



Hart County *Charter System*

Mission: The mission of the Hart County Charter System is to prepare all individuals to meet tomorrow's challenges by providing quality educational opportunities today.

Vision: Hart County Schools will be recognized for educational excellence.

Guiding Principles/Beliefs:

- Schools provide safe, secure, and nurturing environments for all.
- Stakeholders promote a positive atmosphere that fosters confidence and self-worth for all.
- Each individual is valued and treated with respect.
- Each individual has the right to be educated and the responsibility to learn.
- Quality education requires partnership, which is the responsibility of the school system, the students, the parents, and the community.

Purpose of Hart County Charter System Elementary Handbooks

This handbook is an excellent tool for students, parents/guardians, and serves the following purposes:

- To provide general information regarding the operation, procedures, and practices of our elementary schools.
- To provide information about Georgia law regarding Discipline, Code of Conduct, and Compulsory Attendance law.

Hart County Charter System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations.

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Schools and Contact Information



Hart County Charter System

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Phone: (706) 376-5141
Fax: (706) 376-7046
www.hart.k12.ga.us

Mrs. Jennifer Carter, Superintendent

Mr. Brooks Mewborn, Associate Superintendent

Mrs. Lydia Bennett, Assistant Superintendent

Hartwell Elementary School

147 S. College Ave.
Hartwell, Georgia 30643
Phone: (706) 376-4425
Fax: (706) 856-7317

Principal

Mrs. Ashley McNeill

Assistant Principal

Mrs. Andrea Gibbs

North Hart Elementary School

124 Ankerich Road
Bowersville, Georgia 30615
Phone: (706) 856-7369
Fax: (706) 856-7372

Principal

Mrs. Christina Weir

Assistant Principal

Mr. Alex Holmes

South Hart Elementary School

121 E & M Dairy Road
Hartwell, Georgia 30643
Phone: (706) 856-7383
Fax: (706) 856-7386

Principal

Mr. Marion Hanahan

Assistant Principal

Mrs. Stephanie McConnell

District Staff

Transportation Office (706) 856-7295

Student Success/ Social Worker (706) 856-7231

Student Support Services (706) 376-4209

CALENDAR FOR 2025-2026

Date	Event or Holiday
August 4	First Day of School
September 1	Labor Day, Student & Teacher Holiday
September 8	Progress Reports
September 29-October 3	Fall Break
October 16	Early Release, Report Cards, Parent Conferences
November 17	Progress Reports
November 24-28	Thanksgiving Break
December 22 – January 6	Christmas Break
January 5	Professional Learning Day, Student Holiday
January 6	Professional Learning Day, Student Holiday
January 7	First Day of 2 nd Semester/Students Return/Report Cards
January 19	MLK Day, Student & Teacher Holiday
February 11	Progress Reports
February 16-20	Winter Break
March 24	Early Release, Report Cards, Parent Conferences
April 6-10	Spring Break
April 30	Progress Reports
May 29	Last Day of School, Graduation

ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to feel connected to the school and are more likely to perform better in the classroom, have a positive attitude, and graduate from school. The Hart County Charter System recognizes that good attendance contributes to school performance and supports having a consistent approach to ensure students attend school. The Attendance Protocol has been developed to provide parents, students, teachers, and school staff with the information by which to address attendance issues.

The Georgia Compulsory School Attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) requires children to attend school from age 6 to age 16. It also places children who start school before the age of 6 to be subject to the law if they are enrolled in school for at least 20 days.

HART COUNTY RISK REDUCTION

By order of the Juvenile Court, the Hart County Risk Reduction Panel has been established. Students with excessive absences and/or tardies may be called to appear before this panel, which consists of members of various community agencies gathered to provide support to parents and children for the purpose of improving attendance. It is incumbent upon the parent(s)/guardian(s) to work with the panel to develop a plan of action. Failure to comply with the plan, may result in a referral to the Department of Family and Children Services and/or Juvenile Court.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A student is considered absent any time he or she is missing from any assigned class or school activity, with or without parental permission.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

An excused absence is an absence that is a result of one of the following reasons:

1. Any state-approved reason (as listed below)
 - a. Personal illness, requiring attention from a health care professional (medical, counseling, dental, and other agency appointments that cannot be scheduled before/after school hours)
 - b. Serious illness or death in a student's immediate family
 - c. A court order or an order by a governmental agency mandating absence
 - d. Religious holiday
 - e. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health and safety
 - f. Visitation with a parent or legal guardian in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat zone posting
 - g. All students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly
 - h. All students in foster care who attend court proceedings relating to the student's foster care
 - i. All students traveling on a school-sponsored trip
 - j. All out-of-school suspensions shall be temporarily excused. A student under suspension will be allowed to make up work according to Hart County Board Policy JBD.

For the purposes of Policy JBC, the term “immediate family” is defined to include the following individuals: A student's father, mother, grandparents, brother, sister, or relative living in the same household.

Parent Excused Absences

Each student is allowed **four (4)** parent excused absences per semester. These absences are to be supported by a note from the parent/guardian and must be received within ***two (2) school days following the student's absence*** in order to be accepted. The parent note should include the reason for the absence and be signed by the student's parent/guardian with the phone number where the parent/guardian may be reached during the day.

Submitting Excuses

Once a student returns to school, written documentation of absences must be received within ***two (2) school days following the student's absence*** in order to be accepted. If the written documentation is not received within ***two (2) school days***, the absence will remain as an unexcused absence.

Emails to teachers, handwritten notes, and School Status messages will be considered acceptable forms of excuse notes as long as they contain the required information.

Unexcused Absences

A written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failure to comply with Georgia Compulsory School Attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) will be provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) at the beginning of each school year or within thirty (30) days after a student has enrolled in the school district. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will sign a statement indicating receipt of such a written statement of possible consequences and penalties. Students who are 10 years or older by September 1 will sign a statement indicating receipt of a written statement of possible consequences for noncompliance with the school district's attendance policy. All absences, other than those listed under the *Excused Absence* section, will be considered unexcused.

1. THREE (3) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

a. 3-Day Parent Notification

The school will send a message to the parent/guardian through School Status.

2. FIVE (5) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

a. 5-Day Parent Notification

The school will send a 5-day notice of unexcused absence letter and a copy of the notification of compulsory attendance form to the parent/guardian through School Status.

b. Attendance Support Team Meeting

The school will contact the student's parent(s) and conduct an Attendance Support Team meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student after five unexcused absences. The purpose of this meeting is to develop an intervention plan to improve student attendance.

c. Referral School Social Worker

A referral to the Hart County Charter System Social Worker will automatically be made after seven or more absences following the attendance contract. This also applies if a parent/guardian fails to respond to attempts to schedule or participate in the attendance meeting.

d. School Principal Verification of Absence

After five excused absences per semester, the principal of the student's school may require medical or appropriate documentation in support of further absences. All excuses will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

2. TEN (10) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

a. Juvenile Court Referral

The Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law considers students truant at ten unexcused absences. If a student accumulates ten or more unexcused absences, a referral will be made to the Hart County Northern Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified by the Hart County Charter System Social Worker.

3. REVOCATION OF INTRADISTRICT or OUT OF DISTRICT PRIVILEGE

a. Intradistrict Students

If a student was granted an intradistrict transfer to another school, he/she may be placed back at his/her school of origin as recommended by the principal.

b. Out-of-district students

If a student received Board of Education (BOE) approval for out-of-district attendance in Hart County Schools, out-of-district approval may be revoked. The student could be required to enroll in the school district of residence.

Tardy

A student is marked tardy after 8:00 AM. Parents are required to accompany all late-arriving students to the area inside the school building designated for late arrivals. Parents are required to sign the student into a computer system and state the reason for the tardiness.

Early Checkout

Early checkout is leaving school prior to the end of the official school day. The parent (or other authorized pick-up) shall be required to come inside the school to the designated area to sign the student out. Anyone picking up a child from school must show a government-issued picture identification before the child is released.

NO STUDENT CHECK-OUTS ARE ALLOWED AFTER 2:30 P.M

Chronic Unexcused Tardies and/or Early Dismissals

The Hart County Charter System Social Worker will communicate with the parent(s)/guardian(s) about the student's chronic unexcused tardies and/or early dismissals. After the parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed, and the situation persists, a referral could be made to the Hart County Northern Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court.

Parental Responsibility for Attendance

When students live with both parent(s)/guardian(s) or parents having joint custody, the law considers them to be equally responsible for their children's attendance at school. Children should receive sufficient sleep the night before, be awake, and ready to attend school each morning. Parents are encouraged to check on their child's attendance and grades through Infinite Campus. Parents have access to review student attendance records and grades through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. To set up an account or to get help with access, please contact the attendance/data clerk at your child's school. The internet link to campus parent can be found on the district's website, www.hart.k12.ga.us

Student Responsibility for Attendance

Students are permitted to make up work when absent. Parents or students should contact the teacher(s) within two days of returning to school to make arrangements for making up missed work. The student must make up the work according to the schedule set by the teacher; otherwise, make-up credit may be withheld.

Hospital/Homebound Services

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis, radiation/chemotherapy, or students with other serious health conditions).

HHB Services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are, by design, temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student's inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented.

Each school has an administrator assigned to coordinate HHB Services. For more information regarding Hospital/Homebound Services, please contact Hart County Charter System Hospital/Homebound Coordinator, Missy Vaughn, by phone (706)371-5106 or email at missy.vaughn@hart.k12.ga.us.

BUS SAFETY

Students being transported by school bus are expected, regardless of the type of weather, to be at their designated bus stop before the bus arrives. Drivers will not wait for students. In order for students to maintain the privilege of riding the bus, they must follow the rules below. Bus drivers will make any discipline referrals to the home school following the system's code of conduct.

1. Follow the system code of conduct for behavior.
2. Be courteous and refrain from using profane language.
3. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
4. Cooperate with the driver. Disrespectful conduct toward the driver or others will not be tolerated.
5. Do not smoke or vape.
6. Do not be destructive.
7. Stay in your seat and face the front with your feet on the floor.
8. Keep your head, hands, and feet inside the bus and to yourself.
9. Sit in the assigned seat, if appointed by the bus driver.
10. Do not engage in any disruptive behavior.
11. Electronic devices are allowed with headphones only. (Use of external speakers is not allowed.)
12. Do not use 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 bus.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Each school has a guidance counselor. The counselor's time is focused on providing the following services: classroom guidance, small group counseling/guidance, limited individual counseling with situations such as peer relationships and academic components, and coordinating/consulting with parents and staff. Interested or concerned parents should contact the school principal or assistant principal for information regarding these services.

CURRICULUM

The Hart County Charter System implements the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved curriculum or standards of excellence. Schools, along with system personnel, work together to ensure that the curriculum utilized for instruction is up to date and will help prepare students for their future. The state curriculum can be located at www.georgiastandards.org.

Effective implementation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence requires support on multiple fronts, including strengthening teacher content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and contextualized tasks for students that effectively engage all learners. The standards create a foundation to work collaboratively across states and districts, pooling resources and expertise, to create curricular tools, professional development, common assessments, and other instructional material.

CUSTODIAL PARENT/GUARDIANSHIP

The Hart County Charter System will abide by state and federal laws as applicable regarding custody issues involving students who are currently enrolled in our schools.

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal privacy law that gives parents certain protections with regard to their children's education records. FERPA gives custodial and noncustodial parents alike certain rights with respect to their children's education records, unless a school is provided with evidence that there is a court order or state law that specifically provides to the contrary. Otherwise, both custodial and noncustodial parents have the right to access their children's education records.

Legal Documentation of Custody

If a parent has custody of a child and there are circumstances specifically stated in the court order that affect the child at school, the parent is required to provide a certified copy of the order. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to keep the school informed of any changes in the custody order.

DISCIPLINE

It is the desire of the Hart County Charter System and the Hart County Board of Education that all students have every possible opportunity to take advantage of instructional programs that 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 facilitate a positive learning environment for themselves and other students.

Respect for each other, system employees, and school property is a requirement for all students. They are also expected to comply with student behavior policies adopted by the Board of Education and to obey student behavior rules established by the school.

Parent/Guardian involvement is the most desirable avenue for correcting behavioral problems. Conferences may be used in conjunction with other forms of discipline.

School systems are required to have progressive discipline policies. Therefore, consequences may vary from student to student for the same offense due to the progressive discipline policy. Students accused of violating this code should be advised of the violation and given a reasonable opportunity to present their position.

The Student Code of Conduct shall be available to each student and parent in the district, including newly enrolled students. Parents shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of the Code. This Code shall be available online, and a printed copy will be provided upon request.

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

Positive Behavior Intervention Support PBIS

Hart County Charter System elementary schools implement Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) to support student growth. PBIS is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety, and support improved academic outcomes. Implementation of PBIS is saving countless instructional hours otherwise lost to discipline. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior, will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted, and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students. The Hart County Charter System has four behavioral expectations for its elementary schools: **H**elpful, **A**ccountable, **R**espectful, and **T**eachable (HART). Each individual school has created a behavior matrix that describes/outlines major and minor occurrences of behavior. The major and minor will follow discipline procedures that are designed to teach two very important concepts:

- Certain behaviors are undesirable and should be avoided.

- Certain behaviors are desirable and should be repeated.

The foundation of this plan is a set of school-wide classroom rules and consequences drawn up by a parent, teacher, and administrator committee. The superintendent supports the authority of the principal and teachers to remove a student from a classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738. Please be on the lookout for additional information about PBIS throughout the school year.

ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

Every student is expected to maintain the level of personal hygiene necessary to ensure a healthy school environment. Students are encouraged to observe a standard of grooming and dress code with the level of formality of the school situation. By school board policy, the administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of dress in cases not covered by the dress code.

1. All jeans/slacks must fit snugly at the waist or small of the back and may not be worn sagging below the waistline. In the event the student DOES NOT comply, he/she will be required to tuck in his/her shirt.
2. Jeans/slacks/shorts with writing on the buttocks area or with holes are inappropriate and may not be worn at school.
3. Leggings and jeggings may be worn only when an accompanying top is at the appropriate length (the end of the fingers when the arms are held to the side should not touch the leggings/jeggings, only garment material).
4. Shoes should cover the feet and must be worn with shoestrings tied.
 - a. Flip-flops and high-heeled shoes hinder safe student transition at school; therefore, these shoes are discouraged.
 - b. Tennis shoes should be worn by students for physical education classes. Tennis shoes provide safe movement in the class, which allows students to participate.
5. Shorts must be an appropriate length (the end of the fingers when the arms are held to the side should not touch skin, only short material). Bermuda shorts, capris, or shorts of similar length may be worn.
6. All sleeveless tops must have straps that pass the THREE-finger test.
7. All shirts and t-shirts must be long enough to completely cover the midriff. Back and skin should not show.
8. Clothing with gang/cult-related symbols, offensive messages, vulgar language, or advertisements for alcohol, tobacco, or drugs is inappropriate and shall NOT be worn.
9. Hats, skullcaps, bandanas, etc., are not appropriate and may not be worn at school. Special occasions or school-sponsored fundraisers may allow for specific hats to be worn.

10. When extremes with hair color and/or jewelry are determined to be disruptive to classroom instruction, administration will contact the parent/guardian.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS – SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS

In the case of severe weather (e.g., snow, ice, severe cold), the official announcement for school closing will be via SchoolStatus calling system, Hart County Schools Facebook, Hart County Schools Website, and through the following media outlets: WKLY 980AM, WLHR 92.1FM, and television stations, WYFF TV4, and WSPA TV7. **Please check these outlets instead of calling school officials. It is the responsibility of the students' families to keep contact information updated at each school. When contact information has changed, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the school with the necessary changes.** If announcements are not made before 7:30 AM, you should assume school will be in session as usual. If the weather should become severe during the school day, and school is going to be dismissed early, announcements of the school's closing will be made through the aforementioned communications.

If you are not at home, your child must know an alternate place to go in the event of an emergency school closing. (Remember, like any other day, buses run normal daily routes and cannot provide special transportation services on emergency closing days.) Please be sure to discuss emergency closing directions with your child. The child should know what you expect in these situations.

FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES

Our school faculty and staff support and encourage field trips that are educationally tied to the curriculum. Field trips are grade-level specific. Students not enrolled in the school or the particular grade level for which the trip is planned shall not attend. If your child is scheduled for a field trip, the parent or legal guardian will be required to sign a slip granting permission for participation. These permission slips are maintained on file at the school. Teachers planning field trips may request a monetary donation to help defray the cost of the trip. In addition, other support from parents may be requested, including parent attendance on the trip. Field trip experiences will not be denied to a student whose parents do not contribute to the cost. Note that the district's policy does not allow anyone other than the enrolled child and employees to ride the bus during a field trip. All students and school staff are provided transportation to and from field trip destinations in county-approved transportation vehicles unless prior written approval has been obtained from administration. Children may be signed out with their own parent/legal guardian only. Smoking by staff or chaperones is prohibited while on field trips.

GEORGIA S.H.A.P.E. FITNESSGRAM

House Bill 229 requires all students enrolled in a physical education course in grades 1-12 to have

an annual fitness assessment. The Georgia Student Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) Initiative will consist of an annual fitness assessment program for all students in grades 1 – 12. For more information, go to www.fitnessgram.net or contact your child's physical education teacher.

GRADING PRACTICES

The following charts outline the grading practices of the Hart County Charter System. Progress reports are sent home at the middle of each nine weeks, and report cards are sent home at the end of each nine weeks to notify parents of their child's current academic and social development. Teachers may schedule conferences during the school year or on specially scheduled school conference days to discuss a child's progress with his/her parents. Other conferences may also be requested. Please make every effort to attend conferences requested by school personnel. Your child's academic and social growth depend upon strong support and encouragement from you!

Grading System for Grades 3-5

A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
F = Below 70

Grading System for Grades K-2

The Hart County Charter System utilizes a standards-based reporting for kindergarten, first, and second grades. For each grading period, parents will receive a report listing the standards to be covered and the level of mastery for their child. Please note that while all of the standards are listed, some standards will not be taught and/or mastered until later in the year.

Training and more information about the reporting process will take place throughout the school year.

The student exceeds the standard.	The student consistently and independently meets the standard.	The student is making progress towards the standard.	The student needs extensive support at school and at home to meet the standard.
4	3	2	1

HEALTH SERVICES

Hart County School nurses may make contact with parents regarding health issues. The nurse will NOT take responsibility for evaluating signs of illness or injury that have occurred at home. These should be referred to your family doctor or an emergency room. Nursing services will be provided if a medical release has been signed, completed, and returned to school.

Judgment in such cases is at the discretion of school authorities, and parents assume financial responsibility.

Parents will be contacted immediately should a situation warrant when their child becomes ill or has an accident at school. In serious situations when a parent cannot be contacted, the Principal or Principal's designee will request the assistance of local emergency medical personnel. **Please keep your current telephone number and the name of a contact person for emergencies on file in the office. Please be sure to return the emergency authorization form at the beginning of the year to your child's teacher.**

Medications

All students will receive a form entitled "Consent for School Nurse Services" to be completed and signed by parents. No student will be able to receive medicine or be "treated" by the school nurse without this consent form. Medicine(s) should be brought to the school office or to the nurse by the parent/guardian **ONLY** if the medication **MUST** be given during school hours. All medication(s) must be in the original prescription/ pharmaceutical container(s), clearly labeled with the name of the student, the name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the times for dosage. Prescription medication will be administered according to Hart County Board of Education policy. As long as prescribed and/or over-the-counter medicine is administered in accordance with the schedule/directions as described by the parent/guardian, the Hart County Charter System is released from any liability in the event of injury or adverse effects to the child as a result of the administering of such medication. Any student possessing prescription or over-the-counter medication not in accordance with these guidelines will be considered in violation of the system's drug policy and shall be subject to the discipline set forth in the student code of conduct and/or student/parent handbook.

A student with supporting medical documentation may carry at all times inhalers for asthma, auto-injectable epinephrine for allergic reactions, and medical needs for diabetes with parental/guardian permission. Students authorized to self-administer medications shall not allow any other student to handle, possess, or attempt to use his/her medication. Violations of such instructions will be dealt with in accordance with the student code of conduct. Parents of students with such conditions must provide an “action plan” or plan of care from the diagnosing physician.

For a student to carry and self-administer medications, parents may be requested to provide a written statement from a licensed physician confirming the student is able to self-administer the medication. Written permission from the parent for the nurse or designated employee to consult with the doctor regarding any questions that may arise concerning the medication may be requested. The permission releases the school system and its employees and agents from civil liability for administering such medication to students, or if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction, as a result of self-administration of such medication. Parents are encouraged to provide duplicate medication and supplies to the school in the event a student is unable to self-administer or fails to bring the medication or equipment to school.

Nurses or other school employees are authorized to administer an auto-injectable epinephrine, if available, to a student who is having an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse (allergic) reaction, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for epinephrine. Any school employee who, in good faith, administers or chooses not to administer an auto-injectable epinephrine to a student in such circumstances shall be immune from civil liability.

Communicable Diseases

Children having any contagious or infectious disease should not return to school unless cleared by the family physician or the Health Department. A written note from a physician and/or the Health Department must accompany the child upon return to school.

Head Lice

Students who have head lice (pediculosis) will be sent home from school. Before re-entering school, it will be necessary for parents to obtain a statement from a physician, the Hart County Health Department, or the school nurse stating that the student is free of ALL infestation and any remnants, including dead nits. When the student’s head is still suspect, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter school. However, if your child has not been cleared to re-enter on or before the second school day from the date he/she was sent home, the absences will be marked unexcused. Referrals will be made to the School Social Worker for repeated cases of head lice.

Immunizations

The Hart County Charter System, in accordance with the Georgia Department of Public Health, requires all students entering a Georgia public school to have up-to-date immunizations. A certificate of immunization must be submitted to the school. The record of immunizations must be on a form provided by the Department of Public Health (Form 3231). Should a parent not have the immunizations record, or the student not have completed required immunizations for age, the school may grant a 30 calendar day waiver for a justified reason. The waiver may be extended up to 90 calendar days when provided documentation by a physician or local health department that the sequence has been started and that the immunizations needed can be completed in 90 calendar days. The waiver may not extend past the 90 calendar days. The student shall not be permitted to attend school when either the 30-day or 90-day waiver expires.

Exceptions:

1. When the school is presented with a certificate from a physician or local board of health that has examined a child and found the child to have any physical disability that may make vaccination undesirable. (See last column on Form 3231)
2. When parents present a notarized affidavit (Department of Public Health Form 2208) that swears or affirms that the immunization required conflicts with the religious beliefs of the parent or guardian.

Legal ramifications:

1. Any reasonable official permitting a child to remain in a school or facility in violation of the law requiring immunizations could be found guilty of a misdemeanor.
2. Any parent or guardian who intentionally fails to comply with the law requiring immunizations could be found guilty of a misdemeanor.

HONOR ROLL/MERIT LIST

Third, fourth, and fifth-grade students are eligible for Honor Roll/Merit List recognition at the end of each quarter. The **Honor Roll** contains the names of students who have achieved a grade of “A” in all academic subjects. The **Merit List** contains the names of students who have achieved letter grades of “A” and “B”. To qualify for the Merit List, at least three academic A’s must be earned. Students in kindergarten, first, and second grades are recognized for their individual achievements on a continuing basis instead of an Honor Roll listing. It is the system’s belief that young children should not be placed in situations that promote undesirable competitive stress. Early childhood is a time to develop and strengthen a child’s academic, social, and emotional growth. The development of strong self-esteem is of primary importance during these years.

Year-End Recognition

The following awards are for third, fourth, and fifth-grade students who meet the criteria at the end of the school year. The Principal’s Award requires a student to earn 95%-100% in each subject on the final report card. The Academic Excellence, Award of Achievement, and Award of Merit combine all subjects to create a cumulative average for all subjects. The Perfect Attendance Award requires students to be present from the first day of school until the last day of school, with no absences or tardies, and no early departures. All averages and attendance will be verified by the administration and the grade level teacher submitting the information.

Principal’s Award	Students who have a 95-100 in ALL subject areas at the end of the year.
Academic Excellence	Students who have a year-end average that results in a cumulative average of 95 or higher.
Award of Achievement	Students who have a year-end average that results in a cumulative average of 90-94.
Award of Merit	Students who have a year-end average that results in a cumulative average of 85-89.
Perfect Attendance	Students must be present 100% of the time, no absences or tardies, and no early departures.

MAIL, TELEPHONE CALLS, & GIFTS

In order to maintain a school climate focused on learning, the school discourages disruptions of any kind. **Disruptions in the school and safety concerns on the bus are the reasons receiving or distributing items is prohibited.** Mail, telephone calls, or gifts (e.g., flowers, balloons) for students will not be accepted at school. Gifts sent to the school will be returned to the sender at that individual's expense. Phone calls to teachers during the day will only be forwarded to teachers during planning times.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT TIPS

Parents may assist teachers in ensuring that their child experiences success and happiness in school by following the suggestions listed below:

- Attend parent-teacher conferences and communicate often with your child's teacher.
- Limit screen time and establish regular work/study times.
- Listen to your child. Encourage your child to read, discuss, and tell stories.
- Play educational games with your child.
- Read to and with your child each day.
- Become familiar with school procedures and how to address your concerns.
- Volunteer time at school, assist with school activities, and/or join the PTO.
- Let the teacher know in writing if your child is to go to a different address in the afternoon by 12:00 PM.
- Check in at the office first before visiting anywhere in the school.
- Return papers (medical authorization, pupil information, progress reports, attendance notes, etc.) to the school in a prompt manner.
- Be positive in communication to and about school and school personnel.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Twice a year, you will be contacted by your child's teacher to come to school for a conference. Please make every effort to attend these conference appointments. Your child's success in school greatly depends upon your involvement and concern. We look forward to meeting with you during these conference periods. School administrators and teachers are also available throughout the year if additional conferences are needed. Please call or email ahead for an appointment.

PREPARATION FOR THE SCHOOL DAY

Before the student leaves home each day, please be sure he/she has all necessary daily instructional materials. This will avoid undue disruption of instruction. If an emergency arises and it is necessary for you to notify your child, leave a message with the school secretary. The office staff will relay the message to your child's teacher at the appropriate time.

Should it become necessary to change the regular daily transportation or destination for your child, please contact the school no later than 12:00 PM that day. When the change is known in advance, parents must provide in writing to the school their contact information (phone number), name of the adult taking responsibility for their child (with contact information), and address where the child will go after school. Emergencies do arise; however, due to student safety, we must verify who is making the change of transportation request. It is very important that everyone involved in transporting the child cooperates and is able to communicate.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Gifted Education

The Hart County Charter System offers educational services for identified gifted and highly talented students through a gifted resource pullout class. Teachers and/or parents may refer students for consideration for gifted testing. However, highly talented students are identified through a rubric that consists of various benchmark assessments and student performance.

Special Education

The Special Education Department provides a complete range of programs and services for students with identified special needs. Special services are available from kindergarten through fifth grade for eligible students with disabilities of an emotional, and/or intellectual, and/or physical nature. Eligibility procedures include initial screening and further educational or psychological testing to determine program eligibility and the type and amount of help needed when eligible.

Title I Program

Title I is a federally funded program designed to provide additional educational services to students. The school will provide, upon request, the professional qualifications of your child's teachers. Questions regarding Title I program services may be directed to the school Principal or Assistant Principal. Each school's Title I documents (e.g., Schoolwide Improvement Plan, Parent Family Engagement Plan, Grade Level Compacts) are on the school's website and in a binder located in the front foyer/entrance and the media center.

Early Intervention Program

The Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a state-funded program for students in grades kindergarten through fifth. This program is designed to help young learners who need additional instruction in academic areas, especially language arts and mathematics. Teacher checklists, as well as test scores, are used to determine a student's need for early intervention. The goal of the program is to bring the student up to or beyond grade level as quickly as possible.

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

The Hart County Board of Education adopts this policy in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-282 through 20-2-285 (Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy) that bases the placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the education setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

The Superintendent and appropriate staff shall develop procedures and regulations governing promotion, placement, and retention of students in grades K-12. More information can be found in Board Policy [IHE](#).

FOOD SERVICES

School Food Services

Educational research has shown that students can learn more effectively when they are properly nourished. Nutritious breakfasts and lunches that meet USDA nutritional requirements are served each day at the school. This year, the district qualifies for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which will allow all students to be served breakfast and lunch each day at no cost. Breakfast will be served from 7:30-8:00 each day.

For your convenience, menus are on the school's website, in addition to, www.hart.k12.ga.us/nutrition. Though meals are offered at no cost, some students may choose to purchase additional meals or a la carte items. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay their child's meals. Pre-paid amounts are listed below. As an additional pre-payment option and convenience to parents, online payments may be made at www.myschoolbucks.com. This is an online system that allows parents/guardians to make deposits into a student's meal account or view meal purchases. A \$2.75 transaction fee covers the cost of processing online transactions. This fee goes directly to the payment processor, not to the school district.

Parents who have children with a special nutritional or feeding need due to a disability must have their child's physician complete the EATING AND FEEDING EVALUATION CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS form. This must be completed and on file with the School Nutrition Manager of each school before any modifications are made. This is a separate form from the one given to the school nurse and must be completed each year. The form may be picked up from the Nutrition Manager or printed from www.hart.k12.ga.us/nutrition.

2025 - 2026 Meal Prices

All children will receive meals at no cost throughout this school year.

The cost of additional meals is listed below.

- **Additional Student Breakfast - \$2.00**
- **Additional Student Lunch - \$3.75**
- **Adult Breakfast \$2.00**
- **Adult Lunch \$3.75 student portion, \$4.50 adult portion**

SAFETY DRILLS

Fire, tornado, and lockdown drills are held during the year according to the school's safety plan.

Teachers will instruct their students on the procedures to be followed during fire, emergency lockdown, and tornado drills. Students are carefully evacuated from the building during a fire drill.

Students are escorted to a designated place during a tornado drill. Students will remain in rooms with their teacher during the emergency lockdown drill.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The Hart County Charter System has local school governance teams at each school. Each school's team is comprised of teachers, parents, and business members. The purpose of the school governance team is to provide a level of collaboration between parents, the community, and the school on decisions related to budget, instruction, and resources. More information about governance teams can be found on the system website <https://www.hart.k12.ga.us/domain/27>

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Students in the Hart County Charter System participate in various forms of standardized tests and district/common assessments. Discuss the importance of the testing with your child, and how the information from the assessments will be used by teachers, parents, and administration to make educational decisions. The State of Georgia has a mandatory testing program for all elementary students in grades 3-12 called the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS). Kindergarten children are tested with the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS 2.0), which is an ongoing performance assessment based on the Georgia Performance Standards for kindergarten. Elementary students in grades kindergarten through five take part in multiple assessments: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), common assessments created by all schools, and progress monitoring that help determine present levels of performance and annual academic achievement in specific content areas.

STUDENT SUPPORT

The Student Support Team (SST) is a joint effort of regular education and special education to identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for children prior to or in lieu of a special education referral. Each building level team is comprised of administrators, classroom teachers, requesting teacher, special education teacher, counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or central office personnel. Parental involvement is also a critical part of the SST process.

The SST plans for modification in a student's education program and includes a six-step process: (1) identification of needs, (2) assessment, if necessary, (3) educational plan, (4) implementation, (5) follow-up and support, and (6) continuous monitoring and evaluation. The SST functions under the auspices of regular education curriculum services and is based upon the child study team concept.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

The Hart County Charter System utilizes a process to align appropriate assessment with purposeful instruction for all students. The instruction is based in the general education classroom where teachers routinely implement a strong and rigorous standards-based learning environment. Students needing additional support require a school-wide common understanding of the Georgia Standards of Excellence, assessment practices, and instructional pedagogy. These Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) include: Screening, Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention System, Data-Based Decision Making and Infrastructure.

- [Screening](#)
 - The purpose of screening is to identify students who are in need of enrichment/acceleration or who are at risk for poor learning and/or poor behavior outcomes. Screening also provides an indicator of system effectiveness.
- [Progress Monitoring](#)
 - The purpose of progress monitoring is to monitor students' response to primary, secondary, or tertiary interventions to estimate rates of improvement, identify students who are demonstrating adequate progress, and compare the efficacy of different forms of academic and/or behavior instruction.
- [Multi-Level Prevention System](#)
 - A Multi-Level Prevention System is a framework designed to provide support matched to student need to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. The Tiered System of Supports for Students includes schoolwide implementation that focuses on the “what and how of instruction” and the provision of services and supports to students that meet their unique, whole-child needs.
- [Data-Based Decision Making](#)
 - Data-Based Decision Making is a process for making informed decisions about instructional needs, the effectiveness of instruction, and level of intensity needed within a multi-level prevention system. The data-based decision process consists of using data to identify the needs of all students, selecting and implementing evidence-based practices and interventions, monitoring the progress of students' responsiveness to an intervention, and making adjustments based on progress monitoring data, as needed.
- [Infrastructure](#)
 - Infrastructure is the organizational structure necessary to fully operate all components of Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students in a unified system to meet the established goals.

SECTION 504

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in Section 7(20), shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Additionally, Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, including public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools, regardless of whether they receive federal financial assistance.

Any parent, teacher, or administrator may request an evaluation of their child to determine eligibility for accommodations under Section 504. Requests are to be made to the school-based 504 coordinator or the school system coordinator. Initial evaluations may not be conducted unless the parent has given permission for the evaluation. Evaluations are to be conducted by a team of individuals who know the student, and the determination of eligibility is to be a team decision. Parents are to be informed of the decision made by the team.

Any student or parent or guardian (“grievant”) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding your child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant’s failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing form. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system’s central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are supplemental resources that may be issued to each student or can be requested by parents. All books, including library books, should be treated as borrowed school property and given the appropriate respect. In case of loss or damage to textbooks or library books, the parent/guardian is responsible for the replacement or repair cost. If a lost book is found, the money paid will be refunded.

TECHNOLOGY

All technology provided and used by the Hart County Charter System falls under Board Policy IFBG for Acceptable Use and IFBGE for Internet Safety. All students and parents must sign a technology user agreement form each year. In addition, video is used frequently in all schools and classrooms for safety and instructional purposes. Parents may opt out of their child’s video use through a media waiver that is sent home each year.

Cell Phones & Smartwatches

While students may be allowed to be in possession of a cell phone and smartwatch, they cannot be a classroom disruption. Smartwatches may be used as a watch; however, any other use will result in it being treated as a cell phone; this includes interacting with any other function. Notifications must be turned off. Students should leave their cell phones in their backpacks at all times. Cell phones and smartwatches are not allowed in the room during state-required assessments. Offenses for students using cell phones or smartwatches will be issued in accordance with Hart County's Progressive Discipline Policy.

- 1st offense- The teacher will give the student a warning, give the cell phone to the principal, and the parent will have to come and pick it up.
- 2nd offense- The teacher will give the cell phone to the principal, and the parent will have to come and pick it up. Additionally, a behavior referral will be submitted to the administration.
- 3rd offense and beyond- The teacher will give the cell phone to the principal, and the parent will have to come and pick it up. A behavior referral will be submitted to the administration. Consequences assigned by the school administration will be in accordance with Hart County's Progressive Discipline Policy.

VISITORS

Metal Detectors

Visitors are required to walk through metal detectors before entering the school for security purposes. To help expedite the process, please leave all unnecessary items in your car, such as bags, electronics, and other personal belongings. This ensures a smoother and faster entry into the building.

Driver's License and Visitor's Badge

Adult visitors and small children accompanied by an adult are welcome in the school during announced times that do not disrupt the instructional day. For the safety of all, visitors are required to come by the school office for a visitor's pass upon entering the school building and must present their driver's license upon arrival. The administration respectfully requests appropriate supervision of small children visiting the building to prevent disruption in instruction. REMEMBER...when visiting the building, please **PROUDLY display your visitor's pass on the upper part of the body so it is easily seen by all to ensure safety protocols are in place.**

When visiting at lunch, please only eat at the designated tables identified at each school with your own child. For the safety and confidentiality of all students, friends are not permitted to eat with you and your child. No outside commercialized food should be brought into the school cafeteria.

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

Please contact your child's teacher or the school secretary before your child's last day. Also, inform the teacher or secretary of your future destination. All outstanding fees must be paid, and your child must return all textbooks, his/her Chromebook, and library materials before his/her withdrawal is complete. All records will be forwarded to the new school upon notification of enrollment from the receiving school.