the operation of a reliable, safe, and secure network for all students, teachers, and staff. This will establish appropriate measures to be taken by the school or local School District in response to:

- Students and School District employees who willfully and intentionally violate the acceptable-use policy, whether such student or employee was, at the time of such violation, on School District property, in a School District-owned bus/vehicle, at a School District related function, or elsewhere, provided that such measures include disciplinary measures.
- Any person who is not a student or School District employee who violates the acceptable use policy, whether such person was, at the time of such violation, on School District property, in a School District-owned bus/vehicle, at a School District-related function, or elsewhere while utilizing the School District device or network connection.
- Provide for administrative procedures to enforce the acceptable-use policy.
- Provide for administrative procedures to address complaints regarding possible violations of the acceptable-use policy which, at a minimum, requires that each complaint is responded to, in writing, by an appropriate school administrator or local School District official.
- Provide for expedited review and resolution of a claim that the application of the acceptable-use policy is denying a student or School District employee access to material that is not within the prohibitions of the acceptable-use policy.

Board Policy IFBGE: Internet Safety

I. Introduction

The Ben Hill County School District's Internet access is designed to enhance and enrich the educational experience of its students and staff. Internet access will be appropriately provided throughout the School District with the following goals in mind:

- A. To provide educational excellence for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication within our own community, the state, nationally and globally.
- B. To support research and education in and among academic institutions in the world by providing access to unique resources and providing the opportunity for collaborative work.
- C. To stimulate personal growth in information gathering techniques, critical thinking skills and communication skills; to significantly expand each user's knowledge base; and to promote intellectual inquiry and awareness of global diversity through worldwide communication and exploration.
- D. To assist students in developing the intellectual skills needed to discriminate among information sources and to evaluate and use information to meet educational goals as posed to the student by the instructor.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the School District to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)].

III. Definitions

(For purposes of this policy, key terms are as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA")).

CIPA DEFINITION OF TERMS:

- A. TECHNOLOGY PROTECTION MEASURE. The term "*technology protection measure*" means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions are:
- i. OBSCENE, as that term is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1460;
 - ii. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, as that term is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256;
 - iii. Harmful to minors.
- B. HARMFUL TO MINORS. The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:
- i. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
 - ii. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and,
 - iii. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.
- C. SEXUAL ACT, SEXUAL CONTACT. The terms "*sexual act*" and "*sexual contact*" have the meanings given such terms in 18 U.S.C. § 2246.

IV. Instruction for Students

The Superintendent, administrators, and/or other appropriate personnel (as may be, from time to time, designated by the Board of Education), shall design and provide for students age-appropriate instruction regarding safe and appropriate online behavior, including interacting with others on social networking sites and in chat rooms; behaviors that may constitute cyber bullying; and how to respond when subjected to cyber bullying.

V. Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures shall be used to block or filter Internet,

or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information.

Specifically, as required by CIPA, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

VI. Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the School District's online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. All outside web-based email will not be available to staff and students.

Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking', and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

VII. Supervision and Monitoring

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the School District's staff to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and CIPA.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying of any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the designated representatives of the Technology Department.

VIII. Adoption and Amendment

This Internet Safety Policy was originally adopted by the Ben Hill County Board of Education at a public meeting, on August 9, 2025, revised thereafter on January 19, 2021. Future amendment(s) to this policy shall be made effective in the same manner.

IX. Privacy

The School District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store at any time without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information filed shall be and remain the property of the School District and no usage shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

X. Disclaimer of Liability

The Board of Education shall not be liable for a user's inappropriate use of computer resources, violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Board of Education shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on the Internet. The Board of Education's computer system will be used only for administrative and instructional purposes consistent with the School District's mission and goals in compliance with CIPA.

TITLE I

Complaints and Grievances

Complaint Procedures under the ESEA and amended by ESSA

Grounds for a Complaint

A. Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Ben Hill County Board of Education (“Department”) if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges a violation of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the No Child Left Behind Act. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

B. Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

1. Title I, Part A: Improving Academic Instruction
2. Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
3. Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
4. Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
6. Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment
7. Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
8. Title V, Part B, Rural and Low-Income Schools
9. Title VI, IDEA
10. Title IX, Part A, McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth

C. Filing a Complaint

A complaint must be made in writing to the Ben Hill County School Director of Federal Programs and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that the Ben Hill County School System has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation);
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant’s position; and
6. The address of the complainant.

D. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Director of Federal Programs will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the Department received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;
3. A statement of the ways in which the Department may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.
5. If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the Superintendent will have sixty (60) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings. If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required, and timelines for completion will be included. The sixty (60) day timeline outlined above may be extended if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant.

E. Right of Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request a review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Superintendent’s decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Georgia Department of Education, Office of Legal Services, 205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE, 2052 Twin Tower East, Atlanta, GA 30334

It is the policy of the Ben Hill County Board of Education that grievances and complaints relating to school matters are to be recognized and addressed in an orderly manner. Grievances and complaints shall be addressed by parents, students, staff, private schools, and other concerned organizations or individuals in the general public. Grievances and complaints shall be handled and resolved, whenever possible, as close to their origin as possible. For the purposes of this policy, a grievance is defined as any claim by a public member that the action or operation of the school district or the Board of Education violates the law or Board policy. Any claim that does not meet the definition of grievance will be considered a complaint and handled through routine administrative procedures. The Federal Programs Director is responsible for the dissemination of the complaint procedure. The complaint procedure and form will be available on the district website, the employee handbook, and paper copies will be available at each school and the district office.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Purpose and Use of Title I, ESSA Funds

The purpose of the ESSA Title I, Part A funds is to ensure that all students have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on the State Board adopted content and achievement standards, as specified in the statute and regulations. Districts and schools receiving funds are to ensure that they are meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students in low-income schools funded by Title I or in schools receiving the funding and are closing the achievement gap between high and low-performing students, especially the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students and between socioeconomically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers.

School-Wide Program

A school-wide program school may now use its Title I, Part A funds coupled with other Federal education funds to upgrade the school's entire educational program, rather than to target services only on identified children. By affecting the entire program of instruction, the overall education of children in the most impoverished schools can be improved.

Professionally Qualified Teachers and Paraprofessionals

All of Ben Hill County's Title I schools will use their title funds to support instructional strategies effective with students at risk of not meeting state standards. Programs of high quality are in place and offer strategies to ensure success in the Core Academic Program. Professionally qualified teachers are placed in all our schools to provide regular instruction to all our students.

Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, must have:

- Completed two years of study at any institution of higher learning; or
- Obtained an associate's degree (or higher); or
- Demonstrate through an academic assessment the knowledge and the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and math.

Parent Involvement

Parental engagement in the Ben Hill County Schools is an important component of a student's success in school. The Board encourages parents to engage in their child's education to ensure their child's academic success.

The Ben Hill County School District will implement programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1010 of

the Every Student Succeeds ACT (ESSA). Those programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with the parents of participating children.

Parental engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. The Ben Hill County School District will take the following actions to engage parents in the joint development of its district-wide parental engagement plan under section 1010 of the ESSA:

Conduct an annual meeting to inform parents of the school's Title I participation and to discuss the Title I program:

- Provide parents with opportunities to be informed of the benefits of their school's participation in Title I and encourage them to become involved in the ongoing planning, review, and improvement of the parental engagement program;
- Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I program and Parent Engagement Policy through the annual evaluation of the Title I program conducted each year.
- Develop district protocols for appropriate roles for community based organizations and businesses in parent engagement activities;
- Adopt district model approaches to improving parent engagement at the school level;
- Allocate district resources to parent engagement activities;
- Meet with parenting personnel from Pre-K and the English Language Assistance Programs to collaborate while planning for parent workshops when feasible;
- Conduct other activities such as parent resource centers that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their students;
- Communicate with parents in a format and language that they can understand;
- Invite families and preschool children into the schools to visit, have lunch, and participate in planned activities;
- Provide to parents, as appropriate, information to help them understand the State's academic content standards, the State's student academic achievement standards, and the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments;
- Provide parents with timely information about the Title I program through parent meetings, the school website and newsletters throughout the school year.

Teacher Qualifications

At Ben Hill County Schools, we are very proud of our teachers. We feel they are ready for the coming year and are prepared to help your child do their best. As a Title I school, we are required by federal law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, to inform you about your child's teachers' qualifications. It is your right to request the following information about your child's teachers' training and credentials:

- Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Academic Information

Artificial Intelligence

BHCS recognizes the growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in academic work. While students are encouraged to utilize AI technologies to enhance their learning experience, it is essential to uphold academic integrity. The use of AI must be in accordance with BHCS's policies on plagiarism and proper citation. Students must ensure that any AI-generated content is appropriately credited and does not violate academic honesty standards. Deliberate misuse of AI tools to circumvent academic responsibilities will be treated as a violation of BHCS's academic integrity policy.

Attendance Regulations

Any middle or high school student missing more than half of any period will be counted absent for that period.

BHCS Clear Backpack Policy:

For students in grades PK through 12 attending Ben Hill County Schools (BHCS), all backpacks must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Clear Backpack Requirement:** Backpacks must be transparent to ensure easy visibility of their contents. Mesh or colored backpacks are not allowed. Only fully clear backpacks are permitted.
2. **Reasonable Size:** Backpacks should be of a reasonable size, accommodating essential school items while facilitating easy inspection. Oversized backpacks that exceed reasonable dimensions are discouraged.
3. **Non-Clear Lunch Boxes, Purses, and Pouches:** While clear backpacks are mandatory, non-clear lunch boxes, purses, and pouches are allowed, provided they do not exceed a maximum size of 6 inches by 9 inches.
4. **Prohibition of Hidden Compartments:** Backpacks with hidden compartments or excessive layers obstructing visibility are strictly prohibited.
5. **Athletic/Duffle Bags:** Athletic or duffle bags are permissible but are subject to search upon entry into the school building. These bags must be stored in designated areas corresponding to the respective sport or activity, such as the Band Room for band-related activities or the Coaches Office for football-related activities.
6. **Personal Items:** Students are encouraged to bring only school-appropriate and educationally relevant items to campus, minimizing the presence of unnecessary personal belongings.
7. **Search and Inspection:** Students consent to visual inspections by school staff or security personnel by bringing a backpack onto the school premises. This measure upholds a secure environment while respecting students' privacy rights.

Definitions

Accelerated instruction- challenging instructional activities intensely focused on student academic strengths in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. This accelerated instruction is designed to provide opportunities for students to achieve at levels beyond the grade level norm. This instruction will move faster, go deeper with grade-level standards, and introduce standards from the next grade level when appropriate.

Remediation/Intervention instruction – academic instruction beyond regularly scheduled academic classes that are designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, to grade level performance. It may include more instructional time allocated during the school day, instruction before and after the school day, Saturday instruction, and/or summer/intersession instruction.

Differentiated instruction – instructional strategies designed to meet individual student learning needs.

Grade level – performance standard, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, on a Georgia Milestone Assessment.

Placement – the assignment of a student to a specific grade level based on the determination that such placement will most likely provide the student with instruction and other services needed to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

Placement committee – the committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet expectations on the Georgia Milestone Assessment. This committee shall comprise the principal or designee, the student’s parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) where the student did not achieve grade level on the Georgia Milestone Assessment.

Promotion – the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student’s achievement of established criteria in the current grade.

Retention – reassigning a student to the current grade level during the next school year.

Pyramid of Intervention - The pyramid is set up in levels or tiers, each providing general guidelines of what students should receive in their instructional setting.

Tier 1: ALL students receive differentiated instruction and frequent progress monitoring in their current standards-based classroom.

Tier 2: Students struggling in Tier 1 are provided more focused interventions through methods that differ from Tier 1 and provide more frequent monitoring.

Tier 3: Through the Student Support Team (SST) process, students who continue to be unsuccessful are given more individually targeted instruction in addition to the Tier 1 & 2 strategies.

Tier 4: Students enter a specialized learning program to help meet their instructional needs.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support), Response to Intervention (RTI)/Student Support Team

This team consists of the MTSS/RTI coordinator, intervention specialists, and grade-level teachers. It examines each child identified as needing extra support through the Pyramid of Intervention to meet his/her educational goals. The team is responsible for writing the tier 3 Intervention Plan and determining an appropriate progress monitoring tool.

No Extra Credit

BHCS prohibits extra credit opportunities to maintain academic integrity and maintain consistent standards of assessment, as they pose risks of grade inflation and inaccurately reflect student mastery. This policy ensures fair evaluation based on demonstrated understanding and proficiency within the curriculum, preserving the integrity of our grading system.

Gifted Program

The gifted program in Ben Hill County serves students in all grades. Students may be referred for screening by administrators, teachers, and parents. Students may also be automatically referred if they score at the ninety percentile or above in reading and/or math on a standardized achievement test. Once students are referred, they will be evaluated in four areas: Mental Abilities, Achievement, Creativity, and Motivation. To be eligible for the gifted program, the student must qualify in three of the four areas. Eligibility is based on guidelines established by the State Board of Education. The **Criteria for the Continuation of Gifted Services** will be presented to students receiving services in gifted education and their parents at the beginning of each school year.

Grade Distribution

K-5 – Students must achieve grade-level expectations in Reading/Language Arts and Math to be promoted to the next grade level.

Grades 6-8 –

- Milestone Classes: 45% Major Assignments, 45% Minor Assignments, 10% Final/GMAS
- Non-Milestone 50% Major, 50% Minor

Grades 9-12

- All Classes: 50% Major Assignments, 40% Minor Assignments, 10% Final/GMAS

Grade Scale

Grading Scale for Grades 6 - 12:

A= 90-100

B=80-89

C=70-79

F = 69 and Below

Grades: Ben Hill Middle School

NON-MILESTONE GRADING CALCULATIONS

BHMS uses the Georgia Standards of Excellence as the foundation of all curricula. Each activity completed in the classroom (homework, project, assessment, etc.) is directly tied to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Our PLC (Professional Learning Communities) teams work diligently to ensure that our curriculum is broken down into specific learning targets and goals. Every class at BHMS operates on a semester or yearlong schedule. Each quarter (9 weeks) weighs equally in determining a student's final grade. For example, a student in a yearlong class has four quarters. Each quarter contributes 25% of the final grade average, which will be reported on the child's report cards

$$1^{st} \text{ Quarter (25\%)} + 2^{nd} \text{ Quarter (25\%)} + 3^{rd} \text{ Quarter (25\%)} + 4^{th} \text{ Quarter (25\%)} = \text{Final Average}$$

MILESTONE CLASS GRADING CALCULATIONS

For any class with a Georgia Milestone Assessment (GMAS) the GMAS score will count for 10% of the final class grade. BHMS will take the student's final average for all four quarters for 90% of the overall grade. The GMAS score will count for 10% of the overall grade.

$$1^{\text{st}} \text{ Quarter (22.5\%)} + 2^{\text{nd}} \text{ Quarter (22.5\%)} + 3^{\text{rd}} \text{ Quarter (22.5\%)} + 4^{\text{th}} \text{ Quarter (22.5\%)} + \text{GMAS (10\%)} = \text{Final Average}$$

The Georgia Milestone score will be converted to a grade:

Student Scoring 4 = 100%

Student Scoring 3 = 90%

Student Scoring 2 = 80%

Student Scoring 1 = 65%

FHSCCA Specific Information

Advanced Placement - Honors Courses - Dual Enrollment

Various Advanced Placement courses are offered yearly. These courses are recognized by the College Board and the University System of Georgia. Upon completion of these courses, students have the opportunity to earn college credit through the successful completion of an exit exam, which is administered in the spring of each year. It is required that students enrolled in AP courses take the exit exam. FHSCCA pays for AP exam fees. The Accel program is also an option for seniors wishing to earn college credit. Students that passed three Advanced Placement courses and/or Accel classes will receive cords to be worn at graduation and will be recognized as Advanced Placement Scholars.

Fitzgerald High offers Honors and AP (Advanced Placement) courses for students desiring a more rigorous program of study. Honors courses are designed to prepare students for AP courses. Compared with regular high school courses, advanced courses are more demanding, often requiring more time and more work, but students find them rewarding in preparation for college-level work.

Criteria for Advanced Classes: Consideration for placement in an advanced course will be given to duly processed gifted students and other academically promising students. Students are recommended for courses by their teachers in various subject areas. These recommendations are made based on past and present classroom performance and teacher evaluation. However, students may register for any course at or above the recommended instructional levels. Parents may also request a student's placement in advanced courses but will require a signed waiver by the parent/guardian. Dual Enrollment classes will be offered through ABAC and Wiregrass when numbers justify. Students must meet the individual requirements of each post-secondary institution and have a 3.0 or higher G.P.A.

Career Pathways

Agricultural Mechanics Systems, Audio Video Technology & Film, Automotive Climate Control System*, Business and Technology, Computer Science, Culinary Arts*, Early Childhood Care & Education, Engineering and Technology, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Game Design, Health Information Management-Medical Office, Horticulture & Animal Science, Industrial Systems Technology*, JROTC-Army, Plant & Landscape Systems, Salon & Spa Specialist*, Teaching as a Profession, Therapeutic Services- Patient Care*, Web and Digital Design, Welding*, *Can be Dual Enrollment with WGTC

Students are encouraged to complete 3 units in a career path.

Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education (CTAE) Work-Based Learning

Any student desiring to participate in the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Program must have successfully completed the tenth grade and be 16 years of age. (Juniors – 11 units; Seniors – 17 units) Only juniors and seniors are eligible for the work program. Other requirements are as follows:

1. Students absent from school are not permitted to go to work without prior approval from the WBL coordinator or CTAE supervisor.
2. Work students should leave for work and must leave campus at the designated time

3. Students in the WBL program cannot quit their jobs or give notice of quitting without the approval of the coordinator or the CTAE supervisor.

Core and Elective Credit - High School Required

Core area courses successfully completed may not be repeated except as determined by an administrator as being necessary for success in later courses. In that case, only elective credit will be awarded.

Credit Recovery

The goal of credit recovery is to allow high school students to graduate in a timely manner. This program allows students who have failed core courses (courses required for graduation) a chance to make up non-mastered standards without repeating the entire course. The credit recovery program is conducted using an online program/system. The online system does not require a teacher but is managed by a facilitator. Since the credit recovery program will be offered in an online learning environment, participants in the credit recovery program should be self-motivated and independent learners who exhibit a strong personal commitment to earning credit in an online environment.

Requirements for Program

1. Grade of 60-69 in the course in which attempting to recover credit or principal written approval.
2. The parent/guardian and student must participate in an interview with the counselor in order to review the program goals and requirements.
3. Early dismissal from credit recovery is not allowed. Disruptive behaviors and/or abuse of technology will result in removal from credit recovery.
4. If the course requires an EOC, the student must retake the test at the end of the course.
5. Transportation (if applicable) will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Awarding Credits

Recovered credit will only be awarded when students have completed all work satisfactorily. Recovered credit will be entered on the transcript as repeat attempts and will not replace the previously earned grade. Both the original and the Credit recovery grades will be included in the student's cumulative grade point average.

IMPORTANT NCAA INFORMATION

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) does NOT approve this program for students seeking course credit to be eligible for college/universities under the regulations of the NCAA. Students receiving credit from these programs will not be eligible under NCAA guidelines.

Dual Enrollment Program

The Dual Enrollment Program allows high school students to earn college credit while working on their high school diploma. The new law streamlines the existing options (Dual Enrollment, Accel, and HOPE Grant) into one program. Beginning with Fall term 2015 (FY 2016), the program is offered during all school year terms: fall, spring, and summer semesters or fall, winter, spring, and summer quarters. Students and parents should contact the school counselor for more information.

House Bill 444 established O.C.G.A. 1604.2a "Students in the 11th and 12 grade may enroll in any approved dual enrollment courses at an eligible participating postsecondary institution (USG, TCSG, or private)".

House Bill 444 established O.C.G.A. 1604.2b "Students in the 10th grade may enroll in approved Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) courses at a participating TCSG institution only".

House Bill 444 established O.C.G.A. 1604.2c "Students in the 10th grade with minimum SAT score of 1200 or minimum ACT composite score of 26 in a single national test administration, taken prior to the term of enrollment in the GSFC Dual enrollment system, may enroll in any

approved Dual Enrollment courses at a TCSG, USG or private eligible participating postsecondary institution”.

Dual Enrollment Withdrawal Policy

At Fitzgerald High School College and Career Academy (FHSCCA), any withdrawal or schedule change from a Dual Enrollment course requires approval from both the Dual Enrollment Coordinator and the High School Principal. Withdrawals are only permitted in cases of extenuating circumstances—such as serious medical issues or course failure—and must occur within the designated withdrawal window.

Students earning a grade of **C or higher are not eligible for withdrawal**. All requests must include appropriate documentation and will undergo a formal review process. Approved withdrawals will be noted on the student’s academic record as due to extenuating circumstances.

Students will receive prompt communication regarding the decision and any potential academic or financial impacts. If a withdrawal request is denied, students may submit an appeal through a formal process involving designated school personnel. This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure fairness and effectiveness.

Eligibility for Interscholastic Activities

A student will have the first fourteen (14) SCHOOL days after the close of the semester to complete work and change an incomplete grade. If a student with an incomplete grade has not passed three (3) subjects the previous semester, the student will be ineligible. The student is ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities during these fourteen (14) days and cannot practice, play, or participate until he or she has passed three (3) subjects. If three (3) subjects have not been passed by the end of the fourteen (14) calendar days of the semester, he or she is ineligible for the entire semester. No make-up work is to be graded until after an absence has been determined to be excused.

Finals (Semester Exams)

End of Semester Exams will be given each semester in all classes at FHSCCA. Students taking Georgia Milestone Assessments will not take a semester exam. The EOC will count for the semester exam in all EOC classes. There are no exemptions for Final Exams.

Graduation

Graduation is planned by the administration at Fitzgerald High School College & Career Academy. Students must have completed all graduation requirements in order to participate in graduation. The deadline for academic and credit requirements is the Friday prior to graduation; the last day of Senior Finals. Any coursework missing after that date will be calculated as a zero. The following requirements must be completed:

1. Seniors must meet the specific credit requirements.
2. Meet all attendance requirements (refer to Attendance Policy).
3. Have settled all outstanding fees as noted in Infinite Campus.
4. Must have returned their Chromebooks to participate in graduation.

The principal must be notified by May 1st of intent to participate in graduation exercises for students not physically on campus. Senior invitations, caps, and gowns will be arranged through a school-approved company representative. Graduates are only allowed to wear stoles or cords awarded by the school. The junior class marshals will be selected based on academic high school academic GPA through the third term of the junior year. The junior class marshals will be selected as the top two juniors, who have been

enrolled at FHSCCA since the beginning of the current academic year, with the highest academic GPA. The ushers for graduation will be those juniors with the next highest GPAs in the junior class.

Graduation Requirements

Juniors and Seniors transferring into Ben Hill County Schools can meet state graduation requirements and be exempt from system requirements if meeting system requirements would delay graduation. Students graduating must meet all unit requirements for graduation and or meet the requirements for a “Diploma of Performance” as specified in a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) to walk in the graduation ceremonies. Certificates of Attendance – student with disabilities assigned to a special education program who has not met the state assessment requirements or who has not completed all requirements for a high school diploma but who has completed his/her Individualized Educational Program.

High School - Course Requirements

I.	English/Language Arts	4
II.	Mathematics	4
III.	Science	4
IV.	Social Studies	4
V.	CTAE/Modern Language/Latin/Fine Arts	3
VI.	Health & Physical Education (.5 each)	1
VII.	Electives	8
	TOTAL UNITS (Minimum)	28

Two years of a foreign language is required for admission to a four-year college or university. Three years of successful completion of JROTC will meet the requirements of Health/PE. Students must complete requirements as prescribed by the State Department of Education and Ben Hill County Board of Education. All students must meet attendance requirements, perform satisfactorily on state assessments, and attain the specified number of Carnegie units of credit as required for graduation to receive a diploma.

Georgia Governor’s Honors Program

The Georgia Governor’s Honors Program (GHP) is a residential summer program for gifted and talented high school students who will be rising juniors and seniors during the program. The program offers instruction that is significantly different from the typical high school classroom, and that is designed to provide students with the academic, cultural, and social enrichment necessary to become the next generation of global critical thinkers, innovators, and leaders. GHP is held in mid-summer (mid-June to mid-July) at a residential, educational college or university campus. Students attend classes in the mornings and afternoons in specific areas of study, and they participate in a wide variety of social and instructional opportunities every evening. The program, with the only required and expected costs, provides meals and rooms to the students, travel expenses to and from the interviews, a few basic supplies for classes and dorm rooms, and spending money as desired during the program.

Homecoming Court

FHSCCA's Homecoming Court Policy establishes clear expectations regarding attendance, behavior, and grades for students aspiring to participate. To be eligible for Homecoming Court nomination, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 80, exhibit exemplary attendance records, and demonstrate commendable behavior consistent with the school's values. Candidates must be in good standing behaviorally, with no major disciplinary infractions. Additionally, students must have attended FHSCCA for the entirety of the current academic year to qualify. The selection process will involve a combination of student nominations and multiple rounds of student voting. Participation on the Homecoming Court carries the responsibility of upholding the highest standards of conduct both during Homecoming events and throughout the school year. Any violations of FHSCCA's behavior or attendance policies may result in disqualification from the Homecoming Court. This policy aims to ensure that Homecoming Court members

represent the best of FHSCCA, embodying academic excellence, exemplary attendance, and positive behavior.

Honor Graduate

In order to qualify as an Honor Graduate from his/her high school, a student seeking a regular education diploma must have attained an average of 90 or better and have an academic grade point average of 3.5 or higher through the third term of their senior year. Honor graduates are expected to maintain high academic standards for the remainder of the year and conduct themselves in a manner becoming an honor student. No residency requirement exists concerning the qualification of Honor Graduate. Grades from ACCEL university classes will be considered in calculations of the numerical averages. Grades from Honors courses and approved Dual Enrollment courses will be weighted using FHSCCA's Quality Point System and considered in calculations of the numerical averages. **To identify honor graduates, the averages shall be computed at the conclusion of the third nine weeks of the fourth year.**

Hope Program

The HOPE (Helping Outstanding Students Educationally) grant and scholarship programs will assist graduating high school colleges, universities or technical institutes, and, in some instances, private institutions. Counselors can provide additional information to students and parents.

JROTC - Army

The Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp is conducted in accordance with Army Regulations and in agreement with the Ben Hill County Board of Education and Irwin County Board of Education. Participation is open to all students in grades 9-12. Participation imposes no military obligation upon a cadet outside or beyond the school environment. The major objective is to lay the foundation for patriotism, intelligent citizenship, leadership training and development, respect for constituted authority, and self-discipline. Cadets will normally receive at least five hours of military instruction each week between classroom and drill field activity. The Department of the Army provides clothing and equipment, textbooks, and other reference material free of charge to the cadets.

Accelerated Career (Formerly Option B)

Accelerated Career (formerly known as Senate Bill 2) offers qualified students an alternate path to high school graduation. Students choose to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and a Wiregrass degree, diploma, or two (2) Technical Certificates of Credit in a specific career pathway. High School Graduation Option B is only available for those students attending a public high school in Georgia.

Students in Accelerated Career must complete all required high school courses (2 ELA including American Lit), 2 Math (including Algebra I), 2 Sciences (including Biology), 2 Social Studies, 1 Health/PE; AND complete any one Wiregrass Associate Degree Program, Any one Wiregrass Diploma Program, or 2 TCCs (Technical Certificate of Credit).

Promotion & Retention

Students are classified and must have earned the appropriate number of units listed below to enter the respective grade highlighted in the following grid. Promotion to the next grade requires students to pass the core coursework before taking the next required course, i.e., ninth-grade literature, before taking tenth-grade literature. This applies to all core content. (See chart)

For Graduating Class of 2024 and Beyond		
Grade	Block of Units Earned	Courses that must be passed

10	3 units in Academic Classes	5
11	6 units in Academic Classes	11
12	10 units in Academic Classes	17

Students will be asked to make up course work not passed by attending credit recovery programs or attending Summer School for credit repair. Will meet with the central office to discuss the required earned credits to graduate.

Quality Points System

FHSCCA rewards students who challenge themselves by taking higher-level courses. Quality Points are points added to a student's numeric grade at the end of the semester (This is called a Numeric Cumulative Weighted GPA). Students enrolled in an Academic Dual Enrollment Class at a 4-Year, 2-Year, or Technical Institution will have 10 Points added to their grade at the end of the semester. Students enrolled in an Advanced Placement will have 7 points added to their grade at the end of the semester. Students in Honors classes will have 5 points added to their end-of-semester grade.

Seal of Endorsement

High school preparation for college allows students to earn a formal seal of endorsement. The Ben Hill County Board of Education requires a college-preparatory program for all students for a rigorous academic experience. A formal seal of endorsement from the Georgia Board of Education will be awarded to those students who successfully complete the endorsed course of study. In addition to the college-preparatory seal of endorsement, a technology/career-prep seal is also awarded to students who successfully complete a program of study.

Senior Superlatives

To be eligible, students must meet criteria based on grades, attendance, and behavior. To be eligible for consideration, seniors must maintain a minimum GPA of 80, demonstrate good attendance, and exhibit commendable behavior throughout their high school tenure. Only students in good standing behaviorally, with no major disciplinary infractions, will be eligible for nomination and selection. Additionally, candidates must have attended FHSCCA from the beginning of their year to qualify. This policy aims to ensure that recipients of senior superlatives exemplify academic excellence, attendance commitment, and positive behavior, reflecting the values and standards of FHSCCA.

Star Student

To be eligible, students must meet criteria as set by PAGE Star Student.

Top Ten

The Top Ten is a Fitzgerald High School recognition program sponsored and funded by the Fitzgerald Rotary Club. The intent of the program is to recognize students who excel in the most academically challenging courses. All grades considered for that academic year must be earned at FHSCCA. To be considered for Top Ten, a student must be enrolled at FHSCCA on or before the first FTE count in October of the current school year. The top ten students in each grade level will be calculated by using students' academic (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) and higher-level courses (DE, AP, Honors) GPA for that school year only. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of at least 3 "higher level" courses – including Honors, AP, and Academic Dual Enrollment. Grades will be calculated using FHSCCA's "Quality Points" system for higher-level classes. Calculations for Top Ten will be made at the end of the third term.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Calculations for determining valedictorian and salutatorian will be conducted at the conclusion of the third term. The valedictorian will be the Honor Graduate with the highest academic G.P.A. and must be in good standing behaviorally, meeting the requirement for acceptance to a 4-year institution of the university system of Georgia. Similarly, the salutatorian will be the Honor Graduate with the second highest academic G.P.A. and must also be in good standing behaviorally, meeting the same acceptance requirement. Both will lead the senior class in the commencement processional. Furthermore, the valedictorian and salutatorian must have been enrolled at FHSCCA on or before the first FTE count in October of their sophomore year and maintain enrollment through their senior year.

Youth Apprenticeship Program

Youth Apprenticeship is an opportunity for students to work in their chosen career area. It provides school-based learning with work-based learning. Students apply for work experiences that are acquired by the YAP coordinator. Students divide the school day between classes and the work site. Only juniors and seniors are eligible for youth apprenticeship.

Make-Up Work

Make-up work is defined as work assigned on a day the student is absent and should not be confused with previously assigned work. (Previously assigned work includes but is not limited to reports, projects, homework, and term papers, which were assigned when the student was present. Previously assigned work should be completed on the day the student returns to school unless an administrator has determined this would make it an unreasonable expectation of the student.)

Teachers have the discretion to require students who were present before the date of the test administration but absent on the administration date to make up for the missed test on the first date the student returns. Credit will only be awarded if the required excuse is submitted within five days and the absence is deemed an excused absence. (Previously assigned work should be completed on the day the student returns to school unless an administrator has determined this would make it an unreasonable expectation of the student.)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, defined as "to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source," as per Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, is strictly prohibited at BHCS. Any instances of plagiarism will be considered cheating and will result in disciplinary action. Students are expected to properly cite all sources used in their academic work to avoid plagiarism.

Promotion & Retention

Students shall be expected to continuously achieve at a rate commensurate with their ability for achievement. Grade placement decisions shall be made on an individual basis. The student's portfolio shall have written documentation of evidence (Tier 2 minutes, Tier 3/Student Support Team minutes, Individual Education Plan, or Individual Assistance Plan) that supports the individual retention decision.

The IEP Placement Committee will recommend promotion decisions for students with Individual Education Plans.

Standards for Promotion Grades K-5

A student shall demonstrate mastery of all grade-level essential reading and math standards as evidenced by the student portfolio and school identified criteria.

Standards for Promotion Grades 6-8

Students shall demonstrate satisfactory progress in all four academic subjects: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Satisfactory progress will be determined by the yearly averages of 70 or above in 3 out of 4 core content classes and achievement at grade level as defined by scoring at/ above Grade Level for Reading on the Georgia Milestone Assessment. Students must also maintain a 70 or above average in two of four connection courses if they are 18-week courses or four of the eight connection courses if they are 9-week courses.

Retention Appeals

1. If the parent/guardian or teacher(s) appeals to the student's retention, then the school principal or designee shall establish a placement committee to consider the appeal.
 - a. The placement committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) of the subject(s) of the Georgia Milestone Assessment or the alternative assessment instrument on which the student failed to achieve grade level as defined by scoring at/above Grade Level on the Georgia Milestone Assessment.
 - b. The principal or designee shall notify the parent/guardian and teacher(s) in writing by first-class mail of the time and place for convening the placement committee.
 - c. The placement committee shall review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the performance on the Georgia Milestone Assessment or the alternative assessment instrument and promotion standards and criteria established in this policy and make a determination to promote or retain. Achievement data should include all available data such as grades, informal reading inventories, other skills assessments, and standards checklists.
 - d. The decision to promote must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee and must determine that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to achieve grade level as defined by scoring at/above Grade Level for Reading on the Georgia Milestone Assessment by the conclusion of the school year.
 - e. The placement committee shall prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year.
 - f. The placement committee shall provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year to monitor the student's progress (progress monitoring.)
 - g. The decision of the Placement Committee regarding the appeal of the parent/guardian of promotion or retention of the student shall be final.
2. A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed for each student who does not achieve grade level as defined by scoring at/above Grade Level on the Georgia Milestone Assessment specified in section (a) above whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year. The grade-level MTSS Team should be convened within the first five weeks of the following school year to develop and begin implementing this plan.
3. The Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee for students receiving special education or related services.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Progress reports are issued to students in grades 6-12 every four and a half weeks. Report cards are issued to students in grades K-12 every nine weeks.

School-Sponsored Non-Instructional Activities (Absences)

Georgia School Standards prohibit students from being absent from class because of school-related non-instructional activities for more than ten (10) days per class during the school year. A student may be absent because of his/her involvement in school-sponsored, non-instructional activities, such as

participation in athletics or club functions on the local, state, or national level, beyond the ten (10) days if the student receives a specific exemption from the ten (10) day rule from the Board of Education. (The days missed by a student for school-sponsored, non-instructional activities are not computed as part of the absentee policy, which establishes a maximum number of absences from class beyond which a student cannot receive course credit for a class.) A student who wishes to participate in a school-sponsored, non-instructional activity requiring him/her to exceed the ten (10) days per scheduled class period per year maximum must apply for an exemption before the absences according to Board Policy IED.

Accident or Illness

Any accident on the school campus, which is serious enough to require first aid, should be reported to the principal's office immediately. Parents will be notified in case of serious accidents or illnesses at school.

Addressing Concerns

Students/parents concerned about a specific classroom situation should first confer with the teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the student/parent should make arrangements to see an administrator of the school. If the problem is not solved, then contacting the appropriate Central Office personnel would be the next appropriate step.

After-School Activities

All after-school activities sponsored by the school are under the school's jurisdiction, and the same rules and regulations cover them as during school hours. To participate in Non-GHSA activities, students must be in attendance for at least ½ the school day of the event unless otherwise cleared by the administration. The GHSA regulates attendance for participation requirements for activities sanctioned by the GHSA. All other activities are under the jurisdiction of the sponsoring organization.

Arrival & Dismissal Times - Procedures

Ben Hill Primary School

Students shouldn't be dropped off before 7:30 AM

Check-In Procedures: All students arriving after the 8:00 AM tardy bell must report to the office. A parent/guardian must walk the student into the front office. The parent or guardian must state the reason for the student's tardiness. We aim to begin instruction at 8:00 AM after the roll is taken and announcements are made. Please try to prepare your student to begin the school day on time.

Check-Out Procedures: All students must be signed out through the main office. Teachers will not be allowed to release students. The receptionist must document all checkouts. No student check-outs after 2:00 PM. All changes must take place through the front office and not through Dojo. Teachers can be notified through Dojo but all transportation changes must take place through the front office. While BHP understands it is occasionally necessary for children to be checked out before the end of the day, we strongly encourage parents to make dental, medical, and other appointments for their children after school hours. Parents must provide written authorization for other family members or friends to pick their children up from school. Please be advised that the office may request identification before releasing a child to a parent, family member, or friend. Please remember that if we request identification, we only do it to protect your child. Students who are checked out early on a continual basis - like students who are chronically tardy - will be referred to the Attendance/Tuancy Committee. Please make every effort to have your child in school all day.

Transportation changes should be made prior to 2:00 PM.

Silent Dismissal: Ben Hill Primary School uses the **Silent Dismissal** program to ensure a safe, orderly, and efficient dismissal process at the end of the school day. This digital system allows staff to manage and communicate dismissal changes in real-time without disrupting classroom instruction. As dismissal begins, students' names and assigned dismissal methods—such as bus or car rider—are displayed on classroom screens, signaling when it's time for each child to leave. This structured and quiet approach helps minimize confusion and ensures students are dismissed safely and accurately. Silent Dismissal also allows for quick adjustments in the event of transportation changes and enhances overall security and accountability during the end-of-day transition.

Ben Hill Elementary School

Check-In Procedures: All students arriving after the 8:00 AM tardy bell must report to the office. A parent/guardian must walk the student into the front office. The parent or guardian must state the reason for the student's tardiness. We aim to begin instruction at 8:00 AM after the roll is taken and announcements are made. Please try to prepare your student to begin the school day on time.

Check-Out Procedures: All students must be signed out through the main office. Teachers will not be allowed to release students. The receptionist must document all checkouts. No student check-outs after 2:00 PM. All changes must take place through the front office and not through Dojo. Teachers can be notified through Dojo but all transportation changes must take place through the front office. While BHP understands it is occasionally necessary for children to be checked out before the end of the day, we strongly encourage parents to make dental, medical, and other appointments for their children after school hours. Parents must provide written authorization for other family members or friends to pick their children up from school. Please be advised that the office may request identification before releasing a child to a parent, family member, or friend. Please remember that if we request identification, we only do it to protect your child. Students who are checked out early on a continual basis - like students who are chronically tardy - will be referred to the Attendance/Truancy Committee. Please make every effort to have your child in school all day.

Transportation changes should be made prior to 2:00 PM.

BHMS

Ben Hill Middle School opens daily at **7:00 AM** for breakfast; students should not be dropped off before that time. Classes begin promptly at **7:30 AM**, and any student arriving after this time must check in through the front office. Repeated tardiness may result in disciplinary consequences.

School dismisses at **2:50 PM**. Early check-outs should be limited to emergencies and must be completed **before 2:00 PM** by a parent or guardian in the front office. Likewise, **any transportation changes** (e.g., switching from bus rider to car rider) must be communicated to the front office **prior to 2:00 PM**.

FHSCCA

The building opens at 6:40 for student drop-off. Students may be dropped off and picked up at the front entrance of the building. If arriving prior to the beginning of 1st Block., students must report to the cafeteria, gym, or other designated area. School dismissal is at 2:20. All student drop-offs and pickups must be at the main entrance.

Athletic Medical Release

Athletes who have been restricted from play or practice because of a medical condition or injury must have a release from their doctor to return to play or practice.

Cell Phone & Accessory Use and Possession

Cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, and related accessories are allowed on campus but must remain out of sight and unused during instructional hours. These items should be stored in a book bag or purse and not visible (e.g., hanging from pockets). Devices that are used or visible during instructional time will be confiscated.

Consequences for Unauthorized Use:

- **1st Offense:** Parent must pick up the device
- **2nd Offense:** 10 school days or \$10 retrieval fee
- **3rd Offense:** 20 school days or \$20 retrieval fee
- **4th Offense:** 30 school days or \$30 retrieval fee
- **Additional Offenses:** Each subsequent offense increases by 10 school days and \$10

Refusal to surrender a device when requested will result in **3 days of home suspension**.

Unauthorized use will result in a discipline referral under **Rule 34: Possession of Unapproved Items**.

Ben Hill Middle School Cell Phone, Smart Watch, and & Accessory Policy

To reduce distractions and support a focused learning environment, Ben Hill Middle School enforces the following policy regarding cell phones, smartwatches, and related accessories (e.g., headphones, chargers):

- Upon entering the building, all devices must be placed in the main compartment of the student's backpack.
- During Hurricane Time, these items will be collected by the teacher and securely stored in a locked closet for the duration of the school day.
- Devices will be returned to students at the end of the instructional day.

Failure to follow this policy will result in consequences as outlined in the **Ben Hill County Schools Handbook** regarding unauthorized electronic device use. In addition, violations of the BHMS policy will result in an **office referral for student incivility**.

Counseling Services

School guidance counselors are available at each school.

Mental Health

Ben Hill County Schools is committed to supporting the mental and emotional well-being of all students. A comprehensive range of mental health services is available across the district to ensure students have access to the support they need. School counselors at every school provide daily social-emotional guidance, crisis response, and referrals for additional services. Through a partnership with **Mercer University's Mental Telehealth Program**, students can access licensed mental health professionals remotely for counseling and therapy sessions. Additionally, the **Health Clinic at Ben Hill Middle School** offers in-person mental health services in coordination with medical staff to support middle school students. At the high school level, students have access to expanded support through the **on-site mental health clinic at Fitzgerald High School College and Career Academy (FHSCCA)**. Together, these services provide layered support to help students manage stress, cope with challenges, and thrive both academically and personally.

Disaster Alerts

Disaster alerts and drills are held periodically throughout the school year.

Dress Expectation for Students

Students must comply with the Ben Hill County School's Dress Code while attending school. This includes wearing items in the adopted school dress code. This policy addresses requirements for normal school days. The appearance of students should be reasonable. Students are expected and required to pay attention to personal hygiene and neatness. When questionable, the school principal or the principal's designee will determine whether a student's attire or appearance conflicts with the system policy. Students will observe the following dress code at school and on the bus:

The following mandatory standards for student attire have been developed and are applicable to all middle and high schools.

Compliance

The correction plan below has been established to address incidents of noncompliance with the Dress Code Policy.

Incident #1

Warning, parental contact, and remedy clothing

Incident #2

Parental Contact, Remedy Clothing, ISS

Incident #3

Parental Contact, Remedy Clothing, 3 Days ISS

Any Incident beyond the 3rd: Violation will be addressed in accordance with the Code of Conduct, which provides for various consequences depending on a student's discipline record and the severity of the offense.

No student will be considered non-compliant with the dress code policy under the following conditions:

1. During the first 2 weeks after a student transfers from another system or school within the system–
2. When the principal authorizes dress-down days or gives special permission–

- When instructors/advisors have obtained permission through the principal and require students to dress in uniforms such as band, ROTC, sports teams, etc.

BHP & BHES Dress Code

- In addition, no hats, caps, sun visors, combs, scarves, rollers, or bandanas are to be worn. Sunglasses may not be worn inside. (Exceptions can be made with the principal for prescription glasses.)
- No see-through garments, sheer see-through, or mesh see-through garments. Proper and acceptable undergarments will be worn at all times. Undergarments should not be visible to others.
- No skin may be shown between the button and belt lines. No midriff-type clothing is allowed.
- Clothing, such as belts, flaps, etc., must be buttoned or buckled. No chains or chained wallets.
- Clothes shall be of reasonable length and provide proper coverage.
- Students are required to wear safe and appropriate shoes at all times. No bedroom shoes, heeled shoes, stilettos, high heels, or similar types of shoes are allowed at school.
- Tank shirts and halter tops are not to be worn. Cleavage must not show, and no low-cut clothing. Sleeveless shirts may be worn as long as they provide proper coverage.
- No clothing or jewelry bearing advertisements of alcohol or tobacco products or offensive, obscene, or vulgar language will be allowed. The Ben Hill County Board of Education interprets this to include references of a sexual nature, either symbolic or implied, and insufficiently attired caricatures of individuals. Any clothing, jewelry, hair, make-up, fingernails, or any other item, which causes a disruption of the school environment, may be banned at the principal's discretion.
- Pants are allowed to have holes. Students can wear shorts, tights, leggings, spandex, or jeggings under their pants to conceal the exposed skin and provide appropriate coverage if necessary.

The principal shall have the authority to interpret the dress code and make case-by-case determinations for the appropriateness of dress that is questionable or not covered in this policy.

FHSCCA & BHMS Dress Code

Students should wear appropriate school clothing. A student shall not dress, groom, wear, or use emblems, insignias, badges, or other symbols where the effect thereof is to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise to cause disruption or interfere with the operation of the school. Students who, in the opinion of the staff, are dressed inappropriately will be asked and expected to change their attire.

General Guidelines

- Promote a respectful learning environment.
- Promote a safe learning environment where dress does not interfere with the successful and safe completion of learning activities.
- Promote an equitable and inclusive learning environment where the dress code does not negatively influence students and staff.

Permitted Clothing

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants, shorts, a skirt or the equivalent, and shoes.
- Clothing must cover undergarments and private parts.
- Shirts & Tops:**
 - Students in grades 6-12 must wear tops that fit appropriately.
 - The fabric covering all private parts must not be see-through.
 - Tops must have fabric in the front, back, and sides with no space between the top and bottom.
 - Tops do not have to be tucked in.
 - Tops must conceal the upper chest area. There should be no cleavage or chest hair visible.

- e. Tops must be long enough to cover all skin when standing or sitting.
 - i. No midriffs or low cutbacks.
 - f. No sleeveless shirts.
 - g. Proper and acceptable undergarments must be worn and should not be visible to others.
- 4. Pants, Dresses, Skirts, Shorts, Bottoms**
- a. The fabric covering all private parts must not be see-through.
 - b. Pants, shorts, and bottoms: Must be appropriate size and fit and be worn around the natural waistline.
 - c. Shorts, Dresses, Skirts, skorts, and other similar attire must meet the “FingerTip Rule”;
 - i. Unless worn with leggings or jeggings.
 - ii. **Fingertip Rule:** A student should be able to stand straight, have arms by their side, and have their clothing not shorter than their fingertips.
 - d. Yoga pants, leggings, and jeggings are allowed as long as they are not see-through, and the shirt extends to the finger-tips.
 - e. Pants should not drag the floor.
 - f. Holes in pants must meet the FingerTip Rule.
 - g. If worn, belts must be buckled; through belt loops and sashes must be tied, straps strapped, and suspenders and other fasteners fastened.
- 5. Outerwear**
- a. Jackets, coats, and other items must fit properly. The student should still be within the dress code if outwear is removed.
6. Clothing must suit all scheduled classroom activities, including PE, Science Labs, and other school activities.
- 7. Shoes**
- a. Appropriate shoes must be worn at all times.
 - b. No bedroom shoes or slippers and cleats are not permitted.

Clothing Not Permitted

1. Hats, hoods (on the head), head coverings, stocking caps, “do-rags, headbands, bandanas, curlers, picks, hairnets, and sunglasses should not be worn.
2. No see-through, mesh, or sheer garments are allowed.
3. No Pajama Pants
4. Clothing may not be torn or ripped.
5. Clothing, jewelry, or other articles with obscene or provocative language, profanity, or any references of a sexual nature are not allowed.
6. Clothing, jewelry, or other articles which promote or advertise alcohol, tobacco, guns, violence, drugs, or gang-related activity are not allowed.
7. No chains, dog collar-like necklaces, or spiked bracelets are allowed.
8. No bedroom shoes, slippers, Heelys, or stilettos
9. No gloves inside the building
10. No Blankets, stuffed animals, pillows, or the like are allowed
11. No wireless headphones/earbuds.

Gang-Related Clothing:

1. No student should display or wear gang articles, paraphernalia, or clothing.
2. No sagging pants.
3. Pant legs must be the same length

The Principal or his/her designee has the authority to interpret the dress code and make a case-by-case determination for the appropriateness of dress, which is questionable, or which is not covered in the County Handbook.

Dress Code for Dances:

The Prom and Homecoming Dances are special nights for FHSCCA students. The attire for Prom is formal and for Homecoming it is semi-formal. We hope to maintain the integrity and formality of these nights by the below dress code. Students not appropriately dressed will be turned away at the door. If students have questions about whether or not their attire will be appropriate, they should seek prior approval from administration.

Prom is a formal event and students are expected to wear formal attire. Formal prom attire may include dresses, tuxedos, dress suits including a tie or bow tie, a dress shirt, and dress shoes.

1. Dresses may be strapless (if they fit properly) or include spaghetti straps.
2. Dresses may be backless, as long as they are not cut below the naval.
3. A 2-piece dress may not show any midriff.
4. Dresses may not have a slit that exceeds the mid-thigh.
5. Dresses may not be cut below the bust line.
6. Dresses can not have cuts or slits in them exposing skin underneath.
7. Undergarments should not be visible. See-through apparel is not permitted.
8. If you are bringing a date from another school, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make sure your date's attire is in compliance with the above stipulations.
9. This criteria will be strictly adhered to beginning this school year.

Driving to School & Parking Regulations

Only students at FHSCCA are allowed to drive to campus! BHMS students are not allowed to drive to campus under any circumstances.

Parking for students will be in the following approved areas: Student Parking lot located in the Athletic & Fine Arts Parking Lot. Parking decals will be provided for a cost of \$40.00 for the year and \$20.00 after January 2023. Students desiring to obtain a parking permit must present a valid driver's license and proof of insurance upon request for the permit. Replacement of parking decals will cost \$20.00.

1. Students must park in school-approved parking areas only.
2. Permits must be displayed at all times on the inside rearview mirror facing the front windshield.
3. Students will have assigned parking spaces.
4. Students cannot go to automobiles during the school day.
5. Failure to comply with the rules will result in administrative discipline.
6. Students may not loiter in the parking lot before or after school. Students must report to their designated area in the mornings and leave the parking lot in the afternoon.
7. Tickets will be written, and fines will be assessed by the school resource officer for parking and moving violations on campus.
8. Parking violations will be issued, and a fine of \$20, payable to the main office, is due within two weeks, or the student will lose parking privileges, and a hold notice will be put on the report card or diploma.
9. Students with large vehicles can buy permits for their car only.
10. Students will lose their privilege to drive to school when they have accumulated their 9th tardy to school.

NOTE: The administration of FHSCCA reserves the right to search vehicles at any time. Any items forbidden by Fitzgerald High School College & Career Academy rules are prohibited in vehicles.

Due Process Rights of Students Search & Seizure Policy

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, or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search. As used in this policy, 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 described as unauthorized in school rules available beforehand to the student. A student’s failure to permit searches will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

For the safety of all persons on school campuses, buses, and at school activities, school administrators may use metal detectors to search students and their personal property on a random basis for firearms and other weapons before, during, or after the school day on school property, school transportation and at school-related activities.

1. Personal Searches

A student’s person and/or personal effects (e.g., purse, wallet, cell phone, etc.) may be searched by a school administrator whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of a weapon or any other object in violation of school policy. The search is not to be intrusive.

A student who refuses a reasonable request by an administrator to submit to a personal search shall be suspended for ten (10) days, and the principal shall recommend his/her expulsion from the Ben Hill County School System.

2. 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. School authorities, for any reason, may conduct periodic general inspections of lockers at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

3. Automobile Searches

Students are permitted to park on school campuses as a matter of privilege, not a right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspection of the exteriors of student automobiles on school property.

Automobiles may be opened, and the interiors of the students’ vehicles may be searched or inspected more thoroughly whenever a school official has reasonable suspicion or belief that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside, whether or not the illegal or unauthorized materials are in plain sight. Such reasonable suspicion may arise from the school official having seen something in plain view through the vehicle’s windows, from the school having been informed by a staff member or student that a weapon, drug, or some other unlawful or dangerous item is located in the vehicle or from other such circumstances.

4. School Safety Searches

Searches by Drug-Sniffing and/or Weapon Sniffing Canine and/or by Metal Detectors: Students should understand that school lockers, vehicles, classrooms, and other areas of the campus may be searched during school safety searches conducted by appropriate law enforcement agencies in cooperation with local school officials on unannounced dates during the school year using drug-sniffing or weapon sniffing canines. In addition, in the interest of school safety, handheld and/or walk-through metal detectors may be used during school safety searches.

Serious Violations/Special Circumstances: A serious violation is considered to be:

1. A student carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the State or the LEA
2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or to a school function under the jurisdiction of the State or the LEA.
3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the State or the LEA

Seizure of Illegal Materials: If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to proper authorities for ultimate disposition.

Electronic Device Usage by Students

For this policy, an electronic communication device is defined as any computer, personal digital assistant, cell phone, smartphone, digital camera or camcorder, pager, two-way radio, or other electronic communication device. Students are allowed to possess an electronic communication device while on school premises during the school day if permitted by staff for instructional purposes in the classroom. When not being used for instructional purposes during the school day, the electronic device must be kept in the student's book bag, purse, pants or trouser pocket, or such other location which will keep the device out of sight and view of other students and school personnel. "Use" of an electronic communication device shall not only include the obvious meaning of that term but also have the device in the "ON" or operating position. Students who fail to complete and submit the Student and Parent/Guardian Permission Form prior to bringing such personal electronic communication devices on school premises are subject to confiscating the device and other punishment pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct.

The administration has the authority to scroll through/ search the entire contents of electronic communication devices contents including but not limited to its pictures, video, voice, and text messages, address books, incoming/outgoing calls, calendars, emails, and instant messages if the administrator has "reasonable suspicion" that there is student misconduct regarding the electronic communication device. Additional punishment will be issued if the electronic communication device is used for purposes such as inappropriate pictures, cheating violations, or students' refusal to turn over the electronic communication device. Students may not remove batteries, memory cards, or component parts before handing over the electronic communication device to school authorities. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen electronic communication devices. If a phone or other device is being used, heard, or visible for any reason, then the same consequences will apply as listed in the Student Code of Conduct.

Extracurricular Activities & Athletics

Fitzgerald High School College and Career Academy (FHSCCA) and Ben Hill Middle School (BHMS) will maintain supplemental handbooks specifically for extracurricular activities. These handbooks will outline available programs, participation requirements, and provide parents with the opportunity to decline their child's involvement in specific clubs or organizations.

FHSCCA and BHMS students participating in interscholastic activities must meet eligibility requirements in order to participate in the activity. Eligibility concerns students' grades at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Any questions or concerns about student eligibility should be addressed to the school's Athletic Director and principal. Ineligible students cannot practice or participate.

Fundraising

The Board of Education specifically prohibits students in grades PK - 5 from participating in door-to-door fundraising activities.

Law Enforcement Officials (Notification of)

Under the laws of Georgia, any teacher, principal, or other school officials who have reasonable cause to believe that a student has committed criminal acts upon school property or at any school function has a duty to make a written report of that act in order that the act shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The acts which must be reported to law enforcement officials include certain criminal offenses under Georgia law, including aggravated battery, carrying deadly weapons at public

gatherings, possession/use and/or sale/ transfer of marijuana or illegal drugs, and certain sexual offenses. In addition, terroristic threats will be reported.

Please be advised that Georgia Law authorizes law enforcement personnel to come onto school campuses to interview and arrest students. Although every effort will be made to contact parents prior to the student's interrogation or arrest, the school system cannot impede law enforcement personnel in their investigative efforts. Further, Georgia Law provides that juveniles charged with crimes do not have a right to have their parents present when questioned by law enforcement officials. Law enforcement officials will be asked to sign a release form prior to removing a child from school.

Lunchroom Information

Students are expected to confine all eating to the cafeteria and designated areas (except for planned activities). Students are expected to display good manners in the cafeteria. Students should use correct table manners and should leave the table as clean as possible.

School Nutrition Information

The School Nutrition staff at each school invites and encourages your child's participation in the breakfast and lunch programs. Nutritious meals are planned, prepared, and served daily. All meals meet the USDA dietary guidelines for students in the specified grade levels

Meal Cost

Ben Hill County student meals will remain under the USDA CEP pricing option for the 2024-2025 school year. Under CEP, students enrolled in Ben Hill County Schools will be served one breakfast and/or lunch daily at no charge. When snacks are offered as part of afterschool group tutoring conducted by the school system the students will receive snacks at no charge. Meal costs for visitors are Breakfast - \$2.00 and Lunch - \$5.00.

Ala Carte Purchases

Students are allowed to purchase extra items that are being served as part of the student meal, such as extra milk, fruits or vegetables, or smart snack items available in addition to the student meal that is provided at no charge. Smart snack items are clearly labeled as not being part of the student meal. Ala Carte Purchase payment is due at the time of purchase. Students may place money into their meal accounts in advance. Please place payment for ala carte items in a sealed envelope with your child's name and the payment amount on the outside of the envelope. If paying by check, include student ID#, student's first name, and last name, and the school name on the check.

Food Allergies

Parents of students with food allergies must provide the school nurse, prior to the start of every school year, with documentation from their child's physician or nurse supporting a diagnosis of food allergy and any risk of anaphylaxis. Any food to which the child is allergic should be identified along with a description, if appropriate, of any prior history of anaphylaxis, listing any medication prescribed for the child for the treatment of anaphylaxis, detailing emergency treatment procedures in the event of a reaction; listing the signs and symptoms of a reaction; assessing the child's readiness for self-administration of prescription medication; and a list of substitute meals that may be offered to the child by school or early childhood education program food service personnel. The school nurse will copy this information to the school nutrition program so that appropriate changes may be made in the student's meal selections if needed. Lactose intolerance is not considered an allergy. Lactaid milk is available at all schools for students who are lactose intolerant.

Menus

Nutritious meals prepared daily are served at all schools. Therefore, competitive meals purchased from local restaurants cannot be delivered to students for lunch. Students in Pre-K through 5th grade receive a non-select breakfast and lunch meal. Grades 6 through 12 are approved for offer vs. serve for breakfast and lunch and may choose three or four items offered at breakfast and four or more food group

components at lunch. Students are required as part of the USDA School Nutrition Program to have one of their selections be at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable at both breakfast and lunch. Menus are posted on the school's web page and in the cafeteria of each school. Please contact Casey Cross, Director of School Nutrition, at 229-409-5500 x5529 with any questions you may have concerning school nutrition.

Materials

Students will be expected to have their devices, notebooks, notebook paper, and pencils at all times for use in class.

Medication at Schools Procedures

Ben Hill County Schools acknowledge that some students may require medication during the school day. School system personnel will administer medications in accordance with law and system procedures. Parents/guardians are encouraged to administer their child's medications whenever possible before and after school hours.

Parent/Guardian Authorization/Consent

Parent/Guardian consent is required for the medication (prescription and non-prescription) to be administered to a student.

1. Regardless of prescription or non-prescription, the parent/guardian must complete an "Authorization of Medication Administration" form for medication. The parent/guardian is responsible for informing the school of any changes in pertinent data.
2. Medication will be administered according to the prescription pharmacy label unless the prescribing physician has submitted a written change order to the school nurse.
3. Non-prescription medications will be administered according to labeling directions on the original container or as the doctor prescribes.
4. New "Authorization of Medication Administration" forms must be completed each school year, even if the medications remain the same.

Delivery of Medication to School

Prescription medication must be delivered to the school in its original container with the original pharmacy label containing the student's name, date, name of the medication, dosage, and expiration date. (Medications arriving in baggies, envelopes, or other types of packaging will NOT be accepted.)

Non-prescription medication must be delivered to the school in its original container with the manufacturer's directions clearly visible. (Medication arriving in baggies, envelopes, or other types of packaging will NOT be accepted.)

It is recommended that the parent/guardian obtain a second container/bottle of medication from the pharmacy (one for home and one labeled for school), as the medication will NOT be sent home with students.

Physician's Order Requirement

Because aspirin and aspirin-containing products have been linked to Reye's syndrome, aspirin and other salicylates (Pepto-Bismol, Excedrin, Alka-Seltzer, etc.) will NOT be administered to students without a written order from a physician and permission from the parent/guardian. A physician's order will be required non-prescription medication to be administered more than twice a day OR for more than three consecutive days. School personnel will NOT administer alternative medications such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, or dietary supplements unless prescribed by a physician.

Self-Administration of Asthma Medication/Epi-Pen

A student with a diagnosis of asthma or a severe allergic reaction is permitted to possess and self-administer inhaled asthma medication or an Epi-Pen during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, or while on the school bus or other school property after physician and parent/guardian approval. The parent/guardian of the student, the student, and the prescribing physician must complete the "Authorization for Student to Carry a Prescription Inhaler or Epi-Pen" form and return it to the school nurse.

Permission to self-administer asthma inhalers/ Epi-Pens is effective for one school year and must be renewed yearly. Inhalers must be marked in permanent ink with the student's name. Epi-Pens must contain the pharmacy label and directions for the student. Parents are encouraged to provide the schools with duplicate medication and supplies if a student cannot self-administer or fails to bring the medication or equipment to school.

Disposal of Medications

The responsibility of the parent/guardian is to pick up their child's medication (prescription and non-prescription) by the end of the school year. For safety reasons, medications will NOT be sent home with students. A written reminder will be sent home with students that have medication at school. If medication has not been picked up by the last day of school, the school nurse will dispose of and document the disposal of the medications.

Students with Diabetes

An individualized health plan will be developed for each student in coordination with the treating physician and the student's needs.

Caution about Drugs

Students and parents/guardians should be aware that the sale, transfer (to include giving away or making available in any manner), possession, or use of any drugs/medications or created appearance of drug/medication except as outlined above is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Specialized Health Procedures

A physician's order and parent/guardian consent is required for specialized health procedures (cauterizations, tube feedings, ostomy care, etc.). The parent/guardian is responsible for furnishing all equipment, supplies, medications, formulas, or other items necessary to administer the procedure and provide replacements and maintenance.

Parent Classroom Observations

1. Parents wishing to observe their child's classroom should contact school administration in advance to express their interest in observing the classroom.
2. School Administration and the parent will work together to schedule a suitable time for the observation.
3. The parent will sign the necessary classroom observation agreement outline the terms of the observation, including expectations for confidentiality and behavior during the observation.
4. If the parent requires any accommodations or special arrangements to facilitate their observation, they should communicate these needs in advance to the school.
5. On the scheduled date and time, the parent can observe their child's classroom while adhering to the guidelines provided by the school. They should respect the teacher's authority and maintain appropriate behavior at all times.

Parent Portal

You can review your child's academic progress and student records, not just during regular school hours but anytime convenient for you. Contact your child's school for information about how to set up an account or email: parentportal@benhillschools.org

Personal Belongings

Personal belongings should be left at home. The school is not responsible for personal belongings (including cell phones, laptops, smartwatches, headphones, etc.)

Photo Use Per Permission

Unless the parent or legal guardian requests otherwise, pictures and/or audiovisual recordings of students' academic work may be taken by the news media and/or the school system or individual schools during sporting events, awards ceremonies, and general interest events. Pictures and/or audiovisual presentations and students' academic work may appear on the school system or individual websites. Pictures may also appear in schools, school systems and/or news media publications. If the parent or legal guardian wishes to prohibit the taking of any picture or the making of any audiovisual recording of their child by the news media, school system, or by individual schools, the notification must be filed, in writing to the school principal, within ten days of the beginning of the school year or the date of enrollment. Pictures and/or audiovisual recordings identifying students as receiving special education instruction will not be allowed without prior approval.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

All BHCS observe a moment of silence as the State Legislature provides. This period is held immediately after the pledge to the American Flag. Both of these observances deserve respect. The flag will be respected, and absolute silence is required during the moment of silence.

Board Policy JRB: Parents' Bill of Rights

I. Definition

Instructional material-As used in this policy, the term "instructional material" means:

- A. Instructional materials and content which constitute the principal source of study for a state funded course to be used in the various grades in the State of Georgia's public schools, including the elementary grades and high school grades; and,
- B. Locally approved instructional materials and content which constitute the principal source of study for a state funded course, not including supplementary or ancillary material, which is adopted by a local board of education or used by a local school system. Supplementary or ancillary material includes, but is not limited to, articles, online simulations, worksheets, novels, biographies, speeches, videos, music, and similar resources in any medium, including both physical or digital.

II. Requirements

The Board of Education promotes parental involvement in the School District's schools.

- A. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall ensure that each school within the School

District has in place and makes available procedures for a parent to:

- i. Review records relating to his or her minor child;
 - ii. Learn about his or her minor child's courses of study, including, but not limited to, parental access to instructional materials intended for use in the classroom. Such instructional materials will be made available for parental review during the first two weeks of each grading period, either online or on site upon a parent's request made during the review period.
 - iii. Object to instructional materials intended for use in his or her minor child's classroom or recommended by his or her minor child's teacher;
 - iv. Withdraw his or her minor child from the school's prescribed course of study in sex education if the parent provides a written objection to his or her child's participation. Such procedures will provide for a parent to be notified in advance of such course content so that he or she may withdraw his or her minor child from the course;
 - v. Provide written notice that photographs or video or voice recordings of his or her minor child are not permitted, subject to applicable public safety and security exceptions;
 - vi. Procedures that meet the requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-667 and 20-2-670 for a parent to review records relating to his or her minor child and to request the transfer of such records to another school or a person or entity authorized to receive such records; and,
 - vii. Procedures that meet the requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-667 and 20-2-670 for the timely production of a student's education records by such student's current or previous school to another school in which such student has enrolled, intends to enroll, or is considering enrollment.
- B. The procedures required by this policy will be posted on the School District's website and made available for review on site upon request of a parent.

Recess/Unstructured Break Time (BOE Policy IEDA)

Primary and Elementary Schools

The Ben Hill County Board of Education requires the scheduling of unstructured break time ("recess") for students in Kindergarten and grades 1 through 5 every day. Provided, however, that recess shall not be required on any school day on which a student has had physical education or structured activity time or if reasonable circumstances impede such recess, such inclement weather when no indoor space is available, assemblies or field trips exceeding their scheduled duration, conflicts occurring at the scheduled recess time over which the classroom teacher has no control, or emergencies, disasters, or acts of God. No individual break period shall be less than fifteen minutes.

Middle School

The Board allows the scheduling of unstructured break time for students in grades 6 through 8 at the discretion of the school principal.

Scheduling of Recess or Unscheduled Break Time

The principal shall consult with appropriate instructional personnel at the school and system level, as appropriate, to determine the length, frequency, timing, and location to ensure that break time does not interfere with and provides support for academic learning. The principal shall issue directions concerning the responsibility of supervision of students so that break time will be a safe experience for students.

Withholding of Student Participation

Student participation in breaks may be withheld for disciplinary or academic reasons if prior notice of such is provided to the students. However, the decision to withhold break time shall not be inconsistent with any behavioral plan developed by the school system for the student, including Section 504 plans or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

School Property and Student Debts

Students marking or damaging school equipment or property in any way will be required to clean the article and/or pay for the damage. When issued a textbook, the student becomes responsible for assuring that the book does not become lost or damaged beyond normal usage. Loss or excessive damage to textbooks will result in the student paying for the book or for damages. The law specifically provides that parents and students are responsible for materials lent to the student.

Students shall be notified in writing of any debt charged to them, and failure to pay these debts may result in sanctions. Opportunity shall be given for the student or parent to meet with a school official to discuss any debt the student owes. If a student or parent cannot pay the debt, an official statement to that effect may be filed with the superintendent or designee, who will arrange for the student to satisfy the debt by performing services for the school district.

State Assessments

Students in grades 3 through 8 will take an end-of-grade assessment in the content areas of language arts and mathematics. Students in grades 5 and 8 will also take an end-of-grade assessment in the content areas of science, social studies, or the required assessments per the GADOE. These tests are administered toward the end of the school year, typically in April or early May.

Students at the high school level will take an end-of-course assessment in the following four courses:

- Language Arts: American Literature and Composition
- Mathematics: Algebra I
- Science: Biology
- Social Studies: United States History

Final Grade Weight for Milestones:

- FHSCCA: 10%
- BHMS: 10%

The end-of-course measures are administered at the completion of the course, regardless of the grade level. These measures serve as the final exam for the course and contribute 20% to the student's final course grade (this 20% rule does not apply to BHES; BHMS will use 10%). Each school district selects a local testing window from within the state-designated testing window based on its local school calendar. Middle school students enrolled in one or more of these courses must take the associated end-of-course (EOC) measure. If enrolled in a mathematics and/or science EOC course, these middle school students will not take the corresponding content area end-of-grade (EOG) measure.

Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

All kindergarten students defined in Rule 160-3-1-.01, except those students exempted by criteria specified in their individualized Education Program, shall be assessed using GKIDS and/or other state-approved measures during their kindergarten year. Students entering kindergarten prior to March 1 shall be assessed with the total GKIDS. Students entering on or after March 1 shall be assessed with as much GKIDS as the system determines is appropriate. Only certified teachers responsible for the entire class and trained in using the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) shall administer the assessment. All children shall be administered the GKIDS according to the established guidelines and procedures found in The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) Assessment Guide.

Video and Audio Recording

The Ben Hill County School system reserves the right to videotape or audiotape students in school programs, school events, student evaluations, and on BHCS transportation. The school system also reserves the right to tape any meetings concerning the student where a parent may be present. All schools have video camera surveillance systems.

Visitors

Any person entering the school campus or any school building, who is not a student at the school or an employee of the school system, shall check in at the front office, provide a reason for his or her presence at the school, and present their Federal/State Issued ID Card to receive a pass to move throughout the school building. The administration at the school may deny entry into the school building or deny any person that the administration deems to create a hostile environment or create a school disruption for both the students and the school personnel.

SCHOOL START TIMES

SCHOOL	DROP OFF	START TIME	END TIME
Ben Hill Pre-K	7:30	8:00	2:45
Ben Hill Primary	7:30	8:00	3:15
Ben Hill Elementary	7:30	8:00	3:25
Ben Hill Middle	7:00	7:30	2:50
FHSCCA	6:40	7:15	2:20

SCHOOL EARLY RELEASE TIMES

SCHOOL	EARLY DISMISSAL TIME
Ben Hill Prek-K	11:30
Ben Hill Primary	12:30
Ben Hill Elementary	12:15
Ben Hill Middle	11:25
FHSCCA	11:05

SCHOOL CALENDAR: 2025 - 2026

BEN HILL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2025-2026 School Calendar

190 Day Calendar

JULY				
M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

4th of July 29th-1st Pre-Planning
25-28 New Employee Orientation

AUGUST				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

4th - First Day of School

SEPTEMBER				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

1st - Labor Day

OCTOBER				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

8th-10th: Fall Break

NOVEMBER				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

24th-28th Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

22nd - Jan 2nd Christmas Break

JANUARY				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

1-2 Christmas Break 19th MLK Day

FEBRUARY				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

13th-16th: Winter Break

MARCH				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

Mar 30th-Apr 3rd Spring Break

APRIL				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

Mar 30th-Apr 3rd Spring Break

MAY				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

22nd Graduation 26-28th PostPlanning
25th Memorial Day

JUNE				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

	First/Last day of School
	End of Quarter
	Break/Holiday/Off

	Teachers In-Service Day
	Virtual Days for Students / PLC Teacher Training
	Early Release - Parent Conference Days

Affirmation of Receipt of Student Handbook

Homeroom _____

Teacher _____

AFFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF STUDENT HANDBOOK
(Please print)

I, _____, _____, _____, _____,
Student's Last Name First Middle Preferred Name

have received a copy (either electronic or paper) of the **Ben Hill County Schools 2025-2026 Student Handbook and the school supplemental handbook (for respective schools)**. The handbooks contain the student code of conduct, state law, state school board policy, and local policy on student attendance. I understand the policies, procedures, and directives set forth in these handbooks. Furthermore, I agree to abide by these policies, procedures, and directives.

Student Signature

We have read a copy (either electronic or paper) of the Ben Hill County Schools 2025-2026 Student Handbook and the school supplemental handbook (for respective schools), which contain the student code of conduct, state law, state school board policy, and local policy. We expect our son/daughter/student to abide by these policies.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please sign, date, and return to the school site within five school days.