



Duplin
County
Schools

2025-26

Student and Parent Guide and Code of Conduct

It is the policy of Duplin County Schools that no otherwise qualified students shall be excluded from, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity solely on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, handicapping condition, creed, political affiliation or any other issues based on Title VI, Title IX, section 504, Title II ADA, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.



Duplin County Schools' Student and Parent Guide and Code of Conduct

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STEAMA - Pathways with Purpose

...a Message from the Superintendent

Dear Students and Families,

The Duplin County Schools Board of Education is honored to welcome you back for the 2025-26 school year. Whether you are returning or joining us for the first time, we are excited to partner with you in support of every student's educational journey.

In Duplin County Schools, we believe that every child has unique gifts, and we commit to nurturing those gifts through meaningful relationships, personalized learning, and high expectations. Our "One Family" mindset—rooted in unity and respect—continues to guide us as we work together to create safe, engaging learning environments where all students can thrive.

We remain committed to the STEAMA model (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math, and Agriculture), which helps students develop critical skills while exploring real-world career pathways. From Pre- K through 13th grade, our mission is to work collaboratively with the community to prepare all students for career, college, and life success.

The *2025-26 Duplin County Schools' Student and Parent Guide and Code of Conduct* includes important information to help your family navigate the school year, including policies, expectations, and guidance that support a positive and productive learning experience. You can access this guide and all Duplin County Schools' policies online at www.duplinschools.net. Additionally, the guide is linked on the home screen of each student's school-issued technology device. Please take the time to review it together and reach out to your teachers or principal with any questions.

Thank you for entrusting Duplin County Schools with your educational journey. With your partnership, we are confident this will be a year filled with growth, discovery, and success.

Committed to excellence in education,
The Duplin County Schools Board of Education

Our Vision...

The vision of Duplin County Schools is to become an exemplary school system where all students and staff excel in a globally competitive society.

Our Mission...

The mission of Duplin County Schools is to work collaboratively with the community to prepare all students for career, college, and life success.

Our Motto...

"A unified approach to academic excellence."

Duplin County Schools Directory

Central Office/Board of Education	910-296-1521
B.F. Grady Elementary	252-568-3487
Beulaville Elementary	910-298-3171
Chinquapin Elementary	910-285-3476
Duplin County Schools Center of Opportunity	910-293-2068
Duplin Early College High	910-296-1136
East Duplin High	910-298-4535
James Kenan High	910-293-4218
Kenansville Elementary	910-296-1647
North Duplin Elementary	919-658-2931
North Duplin Junior/Senior	919-658-3051
Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary	910-289-3667
Wallace Elementary	910-285-7183
Wallace-Rose Hill High	910-285-7501
Warsaw Elementary	910-293-3121



Duplin County Schools 5-Year Strategic Plan 2022-2027

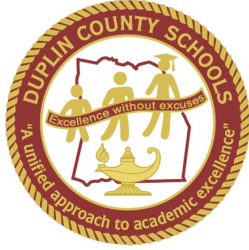
* This plan is aligned with the NC State Board of Education’s Strategic Plan

Vision: The vision of Duplin County Schools is to become an exemplary school system where all students and staff excel in a globally competitive society.

Mission: The mission of Duplin County Schools is to work collaboratively with the community to prepare all students for career, college, and life success.

Motto: “A Unified Approach to Academic Excellence”

Goals	Objectives	Measurements
<p>Strategic Goal One: Student academic success for every Pre-K – 13 student is a priority for all Duplin County Schools.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All teachers will align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure powerful teaching and learning. 2. All Pre-K – 13 students will graduate as lifelong learners, college and career ready, and destined to be a productive citizen. 	<p>Duplin County Schools is committed to continuous improvement in all areas.</p> <p>Duplin County Schools will show continuous improvement in all areas as measured by local, state, and national standards.</p>
<p>Strategic Goal Two: Through a commitment to equity, all students will receive a personalized education through access to STEAMA, career, college, and digital learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every student will choose a pathway aligned to their career goals. 2. Instruction will be differentiated to meet all Pre-K – 13 student needs. 	
<p>Strategic Goal Three: Every student will be instructed and supported by excellent and innovative leaders, teachers, and personnel.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employ and retain highly effective principals, teachers, and personnel to ensure college and career readiness for all Pre-K – 13 students. 2. Develop and support leaders, teachers, and personnel in a manner to promote a continuous learning environment. 	
<p>Strategic Goal Four: Develop and maintain strategic partnerships supported by 21st Century financial, business, and technology systems.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement processes which maximize resource attainment for all Pre-K – 13 students. 2. All financial operations will be conducted in a transparent manner. 3. 21st Century technology and learning tools are available and operational. 4. Provide opportunities for stakeholder input. 	
<p>Strategic Goal Five: Provide safe and nurturing environments and facilities for all Pre-K – 13 students and staff.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain environments that are conducive to learning. 2. Model and lead all Pre-K – 13 students toward healthy, active lifestyles and responsible decisions, emphasizing character education and physical activity/education. 3. Resources will be aligned to accommodate all Pre-K – 13 students’ academic, social-emotional, vocational, and life skills needs. 	



Acknowledgements

A special thanks is extended to each person listed below who was present and participated in the renewal of the Duplin County Schools 5-Year Strategic Plan. Our community's commitment to ensuring the success of all students is reflected throughout the goals and objectives that will guide the district's strategic work through 2027.

Susana Avery
Dara Bailey
Nicolette Barrett
Pam Batts
Walinda Batts
Britani Becher
Matthew Blust
Kendra Bradshaw
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Laura Bryan
Angelo Cavallaro
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Robbin Cooper
Sharnelle Dixon
Ivy Dowe
James Faison
Gina Farrior
Dawn George
Jason Ginn
Lindsay Ginn

Janice Goldsby
Tyler Grady
Adrian Grandy
Addie Hall
Kristen Hall
Ann Hardy
Marketa Hargrove
Jamie Harper
Natausha Hicks
Michael Holton
Denise Humphries
Karen Jackson
Karrie Jarman
Tim Jenkins
Christy Johnson
Bryan Jones
Erica Jones
Roger Jones
Tony Jones
Leon Kea

Karen Kennedy
Tera Kennedy
Lillie Lanier
Erica Levai
Kim Matthis
Renee McCoy
Lauren McMahon
Bonnie Miller
Bobby Mobley
Brittany Moore
Ronald Moore
Taylor Morrison
Nicole Murray
Pamela Murray
Mayshelle Newkirk-Tate
Kelsey Nunn
Austin Obasohan**
Bridget Parvin
Jeremy Perkins
April Raynor

Janice Rhodes
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Robert Ross
Monica Ruffin
Debra Sholar
Susan Sellers
Lindsay Skidmore
Kevin Smith
Tabitha Smith
Tanya Smith
Brent Stafford
L'nette Stokes
Laura Thornton
Sandy Turner
Daren Tyndall
LaTerri Underwood
Maria Uribe
Amy Wallace
Jessica Whitman
Carol Wimmer

** Superintendent Dr. Austin Obasohan provided leadership for the renewal of the Duplin County Schools 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Duplin County Board of Education Members

Brent Davis, Chairman
Reginald Kenan, Vice-Chairman
Pamela Edwards
David Jones
Claudius Morrissey

Approved June 7, 2022; Revised June 6, 2023

Duplin County Schools 2025-2026 PreK-12 STEAMA Customized Calendar

2.4.2025

JULY 2025						
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OCTOBER 2025						
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4[^] Independence Day Holiday
TBD Summer Learning Programs

JULY

AUGUST
11,15,18,22 Optional Teacher Workdays (School-Level)
12,14,19,21 Mandatory Teacher Workdays (School-Level)
13,20 Mandatory Teacher Workdays (District-Level)
18[#] JSCC Classes Begin
19 Open House
TBD Convocation
25 First Day for Students
29 STEAMA Career and College Day

SEPTEMBER

1 Labor Day Holiday
8 STEAMA Spirit Day
17+ Observance of Constitution & Citizenship Day

OCTOBER

6 STEAMA Spirit Day
10 STEAMA Career and College Day
16 End of 1st Grading Period
17 Optional Teacher Workday
20 Beginning of 2nd Grading Period

NOVEMBER

Veterans' History Awareness Month +
3 STEAMA Spirit Day
7 Agriculture Awareness Day
11 Veterans Day Holiday
14 STEAMA Career and College Day
26 Optional Teacher Workday
27,28 Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

1 STEAMA Spirit Day
16-19 High School Course Exams
19 End of 2nd Grading Period/Early Release Day
22, 23 Annual Leave Day
24-26 Christmas Holiday
29-31 Annual Leave Days

JANUARY

1 New Year's Day Holiday
2 Optional Teacher Workday
5, 6 Mandatory Teacher Workday
7 Beginning of 3rd Grading Period
8 JSCC Classes Begin
12 STEAMA Spirit Day
16 STEAMA Career and College Day
19 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

FEBRUARY

2 STEAMA Spirit Day
13 Optional Teacher Workday
20 STEAMA Career and College Day
27 Agriculture Awareness Day

MARCH

2 STEAMA Spirit Day
11 End of 3rd Grading Period
12 Mandatory Teacher Workday/District PD Day
13 Optional Teacher Workday
16 Beginning of 4th Grading Period

APRIL

2 STEAMA Career and College Day
3 Easter Holiday
6-10 Annual Leave Days
13 STEAMA Spirit Day

MAY

4 STEAMA Spirit Day
11-22 K-8 State Assessments
19-22 High School Course Exams
22 End of 4th Grading Period/Early Release Day
25 Memorial Day Holiday
26-29 Mandatory Teacher Workdays
27 JKHS Graduation
28 NDJS Graduation
29 EDHS Graduation
29 WRH Graduation
TBD Summer Learning Programs

JUNE

1-5 Optional Teacher Workdays
TBD Summer Learning Programs

JANUARY 2026

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FEBRUARY 2026

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JUNE 2026

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In case of school closings, the following days will be considered for make-up:

Oct. 17 Nov. 26 Jan. 2, 5, 6
Feb. 13 March 12, 13

***Student Early Release (12:00 PM)
+ Designated by US Code,
NC General Statute & Board Policy**

KEY
Summer Learning Program
First Day for Students
Mandatory Teacher Workdays
Optional Teacher Workdays
Annual Leave Days
Holidays
STEAMA Spirit Days
STEAMA Career and College Days
Agriculture Awareness Days

School Spirit Fridays
Every Friday August 15 – June 5
(Unless Otherwise Designated)

High School Graduation Information
May 27: JKHS – Events Center 10 AM
May 28: NDJS – NDJS Gym 10 AM
May 29: EDHS – Events Center 10 AM
May 29: WRH – Events Center 2 PM

Duplin County Schools 2025-2026 DECHS STEAMA Customized Calendar

2.4.2025

JULY 2025						
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SEPTEMBER 2025						
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DECEMBER 2025						
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28	29	30	31			

4[^] Independence Day Holiday
TBD Summer Learning Programs

JULY

AUGUST

4-7 Mandatory Teacher Workdays
7 Open House
8 Optional Teacher Workday
TBD Convocation
11 First Day for Students
18# JSCC Classes Begin
29 STEAMA Career and College Day

SEPTEMBER

1 Labor Day Holiday
8 STEAMA Spirit Day
17+ Observance of Constitution & Citizenship Day

OCTOBER

6 STEAMA Spirit Day
10 STEAMA Career and College Day
10 End of 1st Grading Period
13 Optional Teacher Workday
14 Mandatory Teacher Workday
15 Beginning of 2nd Grading Period

NOVEMBER

Veterans' History Awareness Month +
3 STEAMA Spirit Day
7 Agriculture Awareness Day
11 Veterans Day Holiday
14 STEAMA Career and College Day
26 Optional Teacher Workday
27,28 Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

1 STEAMA Spirit Day
16-19 High School Course Exams
19 End of 2nd Grading Period/Early Release Day
22, 23 Annual Leave Day
24-26 Christmas Holiday
29-31 Annual Leave Days

JANUARY

1 New Year's Day Holiday
2 Optional Teacher Workday
5, 6 Mandatory Teacher Workday
7 Beginning of 3rd Grading Period
8 JSCC Classes Begin
12 STEAMA Spirit Day
16 STEAMA Career and College Day
19 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

FEBRUARY

2 STEAMA Spirit Day
13 Optional Teacher Workday
20 STEAMA Career and College Day
27 Agriculture Awareness Day

MARCH

2 STEAMA Spirit Day
11 End of 3rd Grading Period
12 Mandatory Teacher Workday/District PD Day
13 Optional Teacher Workday
16 Beginning of 4th Grading Period

APRIL

2 STEAMA Career and College Day
3 Easter Holiday
6-10 Annual Leave Days
13 STEAMA Spirit Day

MAY

4 STEAMA Spirit Day
19-22 High School Course Exams
22 End of 4th Grading Period/Early Release Day
25 Memorial Day Holiday
26-29 Mandatory Teacher Workdays
26 DECHS Graduation
TBD Summer Learning Programs

JUNE

TBD Summer Learning Programs

School Spirit Fridays
Every Friday August 8 – May 29
(Unless Otherwise Designated)

High School Graduation Information
May 26: DECHS – Events Center 10 AM

JANUARY 2026						
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FEBRUARY 2026						
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MARCH 2026						
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APRIL 2026						
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MAY 2026						
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JUNE 2026						
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Oct. 13, 14 Nov. 26 Jan. 2, 5, 6
Feb. 13 March 12, 13

*Student Early Release (12:00 PM)
+ Designated by US Code,
NC General Statute & Board Policy

KEY
Summer Learning Program
First Day for Students
Mandatory Teacher Workdays
Optional Teacher Workdays
Annual Leave Days
Holidays
STEAMA Spirit Days
STEAMA Career and College Days
Agriculture Awareness Days

General Information

This guide is meant to provide general information for students, parents and staff. **Please note that some policies may have been updated since this guide was published and the current versions as well as specific information, including legal and cross references, can be found in the policies located online on the DCS website under Board Policies.** Any time you have questions, concerns, or suggestions throughout the year you are encouraged to talk with your child's teacher and/or principal as needed. Should you need additional guidance after speaking with your child's principal, please feel free to contact our Central Office at 910-296-1521.

ACCESSIBILITY TO WATER

In locations where drinking fountains are not handicap accessible, bottled water will be provided by the administration.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION:

As required under EPA Regulations (40 CFR Part 763), which went into effect in December of 1987, Duplin County Schools have been inspected for the presence and condition of asbestos containing building materials. Asbestos materials have been identified in the following schools:

Asbestos Containing Schools and Buildings

East Duplin High School
James Kenan High School
North Duplin Elementary School
North Duplin Jr/Sr High School
Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary School
Wallace Elementary School
Wallace-Rose Hill High School
Warsaw Elementary School
Kenan Gymnasium

Non-Asbestos Schools and Buildings

B.F. Grady Elementary School
Beulaville Elementary School
Bus Garage/Maintenance Department
Chinquapin Elementary School
County Office
Duplin Early College High School
Kenansville Elementary School
Legion Stadium
Liberty Hall
Duplin County Schools Center of Opportunity

Furthermore, detailed plans have been developed for dealing with the areas identified. These management plans are available for your inspection at each school principal's office. Each management plan contains information about the location of asbestos materials, plans for managing the areas, such as periodic re-inspections, surveillance checks, and response actions, either planned or completed.

ATTENDANCE POLICY 4400

School attendance and class participation are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily. School administrators shall communicate attendance expectations to parents and guardians and work with students and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.

A. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

School officials shall keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Students will be considered in attendance if present at least half of the instructional day on-site in the school or at a place other than the school attending an authorized school-related activity. To be in attendance during remote instruction days, students must: (1) complete their daily assignments, either online or offline; and/or (2) have a daily check-in through two-way communication with (a) the homeroom teacher for grades K-5 or (b) for all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled.

B. LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DEPARTURES

Students are expected to be at school on time and to remain at school until dismissed. During the school day, students are expected to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class and to remain until the class ends.

When a student must be late to school or leave school early, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian should be presented upon the student's arrival at school. Tardies or early departures may be excused for any of the reasons listed below in Section C.

Any disciplinary consequences for unexcused tardiness or unexcused early departures from school or class will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

C. EXCUSED ABSENCES

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian is expected to be submitted on the day the student returns explaining the reason for the absence. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a health care practitioner. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

1. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
2. isolation ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health or isolation or quarantine that is a required state or local measure,
3. death in the immediate family;

4. medical or dental appointment;
5. attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
6. a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent or legal guardian;
7. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal;
8. pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary; or
9. a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student's parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty or inactive member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting; or
10. rare circumstances as approved by the superintendent, or any other reason as approved by the Board in a Board resolution.

D. SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

While recognizing the importance of classroom learning, the board also acknowledges that out-of-classroom, school-related activities can provide students with valuable experiences not available in the classroom setting. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. field trips sponsored by the school;
2. job shadows and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a);
3. school-initiated and -scheduled activities;
4. athletic events that require early dismissal from school; and
5. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal;

In addition, students participating in disciplinary techniques categorized as in-school suspension will not be counted as absent.

E. MAKEUP WORK

In the case of excused absences, short-term out-of-school suspensions, and absences under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school), the student will be permitted to make up his or her missed work. (See also policies 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission, and 4351, Short-Term Suspension.) Assignments missed due to participation in school-related activities also are eligible for makeup by the student. The teacher shall determine a timeline for which make up work is to be submitted. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

4. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive unexcused absences.

Any school disciplinary consequences for unexcused absences will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

Absences may impact eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Principals shall inform students and parents of the applicable attendance standards for the various types of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. Students will not be excluded from graduation ceremonies and promotion ceremonies due to attendance. See also policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

G. CHRONIC AND EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

Because class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process, any absences, whether excused or unexcused, can have a negative impact on a student's academic achievement. Regular attendance must be prioritized within each school and encouraged throughout the community. School administrators shall monitor and analyze attendance data to develop, inform parents of, and implement preventive strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism. Such strategies should involve engaging students and parents, recognizing good and improved attendance, providing early outreach to families of students missing school, and identifying and addressing barriers to attendance.

Prior to the determination of final grades, parents will be notified if their child has excessive absences. If a student has more than three unexcused absences in a grading period or more than six unexcused absences in a semester, the principal or a committee established by the principal shall consider whether the student's grades should be reduced because of the absences. The principal or committee shall review other measures of academic achievement, the circumstances of the absences, the number of absences, and the extent to which the student completed missed work. A committee may recommend to the principal and the principal may make any of the following determinations:

1. the student will not receive a passing grade for the grading period or final course grade;
2. the student's grade will be reduced;
3. the student will receive the grade otherwise earned; or
4. the student will be given additional time to complete the missed work outside of the instructional day and/or calendar year before a determination of the appropriate grade is made.

H. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Students with Chronic Health Problems
No penalties will be imposed for absences due to documented chronic health problems.
2. Students Experiencing Homelessness
For students experiencing homelessness (see Board policy 4125, Homeless Students), school officials must consider issues related to the student's homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school

attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

3. Attendance Requirements for Extracurricular Activities

Absences may impact eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Principals shall inform students and parents of the applicable attendance standards for the various types of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. See also policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

Revised: June 6, 2023

ATTENDANCE 4400-R

School attendance and class participation are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend school daily, arrive on time, and remain the entire day. School administrators shall communicate attendance expectations to parents and guardians and work with students and their families to overcome barriers to attendance. Attendance is taken daily in kindergarten through eighth grade and attendance is taken by class period in high school.

A. EXCUSED ABSENCES

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian is expected to be submitted on the day the student returns explaining the reason for the absence. All notes must be turned into the office where they will be filed for future reference, if needed. Although notes from home are acceptable, these notes may not be accepted more than three school days after the student's return. The school's principal or the attendance committee has the authority to limit the parent/guardian notes to no more than 3 handwritten notes per semester. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a health care practitioner. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

- a. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
- b. isolation ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health or isolation or quarantine that is a required state or local control measure;
- c. death in the immediate family;
- d. medical or dental appointment;
- e. attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
- f. a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent or legal guardian;
- g. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal;
- h. pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary;
- i. a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student's parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting; or
- j. rare circumstances as approved by the superintendent, or any other reason as approved by the Board in a Board resolution.

B. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive unexcused absences. Any school disciplinary consequences for unexcused absences will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

After 10 accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the principal or the principal's designee shall review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 (reports of unlawful absence) and shall confer with the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal shall notify the district attorney and the director of social services of the county where the child resides. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal may file a complaint with the juvenile court counselor pursuant to Chapter 7B of the General Statutes that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse.

Absences may impact eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Principals shall inform students and parents of the applicable attendance standards for the various types of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. Students will not be excluded from graduation ceremonies and promotion ceremonies due to attendance. See also policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

C. CHRONIC AND EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

Because class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process, any absences, whether excused or unexcused, can have a negative impact on a student's academic achievement. Regular attendance must be prioritized within each school and encouraged throughout the community. School administrators shall monitor and analyze attendance data to develop, inform parents of, and implement preventive strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism. Such strategies should involve engaging students and parents, recognizing good and improved attendance, providing early outreach to families of students missing school, and identifying and addressing barriers to attendance.

Prior to the determination of final grades, parents will be notified if their child has excessive absences. If a student has more than three unexcused absences in a grading period or more than six unexcused absences in a semester, the principal or a committee established by the principal shall consider whether the student's grades should be reduced because of the absences. The principal or committee shall review other measures of academic achievement, the circumstances of the absences, the number of absences, and the extent to which the student completed missed work. A committee may recommend to the principal and the principal may make any of the following determinations:

1. the student will not receive a passing grade for the grading period or final course grade;
2. the student's grade will be reduced;
3. the student will receive the grade otherwise earned; or
4. the student will be given additional time to complete the missed work outside of the instructional day and/or calendar year before a determination of the appropriate grade/promotion status is made.

Issued: June 6, 2023

ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE 4400/7510-E

Guidance for Excluding Students from School Due to Illness

An elevation of the body's temperature is generally considered a possible sign of illness, although variations occur. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics provide the following guidance to help reduce the spread of illness in the school setting.

Students should be excluded from school under the following conditions:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher; **OR**
- An elevation of temperature when accompanied by other indicators of a beginning illness, including, but not limited to:
 - Known exposure to communicable illness
 - Malaise/Fatigue/Change of Behavior
 - Headache
 - Chills/Body Aches
 - Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
 - Respiratory symptoms (congestion, cough, runny nose, sore throat, and green or yellow drainage)
 - Flu-like symptoms (It is important to note that not everyone with the Flu will have a fever. Flu seasons are unpredictable in a number of ways.)

Criteria for Return:

- Students sent home for **fever, vomiting or diarrhea**, must remain home for 24 hours after the last episode, and remain fever/symptom free without the use of medicine.
- If your child had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea overnight or the morning prior to attending school, please **DO NOT** give them medications and send them to school. Please keep them home to help prevent the spread of germs.
- After an assessment of the student's symptoms, the school nurse will use their discretion to determine if the student should be sent home. In the school nurse's absence, school staff will follow the above-mentioned guidelines.
- **Staff** with signs of illness should follow the same guidelines as above.

Revised: June 6, 2023

ATHLETICS

The primary purpose of the Duplin County Schools' athletic program is to promote the physical, mental, social, emotional, and moral well-being of the participant. It is hoped that coaches will help athletes in our schools and will be a positive force in preparing our youth for an enriching and contributing role in the 21st Century.

Before the first practice all middle and high school athletes are required to:

- Meet academic and attendance eligibility requirements
- Take and pass a physical examination
- Obtain parental signature on the physical exam
- Turn in a complete:
 - emergency information card
 - parent information and consent form
 - parent and athlete sportsmanship form and honor code
 - parent signature on at-risk form

**** Please see the DCS Student-Athletes and Parents Handbook for complete requirements regarding athletic participation. If you have further questions, please contact your child's athletic director, coach, or principal.**

BULLYING AND HARASSING BEHAVIOR PROHIBITED: Policy Code 1735/4329/7311

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to providing a safe, inviting, and civil educational environment for all students, employees, and other members of the school community. The Board expects all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors to behave in a manner consistent with that goal. The Board recognizes that bullying and harassing behavior creates an atmosphere of intimidation and fear, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious misconduct or to violence. Accordingly, the Board prohibits all forms of bullying and harassing behavior, including encouragement of such behavior, by students, employees, volunteers, and visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school district.

This policy prohibits bullying and harassing behavior, or the encouragement of bullying or harassing behavior, that takes place (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) at any bus stop; (4) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (5) through the use of school district technological resources; (6) at any time or place when the student, employee, or other person is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (7) at any time or place when the bullying has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, social, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment.

A. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy applies to bullying and harassing behavior that is not otherwise prohibited by the following Board policies that address discriminatory harassment in violation of federal law:

- Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, policy 1710/4020/7230 (prohibiting harassment based on federally protected characteristics, such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age (40 or older) religion, military affiliation, or genetic information)
- Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, policy 1725/4035/7236 (prohibiting sexual harassment)

Individuals who wish to report bullying or harassing behavior that is based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, or other personal characteristic addressed by the policies above should refer to and follow the reporting processes provided in those policies.

Conduct that may constitute discriminatory harassment under federal law must be addressed first in accordance with the requirements of the applicable policy(ies) listed above. If subsequently, the conduct is determined not to rise to the level of discriminatory harassment prohibited by those policies, the conduct may be addressed under this policy. Conduct that does not rise to the level of bullying or harassing behavior as defined and prohibited in this policy may nevertheless violate other Board policies or school rules.

B. CONDUCT THAT IS CONSIDERED BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

1. Bullying is deliberate conduct intended to harm another person or group of persons. It is characterized by repeated unwanted aggressive behavior that typically involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, such as a difference in physical size, strength, social standing, intellectual ability, or authority. It may consist of either physical, verbal, or nonverbal behavior. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that is carried out using electronic communication media, such as words, action, or conduct conveyed through email, instant messages, text messages, tweets, blogs, photo or video sharing, chat rooms, or websites, and may exist in the absence of a power imbalance typical of other forms of bullying.
2. Harassing behavior is conduct that is intimidating, hostile, or abusive, or is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Harassing behavior may violate this policy even if no harm is intended to the target and no power imbalance is evident.
3. Bullying or harassing behavior includes conduct that is, or reasonably appears to be, motivated by actual or perceived differentiating personal characteristics, or by a person's association with someone who has or is perceived to have a differentiating personal characteristic. Differentiating personal characteristics include, but are not limited to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Bullying and harassing behavior can violate this policy regardless of a student's motivation.
4. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassing behavior are repeated acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory or lewd comments, spreading rumors, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, offensive touching, physical interference with normal work or movement, visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons, and sharing intimate photos or video of a person or sharing photos or videos that may subject a person to ridicule or insult.
5. Other behaviors that may constitute bullying or harassing behavior under this policy are deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, pressure for sexual activity, offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials.
6. These examples are not exhaustive but are intended to illustrate the wide range of behavior that may constitute bullying and harassing behavior.

7. Conduct such as the following is not considered bullying or harassing behavior: legitimate pedagogical techniques, the exercise of legitimate authority, and academic or work performance monitoring and evaluation.

C. WHEN BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR VIOLATES THIS POLICY

Not all conduct that may be described as bullying or harassing behavior violates this policy. Bullying or harassing behavior violates this policy when any pattern of repeated gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or threatening communication:

1. places a student, an employee, or other person in actual and reasonable fear of harm to their person or property; or
2. creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

"Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

The definition of bullying and harassing behavior in this section is intended to be no less inclusive than the definition of bullying and harassing behavior in G.S. 115C-407.15.

Bullying or harassing behavior based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age (40 or older), military affiliation, or genetic information may also constitute discriminatory harassment in violation of federal law and other Board policies as described in Section A, above.

D. REPORTING BULLYING AND HARASSING BEHAVIOR

1. Reports by Students and/or Parents and Guardians
 - a. The Board encourages students or parents/guardians of students who have been the victim of or who have witnessed bullying or harassing behavior in violation of this policy to immediately report such incidents to a teacher, counselor, coach, assistant principal, or the principal.
 - b. Reports may be made orally or in writing and may be made anonymously.
 - c. All reports of serious violations and complaints made under this policy will be investigated expeditiously. Anonymous reports will be investigated to the extent reasonably possible under the circumstances.
 - d. If, at any time, school officials determine that the alleged bullying or harassing behavior appears to be based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age (40 or older), military affiliation, or genetic information, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the applicable policy listed in Section A above.
2. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees

An employee who witnesses or who has reliable information that a student or other individual has been bullied or harassed in violation of this policy must report the incident to his or her supervisor or to the building principal immediately. If sex-based harassment is suspected, the employee also must report the incident to the Title IX coordinator. An employee who does not promptly report possible bullying or harassing behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Reporting by Other Third Parties

Other members of the school community may report incidents of bullying or harassment to the school principal or the superintendent or designee.

4. Reporting False Allegations

It is a violation of Board policy to knowingly report false allegations of bullying or harassing behavior. A student or employee found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to disciplinary action.

E. REPORTS OF BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR BASED ON A FEDERALLY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC

Bullying or harassing behavior that is based on a federally protected characteristic, such as sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age (40 or older), military affiliation, or genetic information, may constitute discriminatory harassment that is a violation of the individual's civil rights. A school employee who receives a report of bullying or harassing behavior that may constitute sexual harassment must immediately contact the Title IX coordinator. If the reported behavior appears to be based on any other federally protected characteristic, the employee must immediately notify the appropriate civil rights coordinator designated in policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law. Uncertainty as to whether alleged bullying or harassing behavior is based on a federally protected characteristic should be resolved by notifying the Title IX Coordinator.

F. RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

1. Reports of bullying and harassing behavior or the encouragement of such behavior under this policy will be investigated promptly by the principal or designee or site supervisor and addressed in accordance with this policy and policy 4340, School-Level Investigations, when appropriate. If the principal or site supervisor is the alleged perpetrator, the superintendent will designate an appropriate investigator.
2. If at any time before, during, or after the investigation under this policy, the investigator determines or suspects that the alleged bullying or harassing behavior is based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, or religion, the investigator shall notify the appropriate civil rights coordinator and proceed in accordance with the applicable Board policy as described in Section A, above. However, referral to the civil rights coordinator will not preclude appropriate disciplinary consequences for a violation of this policy if, following the designated investigation and resolution process under the appropriate Board policy, the behavior is determined not to constitute discriminatory harassment in violation of federal law.

3. No reprisals or retaliation of any kind are permitted as a result of good faith reports of bullying or harassing behavior. An employee who engages in reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. A student who does so is subject to disciplinary consequences as provided in Section G, below.

G. CONSEQUENCES

1. Students

The disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy should take into consideration the frequency of incidents, the developmental age of the student involved, and the severity of the conduct and must be consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of this policy.

A student who is convicted under G.S. 14-458.2 of cyberbullying a school employee will be transferred to another school. If there is no other appropriate school within the school district, the student will be transferred to a different class or assigned to a teacher who was not involved as a victim of the cyberbullying. The superintendent may modify the required transfer of an individual student on a case-by-case basis and shall provide a written statement of this modification in the student's record.

2. Employees

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

3. Others

Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate, in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools. A third party under the supervision and control of the school district will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

H. OTHER INTERVENTIONS

Interventions designed to remediate the impact of a violation of this policy and to restore a positive school climate will be provided as determined necessary by school officials.

I. NOTICE

This policy must be provided to employees, students, and parents, guardians, and caregivers at the beginning of each school year. Notice of this policy must be included in the Code of Student Conduct and in all student and employee handbooks. Principals are encouraged to post a copy or summary of this policy in each classroom and in a prominent location within the school building and to make an age-appropriate summary of the policy available to elementary students. Information about this policy must also be incorporated into employee training programs.

J. RECORDS

The superintendent or designee shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of bullying or harassing behavior under this policy. The records must identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The superintendent also shall maintain records of any remedial interventions or other steps taken by the school district to provide an environment free of bullying.

Revised: July 1, 2025

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW: Policy Code 1710/4020/7230

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The Board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability, or age (40 or older) in its education program, which includes all operations, services, and activities of the school district, and will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by law. In the context of employment, the Board prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, disability, age (40 or older), military affiliation, genetic information, or other unlawful grounds.

All forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment are subject to this policy except for sexual harassment in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which is addressed separately in policies 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.

Though claims of discrimination or harassment on the basis of disability, as specified in policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, are subject to this policy, allegations regarding or related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or free appropriate public education of a student under Section 504 or the IDEA may be raised through the system of procedural safeguards established under policy 1730/4022/7231, (for Section 504 complaints) or in accordance with the procedures described in *Parents Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education*, published by the NC Department of Public Instruction (for IDEA complaints).

The Board encourages all individuals who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy or who have reliable information that another person has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy to report such conduct as soon as possible through the process provided in Section B below. The Board takes seriously all reports of unlawful discrimination and harassment and directs school officials to take prompt action to investigate and remedy violations of this policy. The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that effective notice of this policy is provided to students, parents, employees, and applicants for admission or employment.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Students, school district employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. The Board expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment as defined below by students, employees, Board members, volunteers, or visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school district.

1. Discrimination

Discrimination is any act or failure to act, whether intentional or unintentional, by an employee or agent of the school district that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely one or more of the legally-protected characteristics listed in the first paragraph of this policy so as to interfere with or limit their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges offered by the school district's education program.

2. Harassment

Harassment is deliberate unwelcome conduct directed at another person or group of persons based on one or more of the legally protected characteristics listed in the first paragraph of this policy that creates a hostile environment or adversely affects a school district employee's employment. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be motivated by animus, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Harassment creates a hostile environment when (1) the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school district or (2) the conduct is so severe or pervasive that an employee finds his or her working conditions to be abusive and a reasonable person in the employee's position would conclude that the working conditions were abusive.

Examples of behavior that may constitute harassment include, but are not limited to, acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, derogatory epithets, comments, or slurs, imitating a person's disability-based limitations, mocking a person's accent, making fun of a person's religious garments, jewelry, or displays, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as hate symbols or derogatory posters or cartoons. Harassment may occur through electronic means, such as through the Internet, email, text message, or video calls.

Petty slights, annoyances, simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) are not harassment under this policy. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment, nor are reasonable performance management actions taken to direct and control how work is performed or to monitor and give feedback on work performance. The exercise of legitimate authority administered in a professional and constructive manner is not harassment under this policy.

3. Application of the Policy

This policy applies to behavior that takes place: (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during, or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) at any bus stop; (4) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (5) through the use of school district technological resources; (6) at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (7) at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools or has consequences in the workplace contributing to a hostile work environment.

This policy will not be construed to allow school officials to punish student expression or speech based on undifferentiated fear or apprehension of a disturbance or out of a desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that may accompany an unpopular viewpoint.

B. REPORTING DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

1. Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy or any third person who knows or suspects conduct that may constitute discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy should inform a school official designated in Section C below. Reports also may be made anonymously, including through the anonymous tip line.

2. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees

Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that another person may have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in Section C below. Any doubt about whether particular conduct is possible discrimination or harassment under this policy or any other policy of the Board must be resolved in favor of reporting the conduct.

Employees who observe an incident of harassment are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator and it is safe to do so. If an employee knows of an incident involving discrimination or harassment and the employee fails to report the conduct or take proper action or knowingly provides false information in regard to the incident, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

3. Preliminary Inquiry

School officials may make a preliminary inquiry when a report is received to understand what occurred and to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary.

C. COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

1. Making a Complaint of Discrimination or Harassment

Any person who believes he or she is the victim of discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, or any person who has witnessed or who has reliable information that another person has been subject to discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, may request that school officials investigate and redress any such unlawful conduct by making a formal written complaint to any of the following persons:

- a. the principal or assistant principal of the school either the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator attends;
- b. the principal, assistant principal, or site supervisor at the location where either the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator is employed;
- c. the senior human resources official (or if the senior human resources official is the alleged perpetrator, the superintendent) if the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator is an employee or applicant for employment;
- d. the Section 504 coordinator or the ADA coordinator for claims of discrimination on the basis of a disability;
- e. the Title IX coordinator, as established in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, for claims of discrimination on the basis of sex; or
- f. for claims of other forms of prohibited discrimination, the applicable civil rights coordinator as established in Section I of this policy.

If a written complaint alleges that the perpetrator is an employee, the school official receiving the complaint shall notify the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources without delay.

2. Addressing Complaints

A written complaint alleging that a student, employee, or applicant for employment has been discriminated against or harassed will be addressed in accordance with this policy.

A written complaint alleging that a person who is not a student, employee, or applicant for employment has been discriminated against or harassed will be addressed in accordance with the general process for resolving complaints provided in policy 1742/5060, Responding to Complaints, not this policy.

3. Time Period for Making a Complaint

Alleged discrimination or harassment should be reported as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

D. SCHOOL OFFICIALS' RESPONSE TO REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

1. Investigation

School officials shall investigate all formal written complaints received. Reports of discrimination or harassment that are not followed by a formal written complaint may be investigated when necessary to remedy violations of this policy and may be investigated even if the alleged victim does not seek action by school officials.

- a. The principal or designee or site supervisor will be the investigator when the alleged perpetrator is a student or third party. The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources or designee will be the investigator when the alleged perpetrator is an employee. The superintendent may determine that individual circumstances warrant the assignment of a different investigator.

Notwithstanding the above designations, (1) if the alleged perpetrator is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, the superintendent will be the investigator, and (2) if the alleged perpetrator is the superintendent or a member of the Board, the Board chair shall direct the Board attorney to investigate, unless the Board chair determines that outside counsel should be engaged to investigate.

- b. As applicable, the investigator shall immediately notify the Section 504, ADA, Title IX, or other relevant coordinator of the complaint, and, as appropriate, may request assistance from the coordinator in conducting the investigation.
- c. If the investigator, after interviewing the complaining party and/or the alleged victim and consulting with the Board attorney, determines that the allegations submitted, even if factual, do not constitute discrimination or harassment as defined in this policy or policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, school officials shall address the matter outside the scope of this policy. Information regarding the investigator's determination and any further avenues for addressing the complaint will be provided to the complaining party.
- d. Any investigation conducted must be impartial, prompt, and thorough. The investigator shall investigate the facts and circumstances related to the allegation(s) of discrimination or harassment and give the alleged perpetrator an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

The investigator shall consider all the evidence collected, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age and maturity of the parties, and any other relevant circumstances, and in consultation with the board attorney as appropriate, shall determine whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of this policy, policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, and/or any other Board policy or expected standard of student or employee behavior.

- e. The complaint and investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible and consistent with law. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately and those with a legal right to access the information.

2. Investigator's Findings

- a. If the investigator finds that discrimination or harassment occurred, the investigator shall take or recommend steps to address the

discrimination or harassment. The investigator shall assign or recommend appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator and/or take or recommend other reasonable measures to eliminate the discrimination or harassment, rectify any wrongful impacts, and prevent its recurrence.

- b. If the investigator finds that the conduct did not violate this policy but violated policy 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, or another Board policy or expected standard of conduct, the investigator shall assign or recommend discipline or other action appropriate to the violation.
- c. The investigator shall make a record of the evidence and findings of the investigation and the assigned or recommended discipline and/or other remedial action and provide a copy to the appropriate civil rights coordinator. If the investigator recommends a disciplinary consequence or remedial action that is beyond his or her authority, the investigator shall provide a copy of the record to the superintendent for further action.
- d. The investigator shall inform the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the outcome of the investigation.

3. Steps to Reasonably End Discrimination or Harassment

- a. The superintendent is responsible for taking or causing appropriate action to be taken in response to discrimination and harassment in violation of this policy. Appropriate action must include:
 - a. reasonable, timely, age-appropriate corrective action intended to end the discrimination or harassment and prevent it from recurring;
 - b. as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination or harassment on the victim; and
 - c. as needed, reasonable steps to protect the victim from retaliation as a result of the complaint.
- b. Appropriate steps to end discrimination and harassment may include, but are not limited to, separating the parties, providing counseling for the parties, and/or taking disciplinary action against a perpetrator determined to have violated this policy. The superintendent may take non-punitive measures to end or prevent instances of discrimination or harassment regardless of whether any individual has been found responsible for the discrimination or harassment. The superintendent also may implement or direct the implementation of classroom-wide, school-wide, or school district-wide responses such as additional staff training, harassment prevention programs, and other measures reasonably calculated to end the behavior, eliminate a hostile environment and its effects if one has been created, and prevent recurrence of the behavior.
- c. The applicable civil rights coordinator shall encourage victims of discrimination and harassment to report any subsequent problems and may conduct follow-up inquiries as warranted to determine if there have been any new incidents of discrimination or harassment or any instances of retaliation.

E. APPEALS

1. Appeals to the Superintendent

The alleged victim may appeal the investigator's decision to the superintendent (unless the alleged perpetrator is the superintendent, in which case the alleged victim may appeal directly to the Board in accordance with the next subsection). The appeal must be submitted in writing within three business days of receiving the notice of the outcome of the investigation. The superintendent may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary, or take any other steps the superintendent determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The superintendent shall provide a written response within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is needed.

2. Appeals to the Board

Student victims or their parents may appeal the superintendent's decision to the Board in accordance with subsection E.5.a of policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure. Victims who are employees or applicants for employment may appeal the superintendent's decision to the Board in accordance with subsection E.4.a of policy 1750/7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees.

3. Discipline Rights Provided by Law

Any student or employee subject to discipline for violating this policy will be accorded all rights provided by law.

F. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

The Board prohibits retaliation against any person for making a report or complaint of a violation of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of a reported violation of this policy. No reprisals will be taken by the Board against a complaining party or other individual who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment. Any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance processes established in policies 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, and 1750/7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees. Acts of retaliation may also be subject to policy 1760/7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation.

G. TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

The Board directs the superintendent to establish training and other programs that are designed to prevent discrimination and harassment and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about the prohibited conduct and grievance procedure in this policy and those in policies 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, must be included in the training plan.

As funds are available, the Board will provide students, employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with students with additional training regarding the Board's efforts to address discrimination and harassment and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (1) provide examples of behavior that constitute discrimination or harassment; (2) teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of discrimination or harassment; and (3) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, at school bus stops, on cell phones, and on the Internet.

H. RECORDS

The superintendent or designee shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of discrimination or harassment. The records must identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The superintendent also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the school district to provide an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

I. CONTACTS FOR INQUIRIES

The superintendent has appointed individuals to coordinate the school district's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under federal nondiscrimination laws, including investigating any complaints communicated to school officials alleging noncompliance with those laws. Inquiries about the application of the nondiscrimination laws addressed in this policy may be referred to the designated civil rights coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education or the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

The contact information for the Title IX coordinator can be found in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex. The contact information for the other designated civil rights coordinators is as follows.

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator is: Janice Goldsby
Office Address: PO Box 128 Kenansville, NC 28349
Email Address: jgoldsby@duplinschools.net
Phone Number: 910-296-1521
- b. The ADA Coordinator is: Susan Smith
Office Address: PO Box 128 Kenansville, NC 28349
Email Address: susmith@duplinschools.net
Phone Number: 910-296-1521
- c. The Age Discrimination Coordinator is: Daren Tyndall
Office Address: PO Box 128 Kenansville, NC 28349
Email Address: dtyndall@duplinschools.net
Phone Number: 910-296-1521
- d. The Coordinator for Other Non-discrimination Laws is: Daren Tyndall
Office Address: PO Box 128 Kenansville, NC 28349
Email Address: dtyndall@duplinschools.net
Phone Number: 910-296-1521

Revised: July 1, 2025

TITLE IX NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX: Policy Code 1720/4030/7235

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and federal regulations to not discriminate in such a manner. This requirement extends to admission and employment. The Board will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of sex, including any form of sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX, in any program or activity of the school district.

A. INQUIRIES ABOUT TITLE IX

The Board has designated a Title IX coordinator to coordinate its efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX and its implementing regulations. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its implementing federal regulations may be referred to the Title IX coordinator and/or the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education.

The contact information for the Title IX coordinator is as follows.

The Title IX Coordinator is: Daren Tyndall
Office Address: PO Box 128 Kenansville, NC 28349
Email Address: dtyndall@duplinschools.net
Phone Number: 910-296-1521

B. RESOLUTION OF GRIEVANCES

The Board has established grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of sex. Any person may report alleged discrimination on the basis of sex, other than sexual harassment, in a school district program or activity occurring against a person in the United States through the process provided in policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law.

The Board has adopted additional means for reporting sexual harassment specifically. Any person may report alleged sexual harassment in a school district program or activity occurring against a person in the United States in accordance with policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process. Those who believe they have been sexually harassed may also file a formal complaint of sexual harassment in accordance with policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, to initiate a prompt and equitable resolution through a formal investigation and adjudication or through an informal resolution process. The Board encourages students, employees, and applicants to first make a report of sexual harassment in accordance with policy 1725/4035/7236 before filing a formal complaint.

C. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against any person for the exercise of rights under Title IX or to interfere with those rights in any way is strictly prohibited and will subject the perpetrator to disciplinary action. The identity of any person who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination or sexual harassment or who is the alleged perpetrator of sex discrimination or sexual harassment will be confidential unless otherwise required or permitted by law. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law.

D. NOTICE OF THE BOARD'S POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX

The superintendent is responsible for providing notice of the Board's nondiscrimination policy to students and their parents or legal guardians, employees, and applicants for admission or employment. The superintendent shall also ensure that each principal or site supervisor makes a copy of this policy available to those persons. In addition, the following must be posted on the school district website and included in all student and employee handbooks: (1) a statement of the Board's policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex; (2) contact information for the Title IX coordinator; and (3) a statement that Title IX inquiries may be referred to the Title IX coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

Revised: July 1, 2025

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT – PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND REPORTING PROCESS: Policy Code 1725/4035/7236

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. As provided in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, the Board will not tolerate sexual harassment in the education program and activities of the school district. The Board takes seriously all reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment.

This Title IX sexual harassment policy specifically prohibits sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX. It provides a process for students, employees, and others to report such sexual harassment for response by school officials. All incidents of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment under this policy are to be reported and treated in accordance with this policy, whether or not the incidents may also constitute violations of other Board policies or standards of conduct.

Conduct that involves discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex but that does not meet the definition of sexual harassment prohibited by this policy may nevertheless violate other Board policies or established standards of conduct and will be treated accordingly. See, for example, policy 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited, policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, and policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit discipline for violations of other Board policies in such circumstances when appropriate and consistent with law. In addition, nothing in this policy is intended to limit reports to law enforcement when warranted.

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment prohibited by this policy or who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subjected to sexual harassment prohibited by this policy should use the process provided in Section C of this policy to report such violations.

The Board also provides a grievance process for those who believe they have been victims of sexual harassment that is designed to achieve prompt and equitable resolution of formal complaints of sexual harassment through a formal investigation and adjudication of the allegations in the complaint or through informal resolution processes. The grievance process is provided in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process. Affected individuals are encouraged to report sexual harassment in accordance with the process provided in Section C of this policy before filing a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process.

The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that effective notice of this policy is provided to students, parents, employees, and applicants for admission or employment.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Students, school district employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. The Board expressly prohibits sexual harassment by students, employees, Board members, volunteers, or visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school district.

Sexual harassment prohibited under Title IX and by this policy is conduct *on the basis of sex* occurring in a school district education program or activity that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. an employee of the school district conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school district's education program or activities. This determination requires consideration of all the facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, the ages and disability statuses of the harasser and the victim and the number of individuals involved and their authority;
3. sexual assault, defined as an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI UCR). The FBI UCR classifies as sex offenses (1) any sexual act (i.e., rape, including sodomy and

sexual assault with an object, and fondling) directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (including due to the influence of drugs or alcohol) or because of age and (2) unlawful sexual intercourse (i.e., statutory rape and incest);

4. dating violence, which means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, with the existence of such a relationship determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship;;
5. domestic violence, which includes crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under North Carolina family or domestic violence laws and also includes the use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who (1) is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim; (2) is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; (3) shares a child in common with the victim; or (4) commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under North Carolina family or domestic violence laws; or
6. stalking, which means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

Conduct that satisfies this standard is not sexual harassment for purposes of this policy if the conduct occurred (1) outside the United States or (2) under circumstances in which the school district did not have substantial control over both the harasser and the context in which the harassment occurred.

All references to "sexual harassment" in this policy mean sexual harassment that meets this definition.

Examples of conduct on the basis of sex that would be considered sexual harassment if the conduct satisfies the criteria above include, but are not limited to: unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; sexual assault; sexual violence; the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials; posting sexually suggestive pictures of a person without the person's consent; and forwarding pornographic material depicting a classmate or other member of the school community. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature may also constitute sexual harassment.

B. DEFINITIONS

The following additional definitions apply in this policy.

1. Report

A report is an oral or written notification that an individual is an alleged or suspected perpetrator or victim of sexual harassment.

Making a report initiates the interactive process with the complainant described in Section D.1, below. No disciplinary action will be taken against a respondent for sexual harassment based on a report alone.

2. Formal Complaint

A formal complaint is a document signed and filed with the Title IX coordinator by a complainant or signed by the Title IX coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that school officials investigate the allegation(s). Filing a formal complaint initiates the grievance process set forth in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activities of the school district.

3. Complainant

The complainant is the individual(s) who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

4. Consent

Consent must be informed and freely and affirmatively given through mutually understandable words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in the sexual activity. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. There is no consent when there is force, expressed or implied, or when coercion, intimidation, threats, or duress is used. Whether a person has taken advantage of a position of influence over another person may be a factor in determining consent. Silence or absence of resistance does not imply consent. Consent to one type of sexual activity does not amount to consent to another type of activity. Prior consent or sexual relations with the same person do not imply future consent. The fact that both people are in a relationship does not, by itself, establish consent. A person cannot consent if they are unconscious, asleep, or impaired to the extent that they do not understand what is going on. Minors under the age of 16 are incapable of giving consent to sexual activity with a person more than four years older than the minor. Consent may never be given by mentally disabled persons if their disability was reasonably knowable to a sexual partner who is not mentally disabled. Consent between parties engaging in sexual activity does not prevent the school district from taking disciplinary action against the parties for violation of any other Board policy.

5. Respondent

The respondent is the individual(s) who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

6. Grievance Process

Grievance process means the process for investigating and reaching a final determination of responsibility for a formal complaint of sexual harassment. The sexual harassment grievance process is set out in policy 1726/4036/7237.

7. Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX coordinator is a school official who is designated to coordinate the school district's response to sexual harassment and allegations of sexual harassment. Contact information for the Title IX coordinator is posted on the school district's website and listed in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex.

8. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school district's education program and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the school district's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

Supportive measures available to the parties include, but are not limited to, counseling, mental health services referral, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring, and other similar measures determined by school officials to be necessary to protect the safety or educational or employment activities of a party.

9. Days

Days are calendar days unless specified otherwise.

10. Student(s)

"Student(s)" means the student and/or the student's parent or legal guardian unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. When the complainant or respondent is a student, references to those terms also include the student's parent or legal guardian unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

11. Actual Knowledge

"Actual knowledge" means a school employee has notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment.

C. REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Student Reports

Any student who believes he or she is a victim of sexual harassment occurring in the school district's education programs or activities is encouraged to report the matter to the student's principal or to the Title IX coordinator. Reports may also be made to a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, teacher assistant, or any other school employee. Middle and high school students may also report sexual harassment through the anonymous tip line, but school officials may be limited in their ability to respond if the report does not identify the complainant.

2. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees and Board Members

Any employee or member of the Board of Education who has actual knowledge of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment occurring in the education program or any activity of the school district must report that information immediately to the Title IX coordinator.

Any of the following confers "actual knowledge" and must be reported immediately:

- a. a report of sexual harassment from a student or other person;
- b. the employee or Board member witnesses conduct that is or reasonably could be sexual harassment; or
- c. the employee or Board member discovers evidence of sexual harassment, such as sexualized graffiti on school property, or otherwise has reliable information or reason to believe that a student, employee, or other individual may have been sexually harassed in violation of this policy, even if no one has reported the sexual harassment.

Employees who observe an incident of harassment are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator, and it is safe to do so. An employee with actual knowledge of possible sexual harassment in violation of this policy who does not promptly report the conduct and/or take proper action as required by this subsection, or who knowingly provides false information about the incident, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any doubt about whether particular conduct is possible sexual harassment must be resolved in favor of reporting the conduct.

The mandatory reporting required by this section is in addition to required reporting under policies 4040/7310, Student-Staff Relations, and 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety, where the conduct at issue requires a report under either of those policies.

3. Reporting by Others

All other members of the school community are strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of sexual harassment in violation of this policy to the school principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent.

4. Content of the Report

To the extent possible, reports should be sufficient to put school officials on notice of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. Employees making mandatory reports should provide as much detail about the alleged sexual harassment as is known, unless such disclosure would violate law or standards of professional ethics. Reports, other than mandatory reports by employees, may be made anonymously, but anonymous reports may limit the school district's ability to respond fully if the alleged victim is not identified.

5. Time Period for Making a Report

Reports by students and third parties can be made at any time. During non-business hours, reports can be made by using the contact information for the Title IX coordinator provided on the school district's website and in policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex. A report should be made as soon as possible after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the report. Delays in reporting may impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to any subsequent formal complaint.

School employees and Board members with actual knowledge of sexual harassment must report that information immediately, as provided in subsection C.2 above.

D. SCHOOL OFFICIALS' RESPONSE TO ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

As required to meet the school district's obligations under Title IX, school officials shall respond promptly and impartially to actual knowledge of alleged sexual harassment in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. A response that is not deliberately indifferent is one that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances and includes, at a minimum, the provision of supportive measures to the complainant, as described in this section.

Consistent with this duty, school officials shall respond to all reports of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment in accordance with this section. However, a report alleging conduct that is not sexual harassment as defined in this policy is not subject to this policy but may be referred to appropriate school officials as a possible violation of other Board policies.

1. Title IX Coordinator Initiates Interactive Process with Complainant

Upon receiving a report of alleged sexual harassment, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant and the complainant's parent or guardian confidentially. This contact must occur within three days, excluding weekends, absent extenuating circumstances. The Title IX coordinator shall also notify the principal of the report and, if an employee is the complainant or respondent, the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

When contacting the complainant and parent or guardian, the Title IX coordinator shall do all of the following during the contact and shall document the same:

- a. offer supportive measures;
- b. consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- c. explain that supportive measures are available with or without the filing of a formal complaint; and
- d. explain the process for filing a formal complaint with the Title IX coordinator and the response required of the school district when a complaint is filed, including all the following:
 - i. that a formal complaint will initiate the grievance process described in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process;
 - ii. that a formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail;
 - iii. the major steps in the grievance process, including (1) a notice of the allegations that will be provided to the respondent that includes identification of the complainant and the allegations made; (2) an investigation of the allegations of sexual harassment in which both parties will have opportunity to have an advisor, present witnesses, review evidence, pose written questions of the other party, and receive a copy of the investigative report; (3) a decision on responsibility in which a decision-maker objectively evaluates all relevant evidence and determines whether the respondent engaged in the alleged sexual harassment in violation of this policy; and (4) the opportunity for either party to appeal the decision;
 - iv. the approximate time frame for concluding the grievance process;
 - v. that school officials will treat both parties equitably by (1) providing remedies to the complainant if the respondent is found responsible, and (2) by not imposing disciplinary sanctions on the respondent without first following the grievance process set forth in policy 1726/4036/7237;
 - vi. the circumstances under which a formal complaint might be consolidated with other formal complaints or dismissed; and
 - vii. that the Title IX coordinator may have an obligation to initiate the grievance process in the absence of a formal complaint filed by the complainant and the time frame in which that decision will be made.

2. Title IX Coordinator Arranges Implementation of Supportive Measures

After considering the complainant's wishes, the Title IX coordinator shall arrange the effective implementation of appropriate supportive measures unless, in the exercise of good judgment, the Title IX coordinator determines that supportive measures should not be provided. If supportive measures are not provided to the complainant, the Title IX coordinator shall document why supportive measures were not provided and why not providing supportive measures is not deliberately indifferent to known sexual harassment.

If the complainant is a student with a disability, the Title IX coordinator may need to consult with appropriate school personnel to determine whether adjustments to the student's IEP or Section 504 plan are needed to implement any supportive measures to be provided and/or whether the student's plan necessitates any adjustment to the proposed supportive measures.

3. Title IX Coordinator Determines Whether to Sign a Formal Complaint

If the complainant declined to file a formal complaint within the designated time period following the interactive process described above, the Title IX coordinator shall determine on a case-by-case basis whether to sign, i.e., file, a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process.

The Title IX coordinator should file a formal complaint (1) if the respondent is a school employee and the complainant is a student; and (2) in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment and in consultation with the school attorney as appropriate, the coordinator determines that a grievance process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to known allegations of sexual harassment. Credibility or merit of the complaint shall not be considered in making the determination.

A decision by the Title IX coordinator to sign a formal complaint is not to be construed as supportive of the complainant or in opposition to the respondent or as an indication of whether the allegations are credible or have merit, or whether there is evidence sufficient to determine responsibility. Signing a formal complaint does not make the Title IX coordinator a complainant or party to the complaint nor relieve the Title IX coordinator from any responsibilities under this policy.

The Title IX coordinator shall document the decision of whether to sign a complaint and the reasons for that decision.

4. Presumption of Non-responsibility of Respondent and Bar on Disciplinary Sanctions without Due Process

The respondent identified in any report alleging sexual harassment under this policy will be presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until the respondent's responsibility is conclusively established through the grievance process outlined in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process.

No disciplinary sanction or other action that is not a supportive measure, including but not limited to (1) short or long-term suspension, expulsion, or transfer to an alternative school or program for student-respondents and (2) suspension, demotion, or dismissal for employee-respondents, may be imposed for a violation of this policy unless the respondent agrees to a specific disciplinary sanction or action in an informal resolution or has been determined to be responsible for the sexual harassment at the conclusion of a grievance process that complies with the process in policy 1726/4036/7237. An employee-respondent, however, may be placed on administrative leave during the pendency of the grievance process if consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

Notwithstanding the limitation just described, respondents are subject to emergency removal as described in the next paragraph.

5. Emergency Removal of Respondent from School or Employment

Any respondent is subject to removal from the school district's education program and activities, or any part of the program or activities, on an emergency basis if a school-based threat assessment team conducts an individualized safety and risk analysis and determines that removal is justified because the person poses an immediate health or safety threat to any person arising from the allegations of sexual harassment. A removal under this subsection includes a transfer of a student to an alternative education program consistent with policy 3470/4305, Alternative Learning Programs/Schools. A schedule change, and/or removing a student from an extracurricular activity is also considered a removal under this subsection where such action would not otherwise constitute a supportive measure.

The emergency removal may take place regardless of whether a formal complaint has been filed. However, any such removal must be consistent with federal and state law, including any applicable law protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. The respondent shall receive notice of the removal and an opportunity to challenge the decision in an informal hearing with the superintendent or designee immediately following the removal.

An employee may be placed on administrative leave with or without pay during the pendency of the grievance process set out in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, if consistent with state law and in accordance with any applicable requirements of state law.

The superintendent or designee shall document all emergency removal decisions under this subsection, including the immediate threat to health or safety that justified the removal.

6. Supportive Measures

Supportive measures will be available to both the complainant and respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Supportive measures will remain confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the ability to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

E. GRIEVANCE PROCESS FOR FORMAL COMPLAINTS

The grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment under this policy is set out in policy 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process. The policy also provides an informal resolution process for complainants who seek an alternate means of resolution to their complaint.

As described in subsection D.3 above, the Title IX coordinator may also initiate the grievance process, as needed.

F. RECORDS

The Title IX coordinator shall create and maintain for a period of seven years records of all reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment. For each report or formal complaint, the coordinator shall document the following:

1. any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to the report or formal complaint;
2. that school officials have taken measures that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school district's education program and activities;
3. why school officials believe their response to the report or complaint was not deliberately indifferent; and
4. if supportive measures were not provided to the complainant, why that was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

In conjunction with the superintendent, the Title IX coordinator shall also maintain for seven years all materials used to train the Title IX coordinator, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. These materials will be made publicly available on the school district's website.

Readopted: July 1, 2025

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS: Policy Code 1726/4036/7237

The process provided in this policy is designed for those who believe that they have been sexually harassed in violation of policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, and wish to file a formal complaint. School officials shall follow the grievance process established in this policy when responding to all formal complaints of sexual harassment.

The superintendent is responsible for notifying students and their parents or legal guardians, employees, and applicants for admission or for employment of this policy and ensuring that each principal or site supervisor provides a copy of this policy to these persons.

A. Definitions

All definitions in policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, are incorporated by reference and have the same meaning when used in this policy, including all references to “sexual harassment” in this policy.

The following additional definitions apply in this policy.

1. Investigator
The investigator is the school official responsible for investigating and responding to a formal complaint.
2. Decision-Maker
The decision-maker is the school official responsible for making a determination regarding responsibility in response to an investigation of sexual harassment triggered by a formal complaint.
3. Investigative Report
The investigative report is a written account of the findings of the investigation conducted in response to a formal complaint.
4. Remedies
Remedies are individualized measures provided to a complainant designed to restore or preserve the complainant's equal access to the education program and activities of the school district when a respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment.
Remedial measures available to a complainant following a determination of responsibility include counseling, mental health services referral, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, escort services, mutual or one-way restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring, and other measures determined by school officials to be necessary to restore or preserve the complainant's equal access to the education program and activities, regardless of whether such measures impose a burden on the respondent or are punitive or disciplinary in nature.
5. Disciplinary Sanctions
Disciplinary sanctions are consequences imposed on a respondent when the respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment.

B. Filing a Formal Complaint to Initiate the Grievance Process

A formal complaint initiates the grievance process.

1. Individuals Who May File a Formal Complaint
 - a. Eligible Complainants
Eligible individuals who believe that they have been sexually harassed in violation of policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, may initiate the grievance process for alleged sexual harassment by filing a formal written

complaint with the Title IX coordinator. To be eligible to file a formal written complaint, the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activities of the school district at the time of filing.

b. The Title IX Coordinator

If the complainant does not wish to file a formal complaint and the matter has not been adequately resolved through the provision of supportive measures, the Title IX coordinator may initiate the grievance process by signing a formal complaint. In accordance with law, only the complainant and the Title IX coordinator may initiate the grievance process; no other individuals or school officials shall have authority to do so.

2. Time Period for Filing a Formal Complaint

There is no deadline for filing a complaint. A complaint should be filed as soon as possible after the conduct occurs, preferably within 30 days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged sexual harassment, unless the conduct forming the basis for the complaint is ongoing. School officials will initiate the grievance process regardless of when the formal complaint is submitted, but delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to the allegations.

In addition, in some circumstances it may be necessary for the Title IX coordinator to sign a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process in order to meet the school district's legal obligations when the coordinator is aware of sexual harassment or alleged sexual harassment and the complainant has not yet filed a formal complaint. The Title IX coordinator can do so at any time.

3. Contents of the Formal Complaint

The complaint should (1) contain the name and address of the complainant and the student's parent or guardian if the complainant is a minor student, (2) describe the alleged sexual harassment, (3) request an investigation of the matter, and (4) be signed by the complainant or otherwise indicate that the complainant is the person filing the complaint.

4. How to File the Formal Complaint

The complaint may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by email. Complaint forms may be obtained from the Title IX coordinator or on the school district website.

5. School District's Response to Receipt of the Formal Complaint

a. Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Title IX coordinator shall engage in an interactive process with the complainant, consider the provision of supportive measures in light of the complainant's wishes, provide supportive measures as appropriate, and otherwise fulfill the requirements of Section D of policy 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, unless the Title IX coordinator has already done so in response to an initial report of the same allegation of sexual harassment.

b. School officials reserve the right to consolidate formal complaints against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. The Title IX coordinator shall advise the complainant if the formal complaint will be consolidated with others.

c. The formal complaint initiates the grievance process as described below.

C. General Principles of the Grievance Process for Formal Complaints

To ensure a complete, thorough, and fair grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment, school officials responsible for the investigation, adjudication, or appeal of a formal complaint of sexual harassment shall comply with the following requirements. Failure by any school official to comply with these requirements or other standards or procedures established in this policy is cause for disciplinary action.

1. Equitable Treatment

Complainants and respondents must be treated equitably throughout the grievance process. Relevant evidence collected in the investigation of a formal complaint must be evaluated objectively. No individual designated as a Title IX coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or appeal decision-maker will have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. Credibility determinations will not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

The complainant and respondent shall be provided an equal opportunity to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be an attorney. If a party elects to be represented by an attorney, the party should notify school officials in advance so that an attorney for the school district may also be present. Any restrictions on advisor participation in any proceeding must be applied equally to both parties.

The complainant and respondent will both be provided a description of the range of supportive measures available to them.

2. Adequate Training

The Title IX coordinator, and all persons serving as Title IX investigators, decision-makers, or appeal decision-makers shall receive training on what constitutes sexual harassment, the scope of the school district's education program and activities, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias. Decision-makers will be trained on any technology to be used at a live hearing and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence.

Materials used to train coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and appeal decision-makers will not rely on sex stereotypes and shall promote impartial investigations and adjudications of sexual harassment. Copyright restrictions will be taken into consideration in selecting training materials in order to comply with the school district's legal obligation to make all training materials available on the school district's website.

3. Presumption of Non-Responsibility/Innocence

At all times prior to a determination regarding responsibility by the decision-maker, there will be a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct.

4. Burden of Proof and Production of Evidence

The burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility will at all times rest on the school district and not on the complainant or respondent. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply in the grievance process.

5. Written Notice of Meetings and Other Proceedings

Parties whose participation is invited or expected at any hearing, investigative interview, or other meeting will be provided written notice of the event's date, time, location, participants, and purpose with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

6. Confidentiality and Privacy

The school district will keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by FERPA, as required by law, or as necessary to carry out a Title IX proceeding. A violation of this provision may constitute retaliation.

All meetings, hearings, or other proceeding conducted pursuant to this policy will be private except to the extent that the parties are permitted to be accompanied by others as provided in subsection C.1 above.

School officials shall not access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's medical, mental health, or other records that are made or maintained by a professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party without the party's voluntary written consent.

7. No Disclosure of Privileged Information

No person acting on behalf of the school district shall require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

8. Timeliness of Process

School officials shall make a good faith effort to conduct a fair, impartial grievance process in a timely manner designed to provide all parties with a prompt and equitable resolution. It is expected that in most cases, the grievance process will be concluded through the adjudication phase within 90 days after filing the formal complaint. The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") reserves the right to extend this time frame or any deadline contained in this policy for good cause with written notice to the parties of the delay and the reason for the delay. Good cause may include but is not limited to the absence of the parties or witnesses, concurrent law enforcement activity, or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

The Title IX coordinator or other responsible school official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the complainant and respondent apprised of progress being made during any period of delay.

D. The Grievance Process for Formal Complaints: Part I – Investigation

1. Step 1 – Notice of Allegations

- a. Upon the filing of a formal complaint, the Title IX coordinator shall, within five school business days, provide the known parties written notice of the allegations that includes:
 - i. notice of the allegations of sexual harassment in sufficient detail to permit the parties to prepare a response before any initial interview, including:
 - a) the identities of the parties involved, if known;
 - b) the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment; and
 - c) the date and location of the alleged incident, if known;
 - ii. a copy of this policy to give notice of the school district's grievance process, including the investigative and adjudication procedures, and any informal resolution process available;
 - iii. notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice and that either party may inspect and review any evidence;
 - iv. notice of the provision in Board policy 4340, School-Level Investigations, that prohibits students and employees from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process; and
 - v. a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility will be made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

- b. If during the investigation, the investigator decides to investigate allegations of sexual harassment not included in the initial notice provided above, notice of the additional allegations will be provided to the parties.

2. Step 2 – Review Grounds for Dismissal of the Formal Complaint

The Title IX coordinator shall review the allegations and determine whether the formal complaint must be dismissed without further investigation because the conduct alleged in the formal complaint, even if assumed true, would not constitute sexual harassment as defined in this policy, did not occur in the school district's education program or activities, or did not occur against a person in the United States. Such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the Code of Student Conduct, Board policy, or expected standards of employee behavior. The complaint will not be dismissed at this stage on the basis that the allegations are frivolous, without merit, or otherwise unfounded.

Upon a dismissal, the Title IX coordinator must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties. The parties have the right to appeal the decision as provided in Section F.

The Title IX coordinator shall refer the matter that was the subject of the dismissed complaint to the principal for further action as warranted.

3. Step 3 – Initiating the Investigation

If the complaint may proceed, the Title IX coordinator shall notify the appropriate investigator, who shall investigate the formal complaint.

- a. In order to provide a neutral and objective investigation, the investigator shall not be a party to the complaint under investigation. The investigator of a formal complaint is ordinarily determined as described below; however, the Title IX coordinator, in consultation with the superintendent, may determine that conflict of interest, bias, or other individual circumstances warrant the assignment of a different investigator.
 - i. If the respondent is a student, the investigator is the principal or designee of the school with jurisdiction over the incident.
 - ii. If the respondent is an employee or applicant for employment, the investigator is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.
 - iii. If the respondent is neither a student nor an employee/applicant for employment, the principal of the school/site supervisor at which the complainant is enrolled or employed shall be the investigator.
 - iv. Notwithstanding the above designations, (1) if the respondent is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, the superintendent shall investigate the complaint; (2) if the respondent is the superintendent or a member of the Board, the Title IX coordinator shall immediately notify the Board chair who shall direct the Board attorney to investigate, unless the Board chair determines that outside counsel should be engaged to investigate.
- b. The investigator may request assistance from the Title IX coordinator to conduct the investigation.
- c. The Title IX coordinator and the investigator shall jointly assess the need for supportive measures for either party, including assessing the effectiveness of any supportive measures currently being provided to the complainant, and, as necessary, will implement appropriate measures in a timely manner and monitor the effectiveness of the measures during the pendency of the investigation and prior to a final determination regarding responsibility. Supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent will be maintained as confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the ability to provide the supportive measures.
- d. The investigator shall explain the process of the investigation to the complainant and respondent.

4. Step 4 – Conducting the Investigation

The investigator is responsible for gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination of whether the allegations in the formal complaint are true and whether the facts as determined by the investigator establish that sexual harassment as defined in this policy occurred. In so doing, the investigator shall impartially, promptly, and thoroughly investigate the complaint.

- a. The investigator shall interview all individuals who may have relevant information, including (1) the complainant; (2) the respondent; (3) individuals identified as witnesses by the complainant or respondent; and (4) any other individuals who are thought possibly to have relevant information. Prior written notice shall be provided to a party whose participation is invited or expected for any investigative interview or meeting in accordance with subsection C.5 above. The investigator shall provide the complainant and respondent an equal opportunity to present fact and expert witnesses and other evidence tending to prove or disprove the allegations.
- b. The investigator shall ensure that the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the school district and not on the complainant or respondent.
- c. The investigator shall not restrict the ability of either party to gather and present relevant evidence or to discuss the allegations under investigation.
- d. The formal complaint and the investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately and those with a legal right to access the information. Any requests by the complainant or respondent for further confidentiality will be

evaluated within the context of the legal responsibilities of the school district.

The investigator may, with approval of the Title IX coordinator, dismiss the formal complaint or any allegations therein if at any time during the investigation or decision-making process: (1) the complainant notifies the Title IX coordinator in writing that he or she would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; (2) the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school district; or (3) specific circumstances prevent school officials from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein. Upon dismissal, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties. The parties have the right to appeal the decision as provided in Section F.

The investigator may consider the matter that was the subject of the dismissed complaint for action in accordance with Board policy for violation of other expected standards of student or employee behavior.

5. Step 5 – Investigative Report and Opportunity to Review Evidence

- a. The investigator shall prepare an investigative report that fairly summarizes the relevant evidence.
- b. Before completing the final report, the investigator shall send to each party and the party’s advisor, if any, in hard copy or electronically, all the evidence collected which is directly related to the allegations raised in the formal complaint. The parties shall have 10 days to submit a written response for the investigator’s consideration before the investigator finalizes the investigative report.
- c. Following the parties’ opportunity to respond to the written evidence, the investigator shall finalize the written investigative report, including a recommendation on the question of responsibility and any recommended discipline sanction.
- d. The investigator shall provide a copy of the report to each party and the party’s advisor, if any, for their review and written response. The investigator shall also notify the parties of the opportunity to submit written questions to the other party and witnesses as provided in subsection E.2 below. The parties shall have 10 days to provide a written response to the investigative report, along with the party’s initial set of written questions.
- e. The investigator shall provide to the decision-maker a copy of the investigative report, the relevant evidence, and the parties’ written responses to the report and initial sets of written questions.

The investigator shall also provide a description of the procedural steps taken, starting with the receipt of the formal complaint and continuing through the preparation of the investigative report, and including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, and methods used to gather other evidence.

E. The Grievance Process for Formal Complaints: Part II – Adjudication

The superintendent or designee (hereinafter “superintendent”) shall serve as the decision-maker. In his or her role as decision-maker, the superintendent shall provide for the exchange of questions between the parties and a decision on responsibility in a manner consistent with state law and as provided below.

1. Step 1 – Student’s Opportunity to Request a Hearing

In cases where the respondent is a student, after the investigative report has been sent to the parties, both parties shall have three school business days to request a hearing. If either party requests a hearing, the long-term suspension hearing procedures described in policy 4370, Student Discipline Hearing Procedures, shall be followed, except that (1) both parties shall have the right to participate in the hearing to the extent required by Title IX; (2) all the evidence sent to the parties pursuant to subsection D.5.b above will be made available at the hearing to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing; and (3) prior to the hearing, both parties shall have a limited opportunity to submit and respond to written questions and follow-up questions as provided below.

2. Step 2 – Exchange of Questions and Answers

Whether or not there will be a hearing and regardless of whether the respondent is a student, after the parties are sent the investigative report, the superintendent shall provide the parties an opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that the party wants asked of any other party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party in accordance with a reasonably prompt time frame established by the superintendent. The parties shall submit their initial set of written questions at the time they submit their response to the investigative report as described in subsection D.5.d above.

- a. Questions and evidence about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior will be considered not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant’s prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant’s sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and is offered to prove consent.
- b. The superintendent must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude questions as not relevant.

3. Step 3 – Decision on the Question Regarding Responsibility

Following the exchange of questions and/or hearing as described above, the superintendent shall decide the question regarding responsibility, any disciplinary action, and any other measures the superintendent deems appropriate. The superintendent shall consider all the relevant evidence objectively, including evidence in the investigative report, any testimony of witnesses at the hearing, if one was held, and any additional information provided by the parties through the exchange of questions and responses as provided in subsection E.2 above.

Based on an objective evaluation of the evidence, the superintendent shall determine whether the preponderance of the evidence supports

a finding that the respondent is responsible for sexual harassment in violation of Board policy, and if so, what disciplinary sanction will be imposed. Remedies will be provided to the complainant if the respondent is found responsible.

4. Step 4 – Written Determination Regarding Responsibility

The superintendent shall issue a written determination regarding responsibility simultaneously to both parties that includes:

- a. identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment under Board policy;
- b. a description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;
- c. findings of fact supporting the determination;
- d. conclusions regarding the application of Board policy and/or the Code of Student Conduct or expected standards of employee behavior to the facts including whether, the respondent engaged in prohibited sexual harassment or other proscribed conduct;
- e. a statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent (which may be a recommendation to the Board for discipline that is beyond the authority of the superintendent or other decision-maker), and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school district's education program and activities will be provided to the complainant;
- f. the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal; and
- g. any other notices that are required to accompany the decision under state law, such as when the superintendent imposes a long-term suspension or recommends dismissal of an employee.

F. Grievance Process for Formal Complaints: Part III – Appeal

The parties shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Education the determination regarding responsibility, the outcome of any disciplinary proceeding, and any dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein. If a party appeals both the determination regarding responsibility and the outcome of a disciplinary proceeding, both matters will be heard by the Board at the same time. If both parties appeal, the appeals will be heard at the same time.

1. Deadline and Grounds for Appeal

Either party may appeal by submitting a request in writing to the superintendent within three school business days of receiving the determination regarding responsibility, unless the party is entitled to a longer appeal period under state law or Board policy. Any longer appeal period applicable to one party shall apply equally to the other party. The grounds for appeal may be any of the following:

- a. procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- b. new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter;
- c. the Title IX coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter;
- d. the disciplinary sanction is inappropriate or unreasonable; or
- e. any other basis provided by law or Board policy governing appeals to the Board.

2. Notice of the Appeal

In all appeals, the other party will be notified in writing when an appeal is filed and be provided a copy of the appeal.

3. Appeal Procedures

- a. The Board will hear the appeal. Unless otherwise required by law, the Board may designate a panel of two or more Board members to hear and act on behalf of the Board.
- b. Appeal procedures will be implemented equally for both parties and will follow the procedures in policy 2500, Hearings Before the Board, modified as necessary to allow equal participation of the parties.

If the appeal includes an appeal of a disciplinary sanction, the procedures in policy 4370, Student Discipline Hearing Procedures; policy 7940, Classified Personnel: Suspension and Dismissal; or policy 7930, Professional Employees: Demotion and Dismissal, shall also apply as applicable.

- c. After the notice of appeal is provided, both parties will be given 10 days to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome. If the basis of the appeal is newly available evidence affecting the outcome, the party shall submit such evidence or a summary of such evidence along with the party's written statement.
- d. The Board will review the record and the written argument of the parties submitted on appeal, determine whether additional information is needed from any party, and take any other steps that the Board determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the appeal.

4. Decision on Appeal
 - a. After considering the record and written statements of the parties, the Board will determine whether the grounds for the appeal have been substantiated.
 - b. If substantiated, the Board will determine the appropriate response, which may include a remand for a new investigation, a new decision, or both, or such other action as the Board determines is needed to correct the error in the original proceedings.
 - c. The Board will provide a written decision describing the results of the appeal and rationale for the result within thirty days after receiving the appeal unless the decision is delayed for good cause. The written decision will be provided simultaneously to both parties.

5. When the Decision Becomes Final

If an appeal is timely filed, the determination regarding responsibility becomes final at the conclusion of the appeal process. However, if the decision on appeal is remand, the determination regarding responsibility does not become final until that process, including any appeal of the proceedings on remand, is concluded. If an appeal is not filed, the determination regarding responsibility becomes final after the three-day appeal period.

The superintendent shall ensure that a copy of the final decision is provided to the Title IX coordinator and shall confer with the Title IX coordinator regarding any remedies to be provided to the complainant, as described in subsection G.4 below.

G. Disciplinary Consequences, Remedies, and Other Responses for Substantiated Sexual Harassment

1. Disciplinary Consequences for Students

Disciplinary consequences for substantiated sexual harassment will be assigned in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion. In addition, the conduct also may be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

A student recommended for a long-term suspension or expulsion will have all applicable rights accorded by Board policy and state law. A student with disabilities will have all rights accorded by law, including the right to a manifestation hearing before the imposition of a suspension exceeding 10 cumulative days in a school year.

This policy will not be construed to allow school officials to punish student expression or speech based on undifferentiated fear or apprehension of a disturbance or out of a desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that may accompany an unpopular viewpoint. However, false or malicious complaints of sexual harassment and false statements made in bad faith in the course of any grievance proceeding conducted pursuant to this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

Nothing in this policy will preclude the school district from taking disciplinary action against a student when the evidence does not establish sexual harassment as defined in this policy but the conduct violates other Board policy and/or the Code of Student Conduct.

2. Disciplinary Consequences for Employees

Substantiated sexual harassment by employees is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. In addition, the conduct may also be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

An employee recommended for suspension, demotion, or dismissal shall have all applicable rights accorded by Board policy and state law.

Nothing in this policy will preclude the school district from taking disciplinary action against an employee when the evidence does not establish sexual harassment as defined in this policy, but the conduct violates other Board policy or expected standards of employee behavior.

3. Consequences for Other Perpetrators

Volunteers and visitors who engage in sexual harassment will be directed to leave school property and/or be reported to law enforcement, as appropriate, in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools. A third party under the supervision and control of the school district will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from access to school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate. Nothing in this policy will be construed to confer on any third party a right to due process or other proceedings to which student and employee respondents are entitled under this policy unless such right exists under law.

4. Remedies

At the conclusion of the grievance process, the superintendent or other decision-maker shall confer with the Title IX coordinator to determine the remedies to be provided to the complainant when the respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment. The Title IX coordinator shall consult with the complainant in determining appropriate remedies.

The Title IX coordinator shall be responsible for the effective implementation of the remedies to be provided to the complainant.

5. Consideration of Need for More Extensive Response

If the superintendent determines that a school-wide or district-wide response is needed in order to respond to the sexual harassment in a way that is not clearly unreasonable under the circumstances, the superintendent shall provide additional staff training, harassment

prevention programs, or such other measures as determined appropriate to protect the safety of the educational environment and/or to deter sexual harassment.

H. Informal Resolution

The Board provides informal resolution processes to resolve some formal complaints of sexual harassment without a full investigation and adjudication. Informal resolution is not available unless a formal complaint is filed and will not be used to resolve formal complaints alleging that an employee sexually harassed a student. Further, school officials shall never condition an individual's enrollment, employment, or other rights on an agreement to waive the individual's right to a formal investigation and adjudication of a formal complaint.

The Title IX coordinator, or other school official in consultation with the Title IX coordinator, may offer the parties an informal process to resolve a formal complaint at any time prior to reaching a final determination regarding responsibility. Before using an informal resolution process, school officials must ensure that both parties have given voluntary, informed, written consent to attempt informal resolution. Accordingly, the Title IX coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker shall:

1. provide the parties (including the parent of a minor) a written notice disclosing:
 - a. the allegations;
 - b. the nature and requirements of the informal resolution process, including that if the parties agree to a resolution of the matter, the agreement precludes either party from resuming a formal complaint process arising from the same allegations; and
 - c. any consequences that could result from participating in the informal resolution process, including whether records will be maintained and could be shared; and
2. obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

Any agreement reached by the parties through informal resolution may include measures that are designed to restore or preserve the parties' equal access to the education program and activities, including measures that may be punitive or disciplinary in nature.

Any informal process should be completed within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days from filing the complaint unless special circumstances necessitate more time. At any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint.

I. Retaliation Prohibited

Any act of retaliation or discrimination against any person for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or because the person has made a report or filed a formal complaint or testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing involving sexual harassment is prohibited. Any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Acts of retaliation may also be subject to policy 1760/7280, Prohibition Against Retaliation.

Complaints alleging retaliation are to be treated as claims of sex discrimination and may be filed in accordance with policy 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex.

J. Records

The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources shall maintain for a period of seven years records of the following:

1. each sexual harassment investigation including:
 - a. any determination regarding responsibility;
 - b. any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript from any live hearing;
 - c. any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent; and
 - d. any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school district's education program and activities;
2. any appeal and the result therefrom;
3. any informal resolution and the result therefrom; and
4. in conjunction with the Title IX coordinator, all materials used to train Title IX coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. These materials will be made publicly available on the school district's website.

Readopted: July 1, 2025

NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITIES: Policy Code 1730/4022/7231

The board of education will not discriminate against qualified persons with disabilities on the basis of a disability. This non-discrimination policy includes, but is not limited to, benefits of and participation in system programs and activities. The system will provide aids, benefits, and school services to a person with disabilities in the most integrated school setting appropriate to his or her needs so that he or she may have an opportunity commensurate to that provided to persons without disabilities to obtain the same results, gain the same benefit, or reach the same level of achievement.

The superintendent is directed to develop appropriate procedures to implement this nondiscrimination policy. The superintendent or designee shall:

1. submit an assurance of nondiscrimination with each application for federal financial assistance;
2. designate a person to coordinate the system's efforts to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") and its regulations;
3. designate a person to coordinate the system's efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and its regulations;

4. publish the name, office address, and phone number of the compliance coordinator(s) in a manner intended to ensure that employees, applicants, students, parents, and other individuals who participate in the school system's programs are aware of the coordinator(s);
5. make complaint procedures available as provided in policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, which provides opportunities for prompt and equitable resolutions to complaints alleging actions prohibited by Section 504 or ADA or regulations for these statutes;
6. provide notice that the school system does not discriminate on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 or the ADA, or their implementing regulations, and make such notice accessible to employees, applicants, students, and parents;
7. make reasonable accommodations for qualifying applicants or employees with disabilities; however, a reasonable accommodation does not include an accommodation that demonstrably would impose an undue hardship on the program or would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity;
8. not inquire about any disabilities that may need accommodation until after an applicant has been made an offer and, additionally, avoid using employment tests or other selection criteria that tend to screen out persons with disabilities unless the criteria are demonstrably job-related and effective alternatives are not available;
9. provide a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 and its regulations; and
10. establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards with respect to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with disabilities under Section 504 which includes an opportunity for the student's parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with the opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

Revised: August 4, 2020

STUDENT AND PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: Policy Code 1740/4010

A. OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") strives to resolve concerns and complaints of students and parents whenever possible. To this end, the Board has provided opportunities for students and parents to express their concerns through processes established in Board policies. Policy 1742/5060, Responding to Complaints, identifies these different processes, including a mechanism for resolving complaints in an informal manner.

While the Board encourages resolutions of complaints through informal means, it recognizes that, at times, a formal process may be necessary for certain types of complaints or if the informal process did not produce satisfactory results. This policy provides a complaint procedure that may be used as described below.

Any parent or student who has questions about the options for proceeding with a complaint or concern may contact the principal or superintendent for further information and copies of all applicable Board policies.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Days

Days are working days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days, or holidays, as set forth in the school calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full working day following the receipt of the grievance. After May 1, time limits will consist of all weekdays (Monday – Friday) so that the matter may be resolved before the close of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.

2. Final Administrative Decision

A final administrative decision is a decision of a school employee from which no further appeal to a school administrator is available.

3. Grievance

A grievance is a formal complaint regarding specific decisions made by school personnel that alleges that such decisions have adversely affected the person making the complaint. A grievance includes, but is not limited to, circumstances such as when a student or parent believes that Board policy or law has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. The term "grievance" does not include any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific Board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon which the Board is without authority to act.

4. Grievant

The grievant is the parent, student or group of parents or students submitting the grievance.

5. Parent

All references to parent include a student's parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or another caregiver adult authorized to enroll a student under policy 4120, Domicile or Residence Requirements.

C. TIMELINESS OF PROCESS

The number of days indicated at each step of the grievance process should be considered a maximum, and every effort should be made to expedite the process.

Failure by a school district official at any step to communicate a decision within the specified time limit will permit the grievant to appeal the grievance to the next step unless the official has notified the grievant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation or report. The official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the grievant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of the grievant's legal rights are not permitted.

Failure by the grievant at any step of the process to appeal a grievance to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at the current step, unless the grievant has notified the appropriate school district official of a delay and the reason for the delay and the official has consented in writing to the delay.

D. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. No reprisals of any kind will be taken by the Board or by an employee of the school district against any grievant or other student or employee because of his or her participation in a grievance filed and decided pursuant to this policy.
2. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.
3. The Board and school district officials will consider requests to hear grievances from a group of grievants, but the Board and officials have the discretion to hear and respond to grievants individually.

4. The grievant may have a representative, including an attorney, at any stage of the grievance. However, if the grievant intends to be represented by legal counsel, he or she must notify the appropriate school official in advance so that school personnel also will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel. At any meeting or hearing during the grievance process, a student grievant may be accompanied by a parent as well as a representative.

E. PROCESS FOR GRIEVANCE

1. Filing a Grievance

- a. Whenever a student or parent believes that he or she has been adversely affected by a decision of a school employee, the student or parent may file a grievance as provided in this policy.
- b. A grievance must be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the grievance. For a grievance submitted after the 30 day period that claims a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of state or federal law, the superintendent or designee shall determine whether the grievance will be investigated after considering factors such as the reason for the delay; the extent of the delay; the effect of the delay on the ability of the school district to investigate and respond to the complaint; and whether the investigation of the complaint is necessary to meet any legal obligations. However, students and parents should recognize that delays in filing a grievance may significantly impair the ability of the school district to investigate and respond effectively to such complaints.
- c. A student or parent who has a grievance must provide the following information in writing to the principal: (1) the name of the school district employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue; (2) the specific decision(s) or action(s) at issue; (3) any Board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the parent or student believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; (4) and the specific resolution desired. If there is not a specific decision or action at issue and no concern that state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, then the procedure established in policy 1742/5060 is appropriate, and the principal shall address the concern following that policy.
- d. Even if the principal is the employee whose decision or action is at issue, the student or parent must submit the grievance first to the principal in order for the principal to address the issue within the formal process. If, however, the grievance claims that a state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated, the student or parent may submit the grievance directly to the superintendent or designee.
- e. If a student or parent wants to initiate a formal grievance regarding a decision by the superintendent that directly and specifically affects the student or parent, the general process described in this policy will be used, except that the grievance will be submitted to the assistant superintendent of human resources, who shall forward the grievance to the Board Chairperson.

2. Investigation

- a. The principal shall schedule and hold a meeting with the grievant within five school days after the grievance has been filed with the principal.
- b. The principal shall conduct any investigation of the facts necessary before rendering a decision.

3. Response by Principal

- a. The principal shall provide a written response to the grievance within 10 days of meeting with the grievant. The response will include the principal's decision regarding resolution of the grievance and the basis for the decision. In responding, the principal may not disclose information about other students or employees that is considered confidential by law.
- b. A copy of the grievance and the principal's response will be filed with the superintendent.

4. Response by Superintendent

- a. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the principal's decision, the grievant may appeal the decision to the superintendent. The appeal must be made in writing within five days of receiving the principal's decision.
- b. The superintendent may review the written documents and respond or the superintendent may schedule and hold a conference with the grievant, principal and any other individuals the superintendent determines to be appropriate within five school days after receiving the appeal.
- c. The superintendent shall provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal. In responding, the superintendent may not disclose information about other students or employees that is considered confidential by law.

5. Appeal to the Board

If the grievant has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local Board policy or procedure, the grievant will have the right to appeal a final administrative decision to the Board (see subsection E.5.a, Mandatory Appeals, below). If a grievant has not alleged such specific violations, he or she may request a Board hearing, which the Board may grant at its discretion (see subsection E.5.b, Discretionary Appeals, below).

a. Mandatory Appeals

- 1) If the grievant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's response to his or her grievance and has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local Board policy or procedure, the grievant may appeal the decision to the Board within five days of receiving the superintendent's response.
- 2) A hearing will be conducted pursuant to policy 2500, Hearings Before the Board.
- 3) The Board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

b. Discretionary Appeals

- 1) If the grievant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's response to his or her grievance but has *not* alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local Board policy or procedure, then within five days of receiving the superintendent's response, the grievant may submit to the superintendent a written request for a hearing before the Board.
- 2) If the full Board will be meeting within two weeks of the request for a hearing, the Board will decide at that time whether to grant a hearing. Otherwise, the Board Chairperson will appoint a three-person panel to review the request and determine if a hearing should be granted. The panel will report the decision to the Board. The Board may modify the decision of the panel upon majority vote at a Board meeting.
- 3) If the Board decides to grant a hearing, the hearing will be conducted pursuant to policy 2500.
- 4) The Board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of the decision to grant a hearing, unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

F. NOTICE

The superintendent or designee is responsible for providing effective notice to students, parents and school district employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating grievances.

G. RECORDS

Appropriate records shall be maintained in accordance with state and federal law.

Revised: March 2, 2021

CHECK IN / CHECK OUT

High school attendance is taken by class period. Students in K-8 must be present at least half a day to be counted present. If K-8 students check out before 11:30, they will be marked absent for the entire day.

When a student must leave early or arrive at school late, he/she must sign in or sign out in the office. The office maintains a daily sign in/out documentation. **Students cannot be called out of class by parents without approval by the principal or designee.** Some acceptable reasons for getting students out of class would be: illness, family emergency, doctor's appointment, and court appearance. Documentation will be required to excuse the student's absence.

High School students who leave daily such as co-op students or teacher cadets will need to show their badges as well as sign in and out every day. When a student arrives at school, responsibility for that student is placed on the school until the dismissal bell at the end of the school day. **Leaving campus without signing out may be considered skipping.** Entering school late without signing in could also be considered skipping. If a student is signed out by another student, both students could be disciplined. **When a parent has given a student permission to leave campus, the student must still go through the office for permission to sign out. Failure to do so could be considered skipping.** Remember that the only person who can check a student out of school is the person listed as the parent or guardian in PowerSchool. Parents should refrain from taking students out of class excessively.

There are three ways that a parent can get a student out of class early. Parents can sign their student out 2 to 5 days prior, pick the student up when it's time to leave, or send a note. Notes must contain a reason for leaving early the time the student is allowed to leave and a phone number where the parent can be contacted. **If the parent cannot be contacted, the student will not be allowed to leave.** All notes must be turned in to the office first thing in the morning. Phone calls from parents to get students out of class will not be accepted. When a parent comes to the office, she/he must present a picture ID to the receptionist before being allowed to sign anyone out.

CHILD NUTRITION

The Child Nutrition Program in Duplin County Schools plays an integral role in the success of students throughout our county. The Child Nutrition Team strives to provide foods that meet or exceed federal guidelines for nutrition, while maintaining a moderate price to enable all of our students to take full advantage of our offerings. Students from across the county choose daily from a well-balanced selection of food items for both breakfast and lunch. Supplemental items such as extra milk, fruits and vegetables and menu items are also available for purchase.

All students will be provided, free of charge, breakfast and lunch during the 2025-26 school year. No free/reduced meal price applications are required to be completed this school year. School lunch menus may be accessed online.

(While not applicable for the 2025-26 school year, the following information is shared to remain in accordance with DCS Policy 6220- Operation of School Nutrition Services: The Duplin County Board of Education recognizes that on occasion students may forget or lose lunch money, and therefore directs the superintendent or designee to develop a procedure to manage situations in which students are unable to pay for a meal on a particular day. This policy must be communicated to school administrators, child nutrition staff, and families. Families will receive a written copy of the meal charges policy at the start of each school year and at any time their child transfers into the school system during the school year via the Student Handbook.

Students may charge federal reimbursable meals only, and will not be permitted to purchase a la carte items if money is owed. Adult and/or visitor charging of meals is not allowed.

No student will be deprived of a meal nor be served a differentiated meal due to forgotten or lost money, or charges owed. Change from future cash meal sales shall be held and applied toward unpaid charges.

Charges must be paid the following school day, after receiving notice. Parents will be notified of charges owed and low balances in a child's meal account at regular intervals during the school year. If a parent regularly fails to provide meal money and does not qualify for free meal benefits, the Child Nutrition staff shall inform the principal, who shall determine the next course of action. To safeguard the dignity and confidentiality of students, reasonable efforts must be used whenever possible to avoid calling attention to the student's inability to pay. The principal shall not impose any administrative penalties on a student for unpaid meal charges. Administrative penalties include withholding a student's records, prohibiting a student from participating in graduation, and denying a student a diploma.)

CLASS RANKINGS: Policy Code 3450

Class rankings are one method of measuring academic performance. The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") also recognizes other means of evaluating student achievement, including grade point average, courses completed, rigorosity of curriculum, results of tests and assessments, and recommendation letters.

High school principals shall provide for the compilation of class rankings to be listed on student transcripts and may make class rank information available periodically to students and their parents or guardians, and to other institutions at the request of the student or the student's parent or guardian. High schools will recognize student academic achievement at graduation ceremonies using a Latin Honors system.

High School Latin Honors distinctions, based upon weighted and unweighted grade point averages, will be determined as follows when final grades are determined:

- Cum Laude (with honors) = 3.95 minimum weighted GPA or 3.5-3.74 unweighted GPA
- Magna Cum Laude (with great honor) = 4.25 minimum weighted GPA or 3.75-3.90 unweighted

- Summa Cum Laude (with highest honor) = 4.40 minimum weighted GPA or 3.91-4.0 unweighted GPA

Principals shall ensure that class ranking is computed in a fair and consistent manner as provided in State Board of Education Policy GRAD-009. The principal shall ensure that students and parents receive adequate notice as to how class rank is calculated and shall provide written procedures on how students with equal grades, or grades that may be perceived as equal, will be treated. Nothing in this policy provides a student with any legal entitlement to a particular class rank or title. Although the student grievance procedure provided in policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, may be utilized to resolve disputes formally, the Board encourages parents, students and principals to reach a resolution informally on any matters related to class rank.

Revised: January 9, 2018

COLLEGE COURSES

Students who meet rigorous eligibility requirements and have shown the potential to be successful at the college level are eligible to enroll in tuition-free college courses under Career and College Promise (CCP) guidelines. Eligible students will receive information regarding CCP enrollment from their school counselor. College courses may be offered online and/or face-to-face depending on the college's schedule of courses.

All courses in which a student enrolls while in high school (high school courses and college courses) will be assigned final grades. Grades will be documented on report cards and transcripts (high school and college) and factored in the calculation of Grade Point Averages (high school and college). Successful completion of college courses will result in dual credit for the completed coursework. All students, along with their parent/guardian, must sign a Career and College Promise Student/Parent Agreement prior to enrolling in college courses. For more information regarding CCP, please contact your school counselor.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM: Policy Code 3540

The board is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program that provides students with accurate information and encourages them to be responsible for their own health and behavior. The board recognizes the primary role of parents in providing for the health and well-being of their children and seeks to involve parents as provided in this policy. The comprehensive health education program provided by the school district will meet the requirements of state law and the objectives established by the State Board of Education. The board may, in its discretion, expand on the subject areas to be included in the program and on the instructional objectives to be met.

A. Comprehensive Health Education Program

A comprehensive health education program must be taught to students from kindergarten through ninth grade. As required by law, the health education program must include age-appropriate instruction on bicycle safety, nutrition, dental health, environmental health, family living, consumer health, disease control, growth and development, first aid and emergency care, mental and emotional health, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, and reproductive health and safety education.

Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality will not be included in the health education curriculum in kindergarten through fourth grade (see also policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement). This restriction does not include responses to student-initiated questions. As required by law and beginning in seventh grade, reproductive health and safety education will include age-appropriate instruction on sexual abstinence until marriage, STDs, the human reproductive system, preventable risks for preterm birth in subsequent pregnancies, the effectiveness of contraceptive methods in preventing pregnancy, awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse, and sex trafficking prevention and awareness.

B. Parental Opportunities to Review Materials and Withhold Consent for Student Participation

Each year before students participate in reproductive health and safety education or in other separate instruction on the prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, or the avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, the principal or designee shall notify parents of the opportunity to review the materials and objectives that will be used in instruction. A copy of all objectives and materials will be available for review in the media center of each school where these subjects will be taught.

The principal or designee shall also notify parents of the right to withhold or withdraw consent for their child's participation in all reproductive health and safety education instruction or in specific topics such as STDs, the effectiveness and safety of contraceptive methods, awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse, and sex trafficking prevention and awareness. Parents may also withhold consent to student participation in other separate instruction on the prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, or the avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Any parent wishing to withhold consent must do so in writing to the principal.

C. Standards for Instruction

For reproductive health and safety education, teachers shall follow the instructional objectives and only use the age-appropriate materials that have been made available to parents for review in accordance with this policy. Information conveyed during instruction will be objective and based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals and credentialed experts in the field of sexual health education or other field authorized by law.

A determination of what is an appropriate education for a student with disabilities must be made in accordance with the student's individualized education plan, following all procedures as provided in the North Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*.

Revised: October 3, 2023

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM: 3540-R

The Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program that provides students with accurate information and encourages them to be responsible for their own health and behavior. The Board recognizes the primary role of parents in providing for the health and well-being of their children and seeks to involve parents as provided in this policy. The comprehensive health education program provided by the school district will meet the requirements of state law and the objectives established by the State Board of Education.

Duplin County Schools will provide a comprehensive health education program beginning in kindergarten – ninth grade. Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality will not be included in the health education curriculum in kindergarten through fourth grade (see also policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement). This restriction does not include responses to student-initiated questions. As required by law and beginning in seventh grade, reproductive health and safety education will include age-appropriate instruction on sexual abstinence until marriage, STDs, the human reproductive system, preventable risks for preterm birth in subsequent pregnancies, the effectiveness of contraceptive methods in preventing pregnancy, awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse, and sex trafficking prevention and awareness. Students in the ninth through twelfth grades will be provided with information on the availability of safe surrender of newborn infants less than 7 days old under North Carolina law. Principals will be responsible for obtaining and distributing accurate information on this matter from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Comprehensive Health Education Program Plan

- The program will reflect careful planning with appropriate input from community and school resources, including health and physical education teachers and school nurses. DAISY (Duplin Agencies in Support of Youth), which serves as Duplin County’s School Health Advisory Council, will act as an advisory committee in establishing and resolving issues pertaining to the comprehensive health education program.
- The Healthful Living Health Education Standards are the responsibility of the classroom teacher in grades K-5 and the health and physical education teacher in grades 6-9.
- Each school year, before students may participate in any portion of (i) a program that pertains to or is intended to impart information or promote discussion or understanding in regard to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, or to the avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy or (ii) a reproductive health and safety education program, whether developed by the State or by the local board of education, the parents and legal guardians of those students shall be given an opportunity to review the objectives and materials as provided in G.S. 115C-81.25(d). A copy of all objectives and materials will be available for review in the media center of each school where these subjects will be taught.
- The principal or designee shall also notify parents of the right to withhold or withdraw consent for their child’s participation in all reproductive health and safety education instruction or in specific topics such as STDs, the effectiveness and safety of contraceptive methods, awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse, and sex trafficking prevention and awareness.
- Parents will be notified at least 20 days in advance of any reproductive health and safety education instruction.
- Permission from the parents or guardians of children in grades 5-8 shall be received prior to their child’s placement into any reproductive health and safety education instruction. Permission forms will be provided by the Duplin County Schools Student Support Services department.
- Students in grades 5-6 will be separated by biological sex for the family life lessons.
Duplin County Schools will partner with the Alice B. Aycock Poe Health Education Center in Raleigh, when feasible, to deliver appropriate NC standards-aligned lessons to students in grades 5-9.

Revised: November 7, 2024

COUNSELING PROGRAM Policy Code: 3610

School counseling programs are provided by the school district with the ultimate aim of improving student performance. These programs implement strategies and activities that support and maximize student learning; help students to grow in their social and emotional development; and provide a foundation for acquiring the skills that enable students to graduate career and college ready and prepared to be lifelong learners. The principal of each school shall appoint a team, usually the school counselor and school social worker, to develop a counseling program that is data-driven and meets the objectives of the State Board of Education’s comprehensive school counseling program curriculum, the school social work professional standards, and the academic, career, and social and emotional developmental needs of the student population at that school. The program will include individual and group counseling, classroom presentations, academic advising, career development services, consultation, parent education, and other responsive services.

In addition, the counseling program will incorporate the following specific elements.

A. Involvement of Parents and Others

The comprehensive school counseling program is the shared responsibility of teachers, counselors, parents and community members, and should operate with the collaboration of all individuals involved in educating students, including those who assist children with special needs or students who are at risk of dropping out of school or not meeting performance expectations. Input from parents and students should be sought in accordance with the school’s parental involvement plan. (See policy/4002, Parental Involvement).

Each year, the principal or designee shall inform parents of the guidance and counseling services available to students. Parents will be notified of the right to opt their students out of participation in certain group academic or career guidance or personal or social counseling services of a generic nature (see policy 1310/4002),

B. Provision of Counseling Services

Counseling services may be provided on an individual basis or in small or large groups. School counselors and school social workers are

members of the school support team which also includes the school nurse, and school administrators.

Students may seek counseling or be referred by staff or parents. School officials and teachers may recommend a counseling program to help a student meet standards of conduct and academic performance established by the board and school district administrators. If students have extensive needs or needs that go beyond the purpose of the counseling program, school counselors may refer them to community resources.

Counseling programs are most effective when voluntarily entered into by a student. Students will not be required to attend individual or small group counseling sessions to address identified significant personal issues unless agreement has been reached with the parent and student in a behavior contract, an intervention plan or, for special education students, an individualized education plan. (See Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and policy 3520, Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities.)

C. Peer-to-Peer Support Programs

All schools with grades six and higher will have peer-to-peer student support programs that address areas such as conflict resolution, general health and wellness, and mentoring, beginning no later than the 2024-25 school year. Schools are encouraged to implement peer-to-peer student support programs in other grades as appropriate.

D. Academic Advising

School counselors and other guiding adults in middle and high schools shall support equitable access to opportunities and rigorous and relevant curricula for all students. Prior to the ninth grade, students will be informed about the course requirements for regular and accelerated college entry and the availability of early graduate scholarships for those students who complete high school in three years. School counselors shall encourage ninth grade students to complete the requirements for college entry in less than four years, if feasible and appropriate.

E. Notification of Safe Surrender Law

School personnel shall annually provide all students in grades 9 through 12 with information on the manner in which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person, in accordance with Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.

F. Employee Mandatory Reporting

Any staff member who is aware that a student is contemplating suicide or is otherwise suffering from an emotional or psychological crisis must immediately notify the counseling program in accordance with any rules established by the superintendent or principal.

Any counselor or other staff member who knows or has cause to suspect maltreatment of a child must report the information as provided in policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety, and as required by law.

G. Confidentiality

Information obtained in a session with a school counselor may be privileged and protected from disclosure as provided by law. A school counselor cannot be required to testify concerning privileged information unless, as provided by G.S. 8- 53.4, the student waives the privilege or the court compels testimony as necessary to the proper administration of justice. The school counselor privilege does not, however, exempt the school counselor from reporting child abuse as required by law and policy 4240/7312.

Any notation made by a counselor for his or her own use is a confidential document and is neither a public record nor a part of the student's record. Such confidential documents do not have to be shared with parents or others except as required by law. Any document prepared by a counselor that is shared or intended to be shared with other staff is considered an educational record of the student and is available to the parent or eligible student in accordance with policy 4700, Student Records.

Revised: January 18, 2024

EARLY GRADUATION

Students have the option of graduating early by completing the State Board of Education minimum graduation requirements on an accelerated three-year pathway. Students choosing to use an accelerated pathway must follow the process required for early graduation as described in State Board Policies GRAD-001 and GRAD-006. Students graduating on an accelerated three-year pathway may be eligible for an early graduate scholarship. Graduation prior to that of one's class may be permitted on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent through regulations and procedures. For more information on early graduation and the early graduate scholarship, see the school counselor and Policy 3460 Graduation Requirements.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students shall comply with Board Policy and HB 959/S.L. 2025-38 within the school setting. In accordance with DCS Policy 3225/4312/7320 Technology Responsible Use, Duplin County Schools is not responsible for personally-owned electronic devices. Any such devices brought onto school system property are brought at the owner's risk. School employees may immediately confiscate any electronic device that is on, used, displayed or visible in violation of Board policy or HB 959/S.L. 2025-38. Students in violation of Board Policy or HB 959/S.L. 2025-38 are subject to disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Duplin County Schools Student Code of Conduct.

FEES – Student fees for the 2025-26 School Year-

- Duplin Early College High School:
 - \$30 Graduation Fee
- East Duplin High School:
 - \$40 Parking fee* (year)
 - \$20 Parking fee* (semester)
 - \$30 Senior Fee
- James Kenan High School:
 - \$30 Graduation Fee
 - \$40 Parking Pass*
- North Duplin Jr/Sr High School:
 - \$2.00 Lockers
 - \$30.00 Senior Fees
 - \$40.00 Parking*
- Wallace-Rose Hill High School
 - \$30.00 Graduation Fee
 - \$40.00 Parking Fee *
- Athletic Fees:
 - \$5.00 Middle School
 - \$10.00 High School
- Other Fees in varying amounts for all schools may be charged for clubs, band, athletic team apparel and more. Please see the next section for fee waiver information.

** Parking is a privilege. All students who wish to park must complete a parking application and pay the parking fee.*

FEES- Waivers or Reductions for Economic Hardship

In accordance with policy 4600, Student Fees, each principal shall notify students and parents that they may request a fee waiver or reduction for economic hardship in accordance with the following process:

1. To apply for a fee waiver or reduction, a student's parent must request a fee waiver or reduction from the school counselor/social worker.
2. A parent may request for a waiver or reduction at any point during the school year by returning making this request.
3. The principal shall determine whether to grant the waiver or reduction within five school days of receiving the request.
4. After determining the student's eligibility for a fee waiver or reduction, the principal shall immediately notify the parent of the decision.
5. If the request for a fee waiver or reduction request is denied, the principal shall notify the parent of the opportunity to appeal the decision in accordance with policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.
6. A waiver granted pursuant to this procedure is good for up to one school year. Parents must notify the principal if a change in financial situation during the school year renders their child ineligible for a continued waiver or reduction of fees.
7. If school officials determine at any time during the school year that the student no longer meets the criteria for economic hardship, the principal or designee shall notify the student and parent in writing that fees are due and payable in an amount equal to the refund that would be due under G.S. 115C-384 to a transferring or departing student.

FINAL EXAM EXEMPTIONS

Duplin County Schools Exam Exemption Process

In an effort to provide students with an incentive to attend school and do their best, Duplin County Schools will allow high school students to be exempt from final exams in specific courses. No student may be exempt from taking final exams in courses requiring North Carolina end-of-course (EOC) tests or Career and Technical Education Proofs of Learning (CTE State Assessment, Credentials, or Performance-Based Measures). The following criteria will determine if a student is eligible for a final exam exemption in an individual course.

- 80-100 average and no more than 5 total absences during the semester. No more than one absence may be unexcused. Any assignment of OSS/ISS by a school administrator will cause a student to lose eligibility for exam exemption during that semester for the classes impacted.

Students may be exempt from an eligible final exam only if they meet the above criteria. If a student is exempt from a final exam, no final exam score will be recorded for the student, and their final grade will be made up of the average of the two grading period grades. No teacher can waive an exam for an entire course. Time out of class for any school-sponsored events will not count as an absence relating to final exam exemptions.

Students facing significant hardships may appeal excused absences for exam exemption purposes by completing and submitting an Excessive Absence Appeal Form along with the appropriate documentation. Appeal requests must be submitted at least 10 school days before the first day of exams each semester. If students facing significant hardships meet academic criteria, the principal may exempt them from non-EOC/state-required final exams upon approval of the Excessive Absence Appeal Form. Appeals will be reviewed initially by the principal at the school level, then reviewed by a District-Level Attendance Appeal Committee if deemed necessary by the principal. Waivers are extremely rare and will only be considered for well-documented, uncontrollable circumstances. The decision of the principal will be final and cannot be appealed further.

Absences related to but not limited to typical illness, college visitations, educational absences, and family vacations are specific examples of absences that will not be waived through an appeal request.

Participating in the final exam may positively impact a student's final course grade and should be considered when deciding whether to be exempt. Students who choose to take the final exam will be required to count the exam score as 20% of their final grade regardless of their score.

If a student is exempted from an exam and is not present in the school for the school day or not at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official to attend an authorized school activity, the student is absent.

GANG-RELATED ACTIVITY: Policy Code 4328

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment. Gangs and gang-related activities have proven contrary to that mission and are prohibited within the schools. A gang is any ongoing organization, association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts and having a common name or common identifying sign, colors or symbols. The violence and crime that accompany gangs pose a serious threat to the safety of students and employees of the school district. Even absent acts of violence or crime, the existence of gang-related activity within the schools creates an atmosphere of fear and hostility that obstructs student learning and achievement. Thus, the Board condemns the existence of gangs and will not tolerate gang-related activity in the school district.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Gang-related activity is strictly prohibited within the schools. For the purposes of this policy, "gang-related activity" means: (1) any conduct that is prohibited by another Board policy and is engaged in by a student on behalf of an identified gang or as a result of the student's gang membership; or (2) any conduct engaged in by a student to perpetuate, proliferate or display the existence of any identified gang.

1. Conduct prohibited by this policy includes: wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs or other items with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang;
2. communicating either verbally or non-verbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.) with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang;
3. tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey membership or affiliation in a gang (see policy 4330, Theft, Trespass and Damage to Property);
4. requiring payment of protection or insurance or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity (see policy 4331, Assaults and Threats);
5. inciting others to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity (see policy 4331);
6. soliciting others for gang membership; and
7. committing any other illegal act or other violation of school district policies in connection with gang-related activity.

B. NOTICE

The superintendent or designee shall regularly consult with law enforcement officials to maintain current examples of gang-related activities, including but not limited to gang names and particularized examples of potential gang indicators including symbols, hand signals, graffiti, clothing, accessories and behaviors. Each principal shall maintain a list of current examples of gang-related activities to assist students, parents and teachers in identifying gang symbols and practices. The list shall be available in an easily accessible location in the main office of the school. Parents, students and school employees may, upon request, access the list, which shall include a warning that wearing or displaying clothing, hand signs or symbols identified in the list with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in any gang may subject a student to discipline under this policy.

In addition, the Code of Student Conduct and all student handbooks (or such other similar materials distributed to parents and students in lieu of a student handbook) shall contain notice that (1) current information on gang-related activities is maintained in the main office at each school; (2) information on gang-related activities is subject to change and the principal should be consulted for updates; and (3) wearing or displaying clothing, hand signs or symbols identified in the list with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in any gang may subject a student to discipline under this policy. The Code of Student Conduct and student handbook (or such other similar materials) also shall provide the addresses of websites that contain additional information identifying gang signs, symbols, clothing and other gang indicators.

In providing this information for students and parents, the Board acknowledges that not all potential gang indicators connote actual membership in a gang.

C. CONSEQUENCES

Before receiving disciplinary consequences for a violation of subsection A.1 or A.2, above, a student shall receive an individualized warning as to what item or conduct is in violation of this policy and shall be permitted to immediately change or remove any prohibited items. A student may be disciplined only if he or she previously received notice that the specific item or conduct is prohibited.

Disciplinary consequences for violations of subsections A.1, A.2 and A.6, above, shall be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of these subsections

Violations of subsections A.3, A.4, A.5 and A.7, above, are violations of both this policy and other Board policies. Disciplinary consequences for such violations shall be consistent with Section D of policy 4300 and the specific range of consequences listed in the Code of Student Conduct for the other Board policy violated. That the violation was gang-related shall be an aggravating factor when determining the appropriate consequences.

In a situation where a student has violated this policy or is otherwise suspected of gang affiliation through other circumstantial evidence, the principal shall conduct an intervention involving the principal and/or assistant principal, the student and the student's parent. Such intervention also may include the school resource officer and others as appropriate. The purpose of an intervention is to discuss school officials' observations and concerns and to offer the student and his or her parent's information and an opportunity to ask questions or provide other information to the school officials.

This policy shall be applied in a non-discriminatory manner based on the objective characteristics of the student's conduct in light of the surrounding circumstances.

Revised: March 2, 2021

GANG-RELATED INFORMATION:

Information on gang-related activities is maintained in the main office at each school. Information on gang-related activities is subject to change and the principal should be consulted for updates. Wearing or displaying clothing, hand signs or symbols identified in the list with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in any gang may subject a student to discipline.

Additional information identifying gang signs, symbols, clothing and other gang indicators can be found at:

- o North Carolina Gang Investigators Association: <https://ncgia.org/>
- o National Gang Center: <https://www.nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov>

GARRETT'S LAW

Garrett's law was enacted in 2004. It mandates schools provide parents and guardians with information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza and the vaccines that protect against these diseases. The law was expanded in 2007 to mandate that information also be provided about human papillomavirus (HPV) and the vaccines available to protect against HPV.

Meningococcal meningitis is a form of bacterial meningitis. The bacterial infection can cause severe swelling or fluid around the brain and spinal cord or a serious blood infection. The disease can be spread through coughing, sneezing, kissing, or sharing items like a drinking glass or utensils. A safe and effective vaccine is available to protect against four of the five most common types of meningitis and the vaccine protects for approximately three to five years.

Influenza (commonly called "the flu") is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and can be easily spread to others. Symptoms of flu include fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Other symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, are much more common among children than adults. The following steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like flu: Avoid close contact with people who are sick, stay home when you are sick, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, wash your hands to protect you from germs, and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

HPV is a common virus that is spread from one person to another by skin-to-skin contact in the genital area. Vaccines are available that can protect females and males (ages 9-26) from some of the major types of HPV.

GRADUATION AND PROMOTION CEREMONIES

Graduation from high school is a huge milestone for all of our students and families. Promotion ceremonies are also important. Each student who earns their diploma or promotion to the next grade level has successfully completed academic and behavioral requirements to participate in these types of ceremonies. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to work with their school's principal, each of whom set their school's standard for these ceremonies, to understand the qualifications for participation. Students will not be excluded from participation in graduation ceremonies and promotion ceremonies due to attendance. Parents or guardians with any questions or concerns, are encouraged to communicate first with the principal and then with the Central Office (910-296-1521), as needed.

HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 3-12 will be recognized on the Principal's List if they have received all A's. Students in grades 3-12 will be recognized on the Honor Roll if they have A's and B's but no C's.

HOMELESS STUDENTS: Policy Code 4125

As required by the North Carolina Constitution and North Carolina law, the Duplin County Board of Education is committed to providing a free public school education to all children who are legally entitled to enroll in the school district. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the North Carolina State Plan for Educating Homeless Children, the Board will make reasonable efforts to identify homeless

children and youth of school age located within the area served by the school system, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate barriers to their receiving an education that may exist in school district policies or practices. Based on individual need, homeless students will be provided services available to all students, such as preschool, free or reduced-price school meals, services for English learners, special education, career and technical education (CTE), academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) services, and before- and after-school care.

The provisions of this policy will supersede any and all conflicting provisions in Board policies that address the areas discussed in this policy.

A. DEFINITION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students are children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term "homeless student" will also be deemed to include the term "unaccompanied youth," which includes a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Homeless children and youth include those students who are as follows:

1. sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;

2. living in motels, hotels, transient trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. abandoned in hospitals;
5. living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
7. living in a migratory situation that qualifies as homeless because the child lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

B. ENROLLMENT, ASSIGNMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

1. Enrollment

a. Eligibility

Notwithstanding the enrollment eligibility requirements established by the Board elsewhere in policy, school personnel shall immediately enroll homeless students even if they do not have proof of residency, school and immunization records, birth certificates, or other documents; have missed application or enrollment deadlines during a period of homelessness; have outstanding fees; or are not accompanied by an adult. The homeless liaison shall assist the students and parents or guardians in securing appropriate records or otherwise meeting enrollment requirements.

b. Records

Homeless students transferring into the school district may provide cumulative and other records directly to school district personnel. The superintendent or designee shall not require that such records be forwarded from another school district before the student may enroll. However, school personnel shall immediately request the official records from the previous school.

Information regarding a child or youth's homeless situation must be treated as a student record and protected accordingly. See policy 4700, Student Records.

2. Assignment

A homeless student (or the student's parent or guardian) may request to attend (1) his or her school of origin or (2) any public school that other students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend. The school of origin is defined as the school the student attended before losing permanent housing or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool. When a student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools. Unless not in the student's best interest, a homeless student who continues attending the school of origin will remain enrolled in the school of origin for the entire time the student is homeless and until the end of any academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing.

The Special Advisor for Digital Learning and Student Support Services, who also serves as the homeless liaison, will decide which school a homeless student will attend. The decision must be based upon consideration of student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors concerning the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth. The Special Advisor for Digital Learning and Student Support Services must presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest unless contradicted by the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth.

If the Special Advisor for Digital Learning and Student Support Services determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, he or she must provide a written explanation of the reasons for the determination to the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, along with information regarding the right to appeal the placement decision as described in Section D, below.

3. Transportation

The Board of Education will provide homeless students with transportation services comparable to those of other students. In addition, at the parent or guardian's request (or at the request of the homeless liaison for unaccompanied youth), the Board will provide transportation services to/from the school of origin. The Director of Transportation and the homeless liaison shall coordinate homeless students' transportation needs, based on the child's best interest. In situations in which a student attends school in this system but his or her temporary housing is in another system (or vice versa), the Director of Transportation shall work with the other system to share the cost and/or responsibility for transportation. If an agreement cannot be reached between the systems, the cost of such transportation will be divided evenly. If a homeless student becomes permanently housed and chooses to remain in his or her school of origin, the Board will provide transportation to the student for the remainder of the school year.

C. ELIGIBILITY FOR TITLE I SERVICES

Homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services. The homeless liaison and the Title I director shall collaborate to identify the needs of homeless students.

D. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

A parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth who disagrees with a decision of school officials with regard to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a student who is homeless (hereinafter, referred to as a "complainant") may appeal the decision to the school system's homeless liaison in accordance with this section upon registering or attempting to register the child or youth at the school in which enrollment is sought.

Any employee who is aware that an unaccompanied youth or a parent or guardian of a homeless student is dissatisfied with a decision of school officials with regard to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment should immediately refer that individual to the school system's liaison for homeless students.

As used in this section, "school days" means days when students are scheduled to be in attendance.

1. Notice, Stay Put, and Informal Resolution

Upon learning of a complainant's disagreement with a decision of school officials, the homeless liaison shall take the following actions.

- a. The homeless liaison shall arrange to have the student immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought (either the school of origin or the school located in the attendance zone of the student's temporary residence) if enrollment is at issue. Once enrolled, the student must receive all services for which he or she is eligible and must be allowed to participate fully in school activities, pending resolution of the dispute.
- b. Within one school day of learning of the complainant's disagreement, the homeless liaison shall provide the complainant a copy of the school system's uniform statement of rights and procedures that is written in a language, manner, and form the complainant can understand, to the extent the school system deems practicable. The written statement must include all of the following:
 - 1) contact information, including telephone number, email address, and physical address of the homeless liaison and of the State Coordinator for homeless education, with a brief description of their roles;
 - 2) notice that, within two school days of the school's decision, the complainant has the right to notify the homeless liaison that the complainant intends to appeal the decision;
 - 3) an explanation of the appeal procedure, including the timeline and process for making the initial appeal and for pursuing a subsequent appeal to the superintendent and Board, as provided by this policy;
 - 4) a complaint form that a complainant can understand, complete, and submit to the homeless liaison to initiate the dispute resolution process and to pursue any subsequent appeals to the superintendent and Board;
 - 5) notice that the Board of Education or a designated panel of the Board will make the final decision on behalf of the school system;
 - 6) notice of the right to appeal, or request an extension of time to appeal, the final decision of the school system to the State Coordinator within three school days of receipt of the final decision;
 - 7) notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school located in the assignment area of the student's temporary residence or remain in the school of origin with transportation provided by the school system pending resolution of the dispute if such transportation is requested by the parent, guardian, or homeless liaison on behalf of the youth;
 - 8) notice that the right to enroll includes the right to fully participate in all school activities;
 - 9) notice of the right to obtain assistance of advocates or attorneys; and
 - 10) notice of the right to provide supporting written or oral documentation during the appeals process.
- c. The homeless liaison shall attempt to informally resolve the matter. Complainants are encouraged to attempt informal resolution through discussion with the homeless liaison when possible.
- d. If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the homeless liaison shall inform the complainant of the right to appeal the matter by initiating the dispute resolution process provided in subsection D.2, below.
- e. If the complaint initiates the dispute resolution process, the homeless liaison shall expedite the process so that a final decision in the dispute is reached within 15 school days or 30 calendar days, whichever is less.

2. Steps in the Dispute Resolution Process and Related Timelines

a. Homeless Liaison Review

- i. If informal resolution of a complaint is unsuccessful, the complainant may initiate the dispute resolution process by making a formal appeal to the homeless liaison, either directly or through the principal of the school in which enrollment is sought. The appeal must be presented within five school days of the decision giving rise to the complaint unless the homeless liaison agrees to an extension of up to five additional school days for good cause.
- ii. The appeal may be made orally or in writing on the designated complaint form. If the complainant makes an oral appeal, the homeless liaison shall complete the written complaint form on the complainant's behalf without delay.
- iii. The complaint should include the date of the filing, a description of the disputed action pertaining to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the name of the person(s) involved and a description of the relief requested. The complainant must be informed of the right to provide supporting written or oral documentation and to seek the assistance of an advocate or attorney.
- iv. No more than two school days after the complainant initiates the dispute resolution process, the local liaison shall (1) inform the superintendent, other school officials participating in the dispute resolution process, and the State Coordinator of the dispute and (2) provide a written decision, including the reasons for the decision, to the complainant and the superintendent.

b. Appeal to the Superintendent of the Liaison's Decision

- i. Within two school days of receiving the liaison's decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the superintendent orally or in writing using the form designated for this purpose. Oral appeals must be made to the homeless liaison, who shall commit the appeal to writing on the designated form. The homeless liaison shall ensure that the superintendent receives copies of the written complaint and the response of the liaison.
 - ii. The superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference with the complainant to discuss the complaint.
 - iii. Within four school days of receiving the appeal, the superintendent or designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a statement of the reasons for the decision.
- c. Appeal to the Board of the Superintendent's Decision
- i. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's decision, he or she may file an appeal with the Board within two days.
 - ii. The appeal may be filed orally or in writing using the form designated for this purpose. Oral appeals must be made to the homeless liaison, who shall commit the appeal to writing on the designated form.
 - iii. The Board or a panel of at least two Board members acting on behalf of the Board will render a decision on the appeal. The Board or Board panel will provide the complainant with a written decision within five school days of receiving the appeal. In unusual circumstances the Board or Board panel may extend this time but will avoid exceeding the lesser of (1) 15 school days from when the complaint was received or (2) 30 calendar days from when the complaint was received.
 - iv. The Board or Board panel's decision will constitute the final decision of the school district for purpose of the complaint's right to appeal to the State Coordinator.
 - v. If the matter under appeal is a school assignment, a Board panel decision will be a recommendation that must be submitted to the full Board for a final determination as required by state law and policy 4150, School Assignment. However, in order to ensure an expedited appeals process for students who are homeless, the recommendation of the Board panel shall be considered the final decision of the Board for purposes of appeal to the State Coordinator if a final determination by the full Board reasonably cannot be accomplished by the deadline described in the previous paragraph.
 - vi. The written statement of the final decision will include the name and contact information of the State Coordinator for homeless education and will describe the appeal rights to the State Coordinator. If the matter under appeal is a school assignment and the appeal was not heard by the full Board, the written decision will also note that review of the matter by the full Board as required by state law is pending.
- d. Appeal to the State Coordinator of the Board's Decision
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board or Board panel, he or she may file an oral or written appeal with the State Coordinator for homeless education within three school days of receiving the Board or panel's decision or within the period of any extension granted. The State Coordinator, who will issue a final decision on the complaint. The appeal must include:
- i. the name of the complainant and, if available, his or her physical address, e-mail address, and telephone number;
 - ii. the relationship or connection of the person to the child in question;
 - iii. the name of the school system and the school in question;
 - iv. the federal requirement alleged to have been violated;
 - v. how the requirement is alleged to have been violated; and
 - vi. the relief the person is seeking. Within three school days following a request from the State Coordinator, the homeless liaison shall provide the record of complaint, a copy of the Board or panel's decision, and any other documents necessary to complete the record.

E. HOMELESS LIAISON

The superintendent or designee shall appoint and train a school employee to serve as the homeless liaison. In addition to the duties specifically assigned elsewhere in this policy, the homeless liaison's duties shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. ensuring that school personnel identify homeless children and youth;
2. ensuring school/preschool enrollment of and opportunities for academic success for homeless children and youth;
3. ensuring that homeless families and children have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible;
4. ensuring that homeless families and children receive referrals to healthcare, dental, mental health and substance abuse, housing, and other appropriate services;
5. informing parents or guardians and any unaccompanied youth of available transportation services and helping to coordinate such services;
6. ensuring that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or

- guardians and unaccompanied youth;
- 7. informing parents or guardians of educational and related opportunities available to their children and ensuring that parents or guardians have meaningful opportunities to participate in their children’s educations;
- 8. communicating the dispute resolution process to parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness;
- 9. helping to mediate enrollment disputes, including ensuring that a homeless child or youth is enrolled immediately pending final resolution of the dispute;
- 10. developing a uniform written notice that explains to parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth their rights and the process for appealing a decision of school officials, as required by subsection D.1.b of this policy. The notice must be written in a simple and understandable format and translated to other languages as needed and practicable;
- 11. ensuring that when parents, students, and unaccompanied youth initiate the dispute resolution process, all parties comply with the dispute resolution policy and that parents, students, and unaccompanied youth are provided with the information listed in subsection D.1.b of this policy;
- 12. informing unaccompanied youth of their status as independent students and assisting in verifying such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;
- 13. ensuring that school personnel providing services to homeless students receive professional development and other support;
- 14. working with school personnel, the student, parents or guardians, and/or other agencies to obtain critical enrollment records, including immunization and medical records, in a timely manner; and
- 15. working with the superintendent or designee to identify Board policies or procedures that might serve as a barrier to enrollment of homeless students, including those related to immunization records, medical records, uniforms or dress codes, school fees, and school admission.

Revised: August 10, 2021

MASS VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring the well-being and academic success of our students, Duplin County Schools conducts annual mass vision and hearing screenings in all elementary schools. These screenings are an essential part of our health and wellness program, aiming to identify any potential issues early on, thus enabling us to provide appropriate support and resources for your child's educational journey. While participation in these screenings is highly encouraged, we respect the autonomy of our parents in making decisions regarding their child's health care. If you wish to opt your child out of the vision and hearing screenings, please notify the school nurse within the first 30 calendar days of the school year.

ADMINISTERING MEDICINE TO STUDENTS: Policy Code 6125

The Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes that students may need to take medication during school hours. School personnel may administer medication prescribed by a health care practitioner upon the completion of the medication authorization form. In limited circumstances, a student may be authorized to self-administer emergency medications. To minimize disruptions to the school day, students should take medications at home rather than at school whenever feasible. School officials may deny a request to administer any medication that could be taken at home or when, in the opinion of the Chief Officer for District Effectiveness/Student Support Services and Digital Learning in consultation with school nursing personnel, other treatment options exist and the administration of the medication by school personnel would pose a substantial risk of harm to the student or others.

For purposes of this policy, all references to “parent” include parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians. In addition, for purposes of this policy, the term “health care practitioner” is limited to licensed medical professionals who are legally authorized to prescribe medications under North Carolina law, such as doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathic medicine, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

Unless otherwise indicated, the terms “medication” and “medicine” include any substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of any disease. The term includes all prescription medications and all such substances available over-the-counter without a prescription, such as drugs, herbs, alternative medicines, and supplements (hereinafter “over-the-counter drugs”). The administration of any prescription or over-the-counter drug to students by school employees is prohibited except when performed in accordance with Section A. The self-administration of any prescription or over-the-counter drug by students at school is prohibited and constitutes a violation of policy 4325, Drugs and Alcohol, except in the limited circumstances described in Section C.

The administration, including by parents, school employees, or self-administration, of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) at school is prohibited unless the CBD or THC product is available by prescription only and has been approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA); and all requirements of this policy are met.

A. Medication Administration by School Employees

1. Conditions for Administering Medication

Authorized school employees may administer medication to students when all of the following conditions are met. These conditions apply to all medications, including those available over-the-counter without a prescription.

- a. Parental Consent: The student’s parent must provide a completed medication authorization form that authorizes school personnel to administer the medication to the student.
- b. Medication Authorization/Order: A health care practitioner must prescribe and complete the medication authorization form for any medication for use by the student, and provide explicit written instructions for administering the medication.
- c. Certification of Necessity: The student’s health care practitioner must certify that administration of the medication to the student during the school day is necessary to maintain and support the student’s continued presence in school.

- d. Proper Container/Labeling: If the medication to be administered is available by prescription only, the parent must provide the medication in a pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name, the name of the medication, the exact dose to be given, the time/frequency the medication is to be given, the route of administration, the number of doses in the container, and the expiration date of the medication. If the medication is available over-the-counter, it must be provided in the original container or packaging, labeled with the student's name.
- e. Proper Administration: The employee must administer the medication pursuant to the health care practitioner's written instructions provided to the school by the student's parent, and in accordance with professional standards.

The Board of Education and its employees assume no liability for complications or side effects of medication when administered in accordance with the instructions provided by the parent and health care practitioner.

2. Procedures for Administering Medications

The superintendent shall develop procedures for the implementation of this policy. The procedures and a copy of this policy must be made available to all students and parents each school year. The superintendent's procedures should be developed according to the guidelines listed below.

- a. The health and welfare of the student must be of paramount concern in all decisions regarding the administration of medication.
- b. Procedures for medication administration must be consistent with recommendations of the School, Adolescence and Child Health Unit of the Whole Child Health Section of the Division of Child and Family Well-Being of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, as described in the *North Carolina School Health Program Manual*.
- c. Students with special needs are to be afforded all rights provided by federal and state law as enumerated in the *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*. Students with disabilities also are to be afforded all rights provided by anti-discrimination laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- d. Except as permitted by this policy, no student may possess, use, sell, deliver, or manufacture any drug or counterfeit drug prohibited by policy 4325, Drugs and Alcohol, nor be under the influence of any drug in violation of that policy.
- e. The Board generally encourages school personnel to administer medication from a centralized location. However, in all instances, whether administered from a centralized location or multiple locations, any medications kept at school for a student must be kept in a locked and secure place. An exception to the requirement for locked storage may be made for emergency medications that must be immediately accessible. Access to controlled substances should be limited to the school nurse, school staff person authorized to administer medication, and the principal or designee.
- f. All school personnel who will be administering medications must receive appropriate training.
- g. Only medications clearly prescribed for the student may be administered by school personnel. At the time a parent brings a medication to school for administration, if school personnel have concerns regarding the appropriateness of the medication or dosage for a student, a confirmation should be obtained from the student's health care practitioner or another health care practitioner prior to administering the medication or allowing a student to self-administer the medication.
- h. Although efforts should be made not to disrupt instructional time, a parent has the right to administer medication to his or her child at any time while the child is on school property, unless otherwise prohibited by this policy.
- i. Written information maintained by school personnel regarding a student's medicine and health needs is confidential. Parents and students must be accorded all rights provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and state confidentiality laws. Any employee who violates the confidentiality of the records may be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Emergency Medication

Students who are at risk for medical emergencies, such as those with diabetes, asthma, or severe allergies, must have an emergency health care plan developed for them to address emergency administration of medication. Students must meet the requirements of subsection A.1, above, including providing authorization and instructions from the health care practitioner and written consent of the parent, in order for emergency medication to be administered by school personnel while the student is at school, at a school sponsored activity, and/or while in transit to or from school or a school-sponsored event.

C. Student Self-Administering Medications

The Board recognizes that students with certain health conditions like diabetes or asthma, /or an allergy that could result in an anaphylactic reaction, may need to possess and self-administer medication on school property in accordance with their individualized health care plan or emergency health care plan.

Students are prohibited from self-administering medication at school unless (1) the medicine has been prescribed for the treatment of diabetes, asthma, or anaphylactic reactions, including insulin or a source of glucose, a prescribed asthma inhaler, or a prescribed epinephrine auto-injector; (2) the medicine is administered in accordance with the student's individualized health care plan or emergency health care plan and any relevant administrative regulations; and (3) the requirements of this section are met. The superintendent shall develop procedures for the possession and self-administration of such medication by students on school property, during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, and/or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events.

1. Authorization to Self-Administer Medication

Before a student will be allowed to self-administer medication pursuant to this subsection, the student's parent must provide to the principal or designee all of the documents listed below:

- a. A signed medication authorization form from the student's parent for the student to possess and self-administer the medication;
- b. a signed medication authorization form from the student's health care practitioner verifying that:
 - 1) the student has diabetes or asthma, or an allergy that could result in anaphylactic reaction;
 - 2) the health care practitioner prescribed the medication for use on school property during the school day, at school-sponsored activities, or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored events; and
 - 3) the student understands, has been instructed in self-administration of the medication, has demonstrated the skill level necessary to use the medication and any accompanying device, and has been determined to be competent for self-administration;
- c. a written treatment plan and written emergency protocol formulated by the prescribing health care practitioner for managing the student's diabetes, asthma, or anaphylaxis episodes and for medication use by the student;
- d. a statement provided by the school district and signed by the student's parent acknowledging that the Board of Education and its employees and agents are not liable for injury arising from the student's possession and self-administration of the medication; and
- e. any other documents or items necessary to comply with state and federal laws.

Prior to being permitted to self-administer medication at school, the student also must demonstrate to the school nurse, or the nurse's designee, (1) the skill level necessary to use the medication and any device necessary for its administration; and (2) sufficient knowledge and maturity to be independent in the management of the medication with no oversight from school staff.

It is recommended the student's parent provide to the school backup medication that school personnel are to keep in a location to which the student has immediate access in the event the student does not have the required medication.

All information provided to the school by the student's parent must be reviewed by the school nurse and kept on file at the school in an easily accessible location. Any permission granted by the principal or designee for a student to possess and self-administer medication will be effective only for 365 calendar days. Such permission must be renewed each school year.

2. Responsibilities of the Student

A student who is authorized in accordance with this policy to carry medication for self-administration must carry the medication in the original labeled container with the student's name on the label.

3. Consequences for Improper Use

A student who uses his or her medication in a manner other than as prescribed or who permits another person to use the medication may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school disciplinary policy. However, school officials shall not impose disciplinary action on the student that limits or restricts the student's immediate access to the diabetes, asthma, or anaphylactic medication.

The Board does not assume any responsibility for the administration of medication to a student by the student, the student's parent, or any other person who is not authorized by this policy to administer medications to students.

D. Standing Orders for Over-the-Counter Medication

Duplin County Schools Medical Advisor has provided standing orders and protocols for the use of designated over-the-counter medications. With a signed consent form, a parent may elect for their student to receive these over-the-counter medications without having to get an order from their medical provider. Any permission provided by the parent will be effective for 365 calendar days. Such permission must be renewed annually. Medications given in accordance of standing orders may only be administered by a school nurse.

Revised: July 2, 2024

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVANCED COURSE OFFERINGS

Middle school students in seventh or eighth grade who demonstrate readiness shall be granted the opportunity to take high school courses. These courses will primarily be offered online through North Carolina Virtual Public Schools. Upon successful completion of the course, the course will appear on the high school transcript and count towards high school graduation requirements, but will not count in the student's high school grade point average.

Process:

1. A parent information letter will be sent home each spring to all 4th and 5th grade students concerning middle school advanced course offerings and criteria.
2. A parent information session will be held at each K-8 school in the spring for 6th & 7th grade students and their parents.
3. Student qualification letters will be distributed by the school counselor to 6th & 7th grade students following EOG/NC Final Exam administration each spring.
4. Middle school students, who meet the criteria, and his/her parents will sign an agreement indicating their decision regarding registration for high school courses in middle school.
5. Qualifying students may opt to take:
 - a. World History (7th or 8th Grade)
 - b. NC Math 1 (8th Grade)
 - c. Earth Science (8th Grade)
 - d. Foreign Language (7th or 8th Grade)
6. Any student scoring a Level 5 on the 7th Grade Math EOG will be placed in NC Math 1 for the 8th grade year unless a parent/guardian submits in writing the request to enroll in 8th Grade Math.
7. It is recommended that students take no more than 2 high school courses at one time.
8. Any student/parent requesting to register for any courses outside of the courses/criteria/options listed in this document, must do so by submitting a formal request via the *High School Courses in Middle School Request Form* to the school principal. This form is available on the Duplin County Schools website, or may be received from your school counselor. Any such request must be approved by a Duplin County Schools Central Office Curriculum Review Team prior to registration.
9. The School Counselor will serve as the NCVPS E-Learning Advisor for the school.
10. The School Counselor will oversee the registration process; receive newsletters and progress reports each week from NCVPS. School Counselors will work collaboratively with the Principal and Data Manager to disseminate appropriate information as well as ensure students successfully login to their classes by the first day of the course. (This may be prior to the start of the school year or semester.)
11. Any school K-8 principal wishing to offer a high school course(s) face to face must submit the request to the Duplin County Schools Central Office Curriculum Review Team using the *Face-to-Face High School Course in Middle School Request Form*. This form may be found on the Duplin County Schools Website.
12. Students will **not** be allowed to drop a high school course after the drop/add period. It is the responsibility of the School Counselor to make students/parents aware of this date.
13. High School course averages **will** be included in determining middle school honor rolls, awards, etc.

Middle School Course Options and Criteria

Advanced Math (6th and 7th Grade)

- Achievement Level 5 on the previous grade Math EOG
- AIG Math Identification
- Principal selection based on student's advanced mathematical knowledge

NC Math 1 (8th Grade)

- Achievement Level 5 on the 7th Grade Math EOG
- **Or** must meet at least 2 of the following criteria:
 - Achievement Level 5 on two of the last three Math EOGs
 - 90 or above class average in 7th Grade Math
 - AIG Math Identification

World History (7th or 8th grade) - must meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

7th Grade World History

- 90 or above class average in 6th Grade Social Studies
- AIG Reading Identification
- Level 5 on most recent ELA EOG

8th Grade World History

- 90 or above class average in 7th Grade Social Studies
- AIG Reading Identification
- Level 5 on most recent ELA EOG

Earth Science (8th grade) - must meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

- Level 5 on 5th Grade Science EOG
- 90 or above class average in 7th Grade Science
- AIG Reading or Math Identification
- Level 5 on most recent ELA EOG

Foreign Language - Spanish or French (7th and/ or 8th Grade) - must meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

- AIG Math or Reading
- Level 5 on most recent ELA or Math EOG
- 90 average of Core subjects in most recent year
- Level 5 on 2 of the last 3 ELA or Math EOGs

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT Policy Code: 1310/4002

The Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes the critical role of parents in the education of their children and in the schools. The Board directs school administrators to develop programs that will promote and support parental involvement in student learning and achievement at school and at home and encourage successful progress toward graduation. Each parent is encouraged to learn about the educational program, the educational goals and objectives of the school district, and his or her own child’s progress. The Board also encourages parents to participate in their children’s education and in activities designed by school personnel to involve them, such as parent conferences, in order to foster effective teacher and parent communication. Parents are responsible for cooperating with school employees to facilitate their children’s compliance with Board policies including, but not limited to, homework, school attendance, and behavior.

For purposes of this policy, “parent” includes parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians of students who are under 18 years old and who have not been emancipated.

A. Parental Involvement Plans

1. Parental Involvement Plan as Part of the School Improvement Plan

The Board directs each principal to ensure that the school improvement team develops a plan for the school’s parental involvement program as a part of the school improvement plan. The principal shall publicize drafts of the parental involvement plan prior to finalization and solicit input from parents of students in the school. This plan must include, at a minimum, efforts to enhance parental involvement by promoting the following priorities:

- a. regular, meaningful, two-way communication between home and school;
- b. responsible parenting;
- c. involvement of parents in student learning;
- d. parental volunteering in the school;
- e. involvement of parents in school decisions that affect children and families;
- f. parental training based on parents’ informational needs;
- g. collaboration with community agencies and other organizations to provide resources to strengthen school programs, families, and student learning; and
- h. student health awareness among parents by addressing the need for health programs and student health services, which are linked to student learning.

2. Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan

Each school participating in the Title I program must develop a school-level written parent and family engagement plan in accordance with policy 1320/3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

3. Parental Involvement Component of a School Plan for Managing Student Behavior

Each school’s plan for managing student behavior should include parental involvement strategies that address when parents will be notified or involved in issues related to their child’s behavior in accordance with policy 4302, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior.

B. Parent Communication, Participation, and Conferences

1. Communication with Parents

The Board encourages school personnel to have regular contact with parents for informational purposes as well as for commendation of students and notification of concerns. School personnel shall communicate with parents about student behavior issues in accordance with requirements of policy 4341, Parental Involvement in Student Behavior Issues, and about student attendance as described in policy 4400, Attendance. In addition, parents will be notified promptly if school personnel suspect that a criminal offense has been committed against the parent’s child, unless notification would impede an investigation by law enforcement or the child welfare agency.

The principal must effectively communicate to parents the manner in which textbooks are used to implement the school’s curricular objectives. Any parent interested in learning more about their child’s course of study or the source of any supplementary instructional materials should contact the principal for more information. If a parent would like to inspect and review particular instructional materials, the parent should make such a request in accordance with policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials.

The principal also shall ensure that information about the nature and purpose of all clubs and activities, curricular and extracurricular, offered at the school is available at the school’s main office. Any parent who would like information about such clubs or activities should contact the school’s main office.

The principal or designee shall strive, through oral or written communication or other means, to include the parents of students identified as at-risk in the implementation and review of academic and/or behavioral interventions for their children, in accordance with policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure.

The principal or designee shall provide the parent of each student in kindergarten, first, or second grade with written notification of the student’s reading progress. The notice will be provided three times a year, following each benchmark assessment and will include: (1)

assessment results, (2) whether the child may not reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade, and (3) instructional support activities for use at home.

2. Parent Participation at Schools

The Board encourages parents to engage in activities in their children's schools. Parents are welcome to visit schools in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools, and, if interested, are urged to participate in school volunteer programs as described in policy 5015, School Volunteers. In addition, opportunities exist for parents to participate on school advisory councils, such as the school health advisory council (see policy 6140, Student Wellness), school improvement teams (see policy 3430, School Improvement Plan), school media and technology advisory committees (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials), and the business advisory council (see policy 2670, Business Advisory Council).

3. Conferences

Teachers are responsible for scheduling conferences or meetings with parents. The Board encourages the superintendent to work with local business leaders, including the local chambers of commerce, to encourage employers to adopt, as part of their stated personnel policies, time for employees who are parents or guardians to attend conferences with their child's teachers.

C. Parental Notification

1. Title I Notifications

Each principal or designee of a Title I school shall effectively notify parents of all parental rights and other required information regarding Title I schools and programs, in accordance with federal law. Parents of students in Title I schools shall receive a copy of the district-wide Title I parent and family engagement policy (policy 1320/3560) and the school-wide parent involvement plan.

2. Parent Guide for Student Achievement

Each year, the superintendent or designee shall create a parent guide for student achievement that meets the requirements of state law and the State Board of Education. All parents will receive a written copy of the guide, and information in the guide will be discussed at the beginning of each school year in meetings of students, parents, and teachers.

At a minimum the guide will include the following:

- a. information for parents regarding the following as it pertains to their child: (1) requirements for promotion to the next grade, including the requirements of the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program as set forth in Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C; (2) the course of study, textbooks, and other supplementary instructional materials and policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials, which provides for the inspection and review of those materials; (3) the child's progress toward achieving State and unit expectations for academic proficiency, including policies for student assessment, and the child's assessment results, report cards, and progress reports; (4) qualifications of the child's teachers, including licensure status; and (5) school entry requirements, including required immunizations and the recommended immunization schedule;
- b. parental actions that can do the following: (1) strengthen the child's academic progress, especially in the area of reading as provided in the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program; (2) strengthen the child's citizenship, especially social skills and respect for others; (3) strengthen the child's realization of high expectations and setting lifelong learning goals; and (4) place a strong emphasis on the communication between the school and the home;
- c. services available for parents and their children, such as family literacy services; mentoring, tutoring, and other academic reinforcement programs; after-school programs; and college planning, academic advisement, and student counseling services (see policy 3610, Counseling Program);
- d. opportunities for parental participation, such as parenting classes, adult education, school advisory councils, and school volunteer programs;
- e. opportunities for parents to learn about rigorous academic programs that may be available for their child, such as academically and/or intellectually gifted programming, honors programs, Career and College Promise and other dual enrollment opportunities, advanced placement, Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses, International Baccalaureate, North Carolina Virtual High School courses, and accelerated access to postsecondary education;
- f. educational choices available to parents, including each type of public-school unit available to residents of the county in which the child lives and nonpublic school options, educational choice options offered within the school district, and programs for scholarship grants for nonpublic schools (Part 2A of Article 39 of Chapter 115C) and for personal education student accounts for students with disabilities (Article 41 of Chapter 115C);
- g. rights of students who have been identified as students with disabilities, as provided in Article 9 of Chapter 115C;
- h. contact information for school and unit offices;
- i. resources for information on the importance of student health and other available resources for parents, including the following information on available immunizations and vaccinations: (1) a recommended immunization schedule in accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations; and (2) information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, including the causes, symptoms, and vaccines, how the diseases are spread, and places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children as required by G.S. 115C-375.4; and
- j. this policy (policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement); policy 1320/3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement; policy 2670, Business Advisory Council; policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials; policy 3430, School

3. Additional Annual Notifications

The principal or designee shall annually notify parents of the following information to the extent that it has not already been provided to parents as part of the parent guide for student achievement:

- a. parental rights related to student records (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- b. parental rights related to student surveys (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- c. the approximate dates of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance, (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration, and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- d. the schedule of pesticide used on school property and their right to request notification of nonscheduled pesticide use (see policy 9205, Pest Management);
- e. student behavior policies, the Code of Student Conduct, and school standards and rules (see policies in the 4300 series);
- f. the permissible use of seclusion and restraint in the schools (see regulation 4302-R, Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools);
- g. policy 1735/4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited;
- h. policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure;
- i. the dates of the district-wide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year, how the results from the tests will be used, and whether each test is required by the State Board of Education or by the local Board;
- j. grading practices that will be followed at the school and, for parents of high school students, the method of computing the grade point averages that will be used for determining class rank (see policies 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress, and 3450, Class Rankings);
- k. available opportunities and the enrollment process for students to take advanced courses and information explaining the value of taking advanced courses;
- l. if applicable, that their child will be provided advanced learning opportunities in mathematics or will be placed in an advanced mathematics course;
- m. when a student initially creates a career development plan, that the plan has been created and information on how to access the plan;
- n. a clear and concise explanation of the North Carolina testing and accountability system that includes all information required by federal law;
- o. a report containing information about the school district and each school, including, but not limited to:
 - i. the following information both in the aggregate and disaggregated by category: student achievement, graduation rates, performance on other school quality and/or student success indicators, the progress of students toward meeting long-term goals established by the state, student performance on measures of school climate and safety, and, as available, the rate of enrollment in post-secondary education;
 - ii. the performance of the school district on academic assessments as compared to the state as a whole and the performance of each school on academic assessments as compared to the state and school district as a whole;
 - iii. the percentage and number of students who are:
 1. assessed,
 2. assessed using alternate assessments,
 3. involved in preschool and accelerated coursework programs, and
 4. English learners achieving proficiency;
 - iv. the per pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funds; and
 - v. teacher qualifications;
- p. the grade earned by the school on the most recent annual report card issued for it by the State Board of Education if the grade was a D or F;
- q. if the school and/or the school district is identified by the State Board of Education as low-performing, the notifications required by G.S. 115C-105.37(b) and/or G.S. 115C-105.39A(c);
- r. supportive services available to students, including health services;
- s. for parents of students in grades 5 through 12, information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, and human papillomavirus, including the causes and symptoms of these diseases, how they are transmitted, how they may be prevented by vaccination,

including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and places parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children;

- t. how to reach school officials in emergency situations during non-school hours;
 - u. information about and an application form for free and reduced-price meals and/or free milk (see policy 6225, Free and Reduced-Price Meal Services);
 - v. information about the school breakfast program;
 - w. information about the availability and location of free summer food service program meals for students when school is not in session;
 - x. for parents of children with disabilities, procedural safeguards (see also policy 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
 - y. information on the availability of the asbestos management plan and planned or in-progress inspections, re-inspections, response actions, and post-response actions, including periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities;
 - z. education rights of homeless students (see policy 4125, Homeless Students);
 - aa. the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy (see policy 6140, Student Wellness);
 - bb. their right to take four hours of unpaid leave from their jobs every year in order to volunteer in their child's school as stated in G.S. 95-28.3 (see policy 5015, School Volunteers);
 - cc. that the school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, and the school district's processes for resolving discrimination and harassment complaints (see policies 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process, 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process, and 1730/4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
 - dd. that the school district provides equal access to its facilities, programs, and activities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups (see policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law); and
 - ee. the availability of and the process for requesting a waiver or reduction of student fees (see policy 4600, Student Fees).
4. Opportunities to Withhold Consent/Opt Out Notifications

As a part of the annual notification described above, parents will be effectively notified that they may opt out of any of the following:

- a. release of student directory information about their child for school purposes or to outside organizations (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- b. release of their child's name, address, and telephone listing to military recruiters or institutions of higher education (see policy 4700, Student Records);
- c. their child's participation in curricula related to (a) prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; (b) avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy; or (c) reproductive health and safety education, as provided in policy 3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program. A copy of the materials that will be used in these curricula will be available in the school media center during the school year and at other times that the media center is available to the public. To meet any review periods required by law, materials also may be made available for review in the central office;
- d. their child's participation in academic or career guidance or personal or social counseling services of a generic nature offered to groups of students (e.g., peer relations strategies offered to all sixth graders). However, parents do not have the right to opt out of: (a) short-duration academic, career, personal, or social guidance and counseling and crisis intervention that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment; (b) student-initiated individual or group counseling targeted at a student's specific concerns or needs; and (c) counseling if child abuse or neglect is suspected (see policies 3610, Counseling Program, and 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety);
- e. their child's participation in any protected information survey given as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey or the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- f. their child's participation in any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance; (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration; and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- g. the collection, disclosure, or use of their child's personal information for marketing purposes (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students); and
- h. release of their child's free and reduced-price meal information to State Medicaid or State children's health insurance program (SCHIP).

Any parent or legal guardian who wishes to opt out/withhold consent must do so in writing after receiving notice. Otherwise, consent to the programs or activities is presumed. After the annual notification, the school is not required to provide further notice to the parent or legal guardian

as to the manner in which student directory information is used, the curriculum is provided, or guidance programs are made available.

D. Parental Permission Required

Written parental permission is required prior to the following activities:

1. the administration of medications to students by employees of the school district (see policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students);
2. the release of student records that are not considered directory information, unless the release is allowed or required by law (see policy 4700, Student Records);
3. off-campus trips;
4. students' participation in high-impact or high-risk sports or extracurricular activities, such as football or mountain climbing (see policy 4220, Student Insurance Program);
5. all decisions or actions regarding special education or related services to students with disabilities that require written parental consent under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
6. certain health services, as required by law;
7. participation in a mental health assessment or mental health services under circumstances prescribed by federal law;
8. students' participation in programs or services that provide information about where to obtain contraceptives or abortion referral services;
9. students' participation in any protected information surveys other than those given as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey or the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
10. disclosure of students' free and reduced price lunch eligibility information or eligibility status; and
11. students' access to school district technological resources, including the Internet, as described in policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use.

E. Procedures for Parental Involvement in Student Health

1. Parent Notifications Regarding Student Physical and Mental Health

At the beginning of each school year, the principal or designee shall notify parents of (1) each health care service offered at their children's schools and the means for parents to provide consent for any specific services; (2) acknowledgement that consenting to a health care service does not waive the parents' right to access their children's educational records or health records or to be notified of changes in their children's services or monitoring; and (3) the procedures to exercise the parental remedies for concerns related to student health provided by G.S. 115C-76.60 and described below in subsection E.6.

Before any student well-being questionnaire or health screening form is administered to students in kindergarten through third grade, the principal or designee shall provide parents with a copy of the questionnaire or form and shall inform parents of the means for parents to consent to the use of the questionnaire or form for their children.

The principal or designee shall notify parents of changes in services or monitoring related to their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for their children prior to or contemporaneously with the changes being made. In addition, the principal or designee shall notify parents before any changes are made to the names or pronouns used for their children in school records or by school personnel.

No school district policy, procedure, or form will expressly or otherwise prohibit school employees from notifying parents about their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring, nor will any school district policy, procedure, or form intentionally encourage or be designed in a manner that is reasonably likely to have the effect of encouraging any children to withhold from their parents information about their mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring. School personnel shall not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.

2. Discussions Related to Student Well-Being

When issues of a student's well-being arise, school personnel shall encourage the student to discuss the issues with his or her parent. As appropriate, school personnel may facilitate discussions of such issues with parents.

3. Parent Access to Student Records

Parents will not be prohibited from accessing any of their children's education and health records created, maintained, or used by the school district, except as permitted by law. See policy 4700, Student Records.

4. Student Support Services Training

Student support services training developed or provided by the school district to school personnel will adhere to student services guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Public Instruction.

5. Instruction on Gender Identity, Sexual Activity, and Sexuality

Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality will not be included in the curriculum provided in kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties. For purposes of this subsection, curriculum includes the standard course of study and support materials, locally developed curriculum, supplemental instruction, and textbooks and other supplementary materials, but does not include responses to student-initiated questions.

6. Remedies for Parental Concerns Related to Student Health

If a parent has a concern about the school district's procedure or practice under Part 4 of Article 7B of Chapter 115C, as described in Section E of this policy, the parent should submit the concern in writing to the principal at his or her child's school. The parent should include the following information in the written concern: (1) the specific school district procedure or practice with which the parent is concerned, (2) if applicable, the name of any school district employee(s) or other individual(s) whose actions are at issue, (3) any specific laws, regulations, or policies believed to be violated, and (4) the specific resolution desired.

The principal or designee shall review the written concern and may, in his or her discretion, schedule and hold a meeting with the parent within five days after the concern was submitted. The principal shall conduct any necessary investigation before rendering a decision. If possible, the principal should resolve the concern within seven days after the concern was submitted. In any event, the principal shall provide a written response within seven days after the concern was submitted, including the principal's decision regarding resolution of the concern and the basis for the decision. In responding to the concern, the principal shall not disclose information about other students or employees that is considered confidential by law.

If the principal cannot resolve the concern within seven days, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent or designee and provide the superintendent or designee with a copy of the parent's written concern and the principal's written response. The superintendent or designee shall review the written documents and provide a written response within 14 days after the parent initially submitted the concern. In responding to the concern, the superintendent or designee shall not disclose information about other students or employees that is considered confidential by law.

If the concern has not been resolved within 15 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the superintendent or designee shall refer the matter to the chair and vice chair of the Board. The chair and vice chair shall consult and determine (1) whether the concern will be reviewed by the full Board or by a panel of not less than two members of the Board and (2) whether the review will be based solely on the written record or whether a hearing before the Board or Board panel will be scheduled per policy 2500. If the chair and vice chair are unable to agree on whether the concern will be reviewed by the full Board or by a panel of Board members, the matter will be referred to the full Board. If the chair and vice chair are unable to agree on whether the concern will be reviewed solely on the written record, a hearing will be scheduled per policy 2500, Hearings Before the Board.

The Board or Board panel shall review the concern and notify the parent in writing of its decision within 30 days of the date on which the parent submitted the written concern to the school principal. If the concern is not resolved within this 30 day period, the Board will provide a statement of the reasons for not resolving the concern.

If the concern is not resolved within 30 days of initial submission, the parent has the right to pursue additional remedies as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b).

F. Parent Requests for Information

A parent may request in writing from the principal of the school in which his or her child is enrolled any of the information the parent has the right to access under Part 3 of Article 7B of Chapter 115C. The request shall be submitted in writing and shall identify the specific information that the parent seeks. The superintendent is authorized to develop a form to be used for any such requests.

Within 10 business days after the written request has been received by the principal, the principal shall either provide the requested information to the parent or provide an extension notice to the parent that, due to the volume or complexity of the request, the information will be provided no later than 20 business days from the date of the parental request.

If the principal (1) denies or fails to respond to the request for information within 10 business days or (2) fails to provide information within 20 business days following an extension notice, the parent may then submit the written request for information to the superintendent, along with a statement specifying the time frame of the denial or failure to provide information by the principal.

If the superintendent denies or does not respond to the request for information within 10 business days after the written request has been received by the superintendent, the parent may appeal the denial or lack of response to the Board no later than 20 business days from the date of the request to the superintendent. The Board will place the parent's appeal on the agenda for the next Board meeting occurring more than three business days after submission of the appeal. Prior to that meeting, the Chair and Vice Chair shall consult and determine whether the Board's review will be based solely on the written record or whether a hearing before the Board will be scheduled per policy 2500. If the Chair and Vice Chair are unable to agree, a hearing will be scheduled.

The Board's decision is final and not subject to judicial review.

For purposes of this Section F, "business day" does not include Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days, or holidays, as set forth in the school calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full business day following the receipt of the written request.

The information in Section F of this policy will be posted on the school district's website along with the list of parents' legal rights for their child's education as described in G.S. 115C-76.25.

G. Community Services Available

A variety of community services are available to provide parents and families of students in the school district with needed information, support, and resources. Parents are encouraged to utilize applicable community services included on the site linked below:

H. Reporting Requirements

By September 15 of each year, the superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education parental involvement information as required by State Board of Education Policy PRNT-002 and G.S. 115C-76.70.

Revised: July 1, 2025

PARENT CONCERN PROCESS

Students are the number one priority of both parents and DCS. Having said that, it is recognized there may be times when parents have concerns. To expedite answers to questions and resolutions to challenges that may arise, DCS has put into place a process to address all parent concerns and questions as efficiently and effectively as possible.

When a question or concern arises:

1. Please contact your child's teacher. *If you discuss the matter with the teacher and are unable to resolve it at this level,*
2. Please schedule a time to meet with your child's principal. *If you discuss the matter with the principal and are unable to resolve it at this level,*
3. Please contact Dara Bailey, Director of Administrative Services/Policy/Parent Affairs at 910-296-6645 or dubailey@duplinschools.net.

PARENT PORTAL

Infinite Campus, our district's student information system, provides parents and students with real-time access to grades, attendance, assignments, schedules, and more. It offers a variety of helpful features designed to streamline communication between families and schools.

With a single, user-friendly login through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal, families can easily manage and access multiple student accounts.

For more information and to create an account, visit the Parent section of the Duplin County Schools website.

PEST MANAGEMENT: Policy Code 9205

Pests are significant problems for people and property. The pesticides that are commonly used in pest control may pose a potential risk to human health and the environment. The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to maintaining a safe educational environment while also protecting the physical conditions of school facilities. To this end, the Board will utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs or incorporate IPM procedures into the maintenance program conducted by the school district. The superintendent will appoint an IPM contact person to facilitate the use of IPM techniques. As necessary, the superintendent will develop administrative procedures for the IPM program.

A. OVERVIEW OF INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

IPM is a comprehensive approach that combines effective, economic, environmentally sound and socially acceptable methods to prevent and solve pest problems. IPM emphasizes pest prevention and provides a decision-making process for determining if, when and where pest suppression is needed and what control tactics are appropriate.

Through its IPM program, the school district will strive to do the following:

1. minimize any potential health, environmental and economic risks from pests or from the use of pest control methods;
2. minimize loss or damage to school structures or property from pests or from the use of pest control methods;
3. minimize the risk of pests spreading into the community; and
4. enhance the quality of facility use for the school and community.

Pesticide use will not be based *solely* on a schedule. School personnel in charge of pest management will consider how and when pesticides need to be used to achieve the pest management goals.

B. USE OF IPM IN FACILITY AND MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

The school district shall include pest management considerations in facilities planning and maintenance. The IPM contact person, in conjunction with the school district's contracted pest management professional, will recommend to the superintendent any landscaping changes, structural modifications and sanitation changes needed to reduce or prevent pest problems. The superintendent will review such recommendations and may authorize action to address necessary minor changes in a timely manner, as the budget permits. For significant changes or changes that require a significant expenditure of funds, the superintendent will recommend changes to the Board for approval.

C. PROVIDING INFORMATION ON IPM TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Staff, students, pest managers, parents and the public will be informed about potential school pest problems, school IPM policies and procedures, and their respective roles in achieving the desired pest management objectives. Each year, the principal or designee will ensure that the student handbook includes the schedule of anticipated pesticide use on school property and a notice to parents, guardians and custodians of their right to request notification of nonscheduled pesticide use. Additionally, the principal or designee shall annually notify school staff of scheduled pesticide use on school property and of their right to request notice of nonscheduled pesticide use. Notice of nonscheduled pesticide use should be made at least 72 hours in advance of such use, to the extent possible.

D. RECORDKEEPING

Records of all pest management activities must be maintained, including inspection records, monitoring records, pest surveillance

data sheets or other indicators of pest populations, and records of structural repairs and modifications. If pesticides are used, records must be maintained on site to meet the requirements of the state regulatory agency and school Board.

Adopted: June 14, 2011

ANTICIPATED PESTICIDE SCHEDULE FOR 2025-26

The following dates indicate the anticipated Pesticide Schedule for 2025-26: July 2, 2025, August 5, 2025, September 2, 2025, October 7, 2025, November 4, 2025, December 2, 2025, January 6, 2026, February 3, 2026, March 3, 2026, April 7, 2026, May 5, 2026 and June 2, 2026.

** Parents and guardians have the right to request from the principal notification of nonscheduled pesticide use.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The intent of the North Carolina Healthful Living Standard Course of Study is to establish competency goals and objectives for the teaching and learning of behaviors that contribute to a healthful lifestyle and improved quality of life for all students. The NC Healthful Living Standard Course of Study is a combination of two content areas: health education and physical education. The two courses should complement each other as reflected in the Essential Standard Strands and Clarifying Objectives. Attention should also be given to ensure students experience a comprehensive sequential educational program that involves learning a variety of skills and concepts that are health enhancing.

In addition to the Elementary and Middle School grade level expectations for Healthful Living as outlined by the North Carolina Healthful Living Essential Standards, a minimum of 1 credit of Healthful Living, which reflects both Health Education and Physical Education, is required for graduation from a North Carolina public high school.

LOCAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT PROMOTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Regulation Code 3420-R

I. Grade Level Proficiency Guidelines

The following grade level student accountability guidelines are based on a belief in the need to provide early and ongoing assistance to students who need it. Our aim must be that all students have the reading, writing, language, mathematics, and computing skills to be successful at the next level of schooling. These guidelines provide multiple criteria for assessing student readiness to perform at the next grade level of study. These guidelines, in addition to others the local school determines to be appropriate, should be used by the principal and teacher(s) in assessing each student's preparedness to perform successfully at the next grade level. These guidelines recognize the legal authority of the principal, in consultation with teachers, to promote and to retain students not performing at grade level expectations. Teachers should inform and assist parents in understanding these guidelines and grade level expectations. Parents should be encouraged to collaborate with the teacher(s) in monitoring and assessing their child's progress and performance throughout the year. Parent input should be requested and considered in making promotion and retention decisions. This decision should be made based on what is in the child's best interest, both academically and personally. Parents have a right to appeal a local school decision to the superintendent and/or Board of Education.

A. K-2 Promotion Guidelines

Kindergarten

- Demonstrates progress towards proficiency in Reading Standards for Foundational Skills (print concepts, handwriting, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency).
- Math Summative Assessment – A reasonable understanding (Level III/IV) on each domain assessed (Counting & Cardinality, Operations & Algebraic Thinking, Numbers and Operations in Based Ten, Measurement & Data, and Geometry).
- Progress toward Writing proficiency – proficient as indicated on writing rubric.
- Meet the state-approved diagnostic assessment end of year score for literacy/reading.
- Age and maturity of student (social, emotional, and physical)
- Attendance Record
- Prior Retentions
- Student growth, pertinent information, and assessment considerations deemed appropriate to use in determining a student's readiness to perform successfully at the next grade level

First Grade

- Demonstrates progress towards proficiency in Reading Standards for Foundational Skills (print concepts, handwriting, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency).
- Math Summative Assessment – A reasonable understanding (Level III/IV) on each domain assessed (Operations & Algebraic Thinking, Numbers and Operations in Based Ten, Measurement & Data, and Geometry). Progress toward Writing proficiency – proficient as indicated on writing rubric.
- Meet the state-approved diagnostic assessment end of year score for literacy/reading
- Age and maturity of the student (social, emotional, and physical)
- Attendance Record
- Prior Retentions
- Student growth, pertinent information, and assessment considerations deemed appropriate to use in determining a student's readiness to perform successfully at the next grade level

Second Grade

- Demonstrates progress towards proficiency in Reading Standards for Foundational Skills (print concepts, handwriting, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency).
- Math Summative Assessment –A reasonable understanding (Level III/IV) on each domain assessed (Operations & Algebraic Thinking, Numbers and Operations in Based Ten, Measurement & Data, and Geometry).
- Progress toward Writing proficiency – proficient as indicated on writing rubric.
- Age and maturity of student (social, emotional, and physical)
- Attendance Record
- Prior Retentions
- Student growth, pertinent information, and assessment considerations deemed appropriate to use in determining a student's readiness to perform successfully at the next grade level.

B. Third Grade Promotion Guidelines

Read to Achieve Requirement for meeting Third Grade Promotion Standards:

- a. Proficient score on BOG 3 **or**
- b. Proficient score on grade (EOG) reading assessment **or**
- c. Pass state developed alternative assessment (Read to Achieve Test) **or**
- d. Meet 70% proficiency on passages in the portfolio **or**
Meet the state-approved diagnostic assessment end-of-the-year score for literacy and reading

Local Promotion Guidelines in Grade Three

1. Progress toward proficiency in mathematics
2. Progress toward Writing proficiency – proficient as indicated on writing rubric
3. Class coursework – passing reading, mathematics, language, and two (2) other subjects
4. Age and maturity of student (social, emotional, and physical)
5. Attendance record
6. Prior retentions
7. Student work samples/portfolios
8. Input from Others (i.e., parents, resource teachers, outside agencies, etc.)
9. Student growth, pertinent information, and assessment considerations deemed appropriate to use in determining a student's readiness to perform successfully at the next grade level
10. Progress in appropriate and focused intervention to assist the student in meeting grade level expectations.

C. Promotion Guidelines in Grades Four-Eight

1. Progress toward proficiency in both reading and mathematics
2. Class coursework – passing reading, mathematics, language, and two (2) other subjects
3. Age and maturity of student
4. Attendance record
5. Number of times retained previously
6. Student work samples/portfolios
7. Input from Others (i.e., parents, resource teachers, outside agencies, etc.)
8. Other pertinent information and assessment data deemed appropriate to use in determining a student's preparedness to perform at the next grade level
9. Progress in appropriate and focused intervention to assist the student in meeting grade level expectations.

II. Duplin County Board of Education Requirements

A. Notification Statement:

1. At the end of the first semester, written notification shall be made to the parents of all students who are potentially at risk of being retained. A copy of this communication shall be maintained by the principal.
2. By the end of the **third grading period**, the School-Based Leadership Team shall meet to evaluate the progress of all at-risk students. The parents of students not meeting grade level expectations will be invited for a conference to review the student's status and to discuss intervention strategies that may assist the student in reaching proficiency. A copy of the notification and summary of findings shall be maintained at the school.
3. At the end of the school year, a final written notification shall be sent with the report card to the parents of students who will be retained.

B. High School Promotion Requirements

In accordance with graduation requirements, grade level classification is based on a student's **maximum potential** to earn a credit along with the following criteria:

1. To be classified as a **sophomore**, a student must have passed the number of units equal to his/her maximum potential less 2 units. One unit must be English I and one unit must be NC Math 1.
2. To be classified as a **junior**, a student must have passed the number of units equal to his/her maximum potential less than 3 units.

One unit must be English II.

- To be classified as a **senior**, a student must have passed the number of units equal to his/her maximum potential less 4 units. One unit must be English III.

	Grade	Units
Duplin County Board of Education	9 th – 10 th	English I and NC Math 1 plus 4 units = 6 units
	10 th – 11 th	English I and II plus 11 units = 13 units
	11 th – 12 th	English I, II, and III plus 17 units = 20 units

- Mid-year grade promotions are not permitted, except in cases where a high school student was previously retained.

Students approved for the three-year accelerated graduation track will graduate as 11th graders without participating in senior activities or receiving senior privileges, unless they meet the established criteria for promotion to Grade 12 at the conclusion of their sophomore year (including but not limited to Homecoming senior court, Prom King or Queen, senior parking, etc.).

Please note that senior privileges do not include participation in graduation ceremonies or graduation-related services (e.g. Baccalaureate).

For high school graduation requirements, refer to *Policy 3460 Graduation Requirements*.

Revised: July 1, 2025

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR/SAY SOMETHING ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM

Students and parents should notify any staff member of any acts of violence, harassment or bullying or any other unusual or suspicious behavior that may endanger safety. Anyone who has any concerns about safety may use the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System. Reports can be made via the app, the link on the DCS website, or by calling 1-844-5-SAYNOW. For emergencies, call 911. Ongoing student education efforts will aim at minimizing any fear, peer pressure, embarrassment, or other impediments to students reporting potential problems.

RULES FOR USE OF SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT: Regulation Code 4302-R

The following rules will govern the use of seclusion and restraint by school personnel. As used in this regulation, “school personnel” means employees of the Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) and any persons working on school grounds or at a school

function (1) under a contract or written agreement with the school district to provide educational or related services to students or (2) for another agency providing educational or related services to students.

Seclusion and restraint will not be used on students with disabilities (1) for behavior(s) that would not result in seclusion or restraint for students without identified disabilities, unless the use is authorized by the student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan for an educational or safety-related purpose, or (2) based on assumptions or stereotypes about disabilities or students with disabilities generally.

A. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Physical restraint means the use of physical force to restrict the free movement of all or a part of a student’s body.

Physical restraint will be considered to be a reasonable use of force when used in the following circumstances:

- as reasonably needed to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
- as reasonably needed to maintain order or to prevent or break up a fight;
- as reasonably needed for self-defense;
- as reasonably needed to ensure the safety of any student, employee, volunteer, or other person present;
- as reasonably needed to teach a skill, to calm or comfort a student, or to prevent self-injurious behavior;
- as reasonably needed to escort a student safely from one area to another;
- if used as provided for in an IEP, Section 504 plan, or behavior intervention plan; or
- as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person’s property.

Except as set forth above, physical restraint of students will not be considered a reasonable use of force, and its use is prohibited. In addition, physical restraint will not be considered a reasonable use of force when used solely as a disciplinary consequence.

Prone restraint is a form of physical restraint in which a person is held in a face-down position on the floor or other surface. Prone restraint does not include placement in a face-down position as part of a necessary medical intervention. The use of prone restraint is prohibited.

B. MECHANICAL RESTRAINT

Mechanical restraint means the use of any device or material attached or adjacent to a student’s body that restricts freedom of movement or normal access to any portion of the student’s body and that the student cannot easily remove.

Mechanical restraint of a student by school personnel is permissible only in the following circumstances:

1. when properly used as an assistive technology device included in the student's IEP, Section 504 plan, or behavior intervention plan or as otherwise prescribed by a medical or related service provider;
2. when using seat belts or other safety restraints to secure a student during transportation;
3. as reasonably needed to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
4. as reasonably needed for self-defense; or
5. as reasonably needed to ensure the safety of any student, employee, volunteer, or other person.

Except as set forth above, mechanical restraint, including the tying down, taping, or strapping down of a student, will not be considered to be a reasonable use of force, and its use is prohibited.

C. SECLUSION

Seclusion means the confinement of a student alone in an enclosed space from which the student is (a) physically prevented from leaving by locking hardware or other means or (b) incapable of leaving due to physical or intellectual capacity.

Seclusion of a student by school personnel may be used in the following circumstances:

1. as reasonably needed to respond to a person in control of a weapon or other dangerous object;
2. as reasonably needed to maintain order or prevent or break up a fight;
3. as reasonably needed for self-defense;
4. as reasonably needed when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent physical harm to self or others or imminent substantial destruction of school or another person's property; or
5. when used as specified in the student's IEP, Section 504, or behavior intervention plan; and
 - a. the student is monitored by an adult in close proximity who is able to see and hear the student at all times while the student is in seclusion;
 - b. the student is released from seclusion upon cessation of the behaviors that led to the seclusion or as otherwise specified in the student's IEP, Section 504 plan, or behavior intervention plan;
 - c. the confining space has been approved for such use by the school system;
 - d. the space is appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled; and
 - e. the space is free from objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.

Except as set forth above, the use of seclusion is not considered to be reasonable force, and its use is prohibited. In addition, seclusion will not be considered a reasonable use of force when used solely as a disciplinary consequence.

D. ISOLATION

Isolation means a behavior management technique in which a student is placed alone in an enclosed space from which the student is not prevented from leaving.

Isolation is permitted as a behavior management technique provided that:

1. the isolation space is appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled;
2. the duration of the isolation is reasonable in light of the purpose for the isolation;
3. the student is reasonably monitored while in isolation; and
4. the isolation space is free from objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.

E. TIME-OUT

Time-out means a behavior management technique in which a student is separated from other students for a limited period of time in a monitored setting. Teachers are authorized to use time-out to regulate behavior within their classrooms.

F. AVERSIVE PROCEDURES

Aversive procedure means a systematic physical or sensory intervention program for modifying the behavior of a student with a disability that causes or reasonably may be expected to cause one or more of the following:

1. significant physical harm, such as tissue damage, physical illness, or death;
2. serious and foreseeable long-term psychological impairment; or
3. obvious repulsion on the part of observers who cannot reconcile such extreme procedures with acceptable standard practice, for example:
 - a. electric shock applied to the body;
 - b. extremely loud auditory stimuli;
 - c. forcible introduction of foul substances to the mouth, eyes, ears, nose, or skin;
 - d. placement in a tub of cold water or shower;
 - e. slapping, pinching, hitting, or pulling hair;
 - f. blindfolding or other forms of visual blocking;
 - g. unreasonable withholding of meals;
 - h. eating one's own vomit; or
 - i. denial of reasonable access to toileting facilities.

The use of aversive procedures is prohibited by law and by the Duplin County Board of Education.

G. NOTICE, REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION

1. School personnel shall promptly notify the principal or designee of any of the following:
 - a. any use of aversive procedures;
 - b. any prohibited use of mechanical restraint;
 - c. any use of physical restraint resulting in observable physical injury to a student;
 - d. any prohibited use of seclusion; or
 - e. any seclusion exceeding 10 minutes or the amount of time specified on a student's behavior intervention plan.
2. Notice to Parents
When a principal or designee has personal or actual knowledge of any of the incidents listed above in subsection G.1, he or she shall promptly notify the student's parent or guardian and shall provide the name of the school employee whom the parent or guardian may contact regarding the incident. Such notice shall be provided by the end of the workday during which the incident occurred when reasonably possible, but no later than the end of the following workday. Such notice also shall be provided in addition to the written incident report required in subsection G.3, below.
3. Written Report to Parents
Within a reasonable period of time not to exceed 30 days after incident listed in subsection G. 1 of this regulation occurs, the principal or designee shall provide the parent or guardian with a written incident report. This report must include the following:
 - a. the date, time of day, location, duration, and description of the incident and interventions;
 - b. the events or events that led up to the incident;
 - c. the nature and extent of any injury to the student; and
 - d. the name of a school employee the parent or guardian can contact regarding the incident.
4. Reporting to State Board and NCDPI
The Board will maintain a record of incidents reported under the procedure described in subsection G.3, above, and will provide this information annually to the State Board of Education.

In accordance with state and federal statutes and State Board of Education policies, any occurrence of following actions by school staff and any student victim of the actions listed below must be reported to NCDPI:
 - a. Aversive procedure (per state definition)
 - b. Physical restraint (per state and/or federal definition)
 - c. Mechanical restraint (per state and/or federal definition)
 - d. Seclusion (per state and/or federal definition)
5. Non-Retaliation for Reporting
An employee making a report alleging a prohibited use of physical or mechanical restraint, seclusion or aversive procedure will not be discharged, threatened or retaliated against through compensation, terms, conditions, location or privilege of employment unless the employee knew or should have known that the report was false.

H. NOTICE OF REGULATION

All at the beginning of each school year, principals will provide copies of this regulation to each staff member and will discuss reporting procedures for any abuse of this regulation. A copy of the regulation will be shared with parents at the beginning of each school year.

I. TRAINING

All Duplin County School District employees will receive awareness sessions on the Seclusion and Restraint legislation. Duplin County Schools will train staff members at each school in the Crisis Prevention Intervention model. Principals will make lateral entry and new staff, employed after the beginning of school, aware of these guidelines. Staff development will be addressed in the LEA Safe School Plan every update. Contractors such as: psychologist, therapist, Dispute Settlement Center, etc. will be provided copies of these procedures on an annual basis.

Revised: August 9, 2022

SAFE SURRENDER LAW

North Carolina's Safe Surrender law allows an overwhelmed parent to surrender a newborn to a responsible adult and walk away. The baby must be unharmed. An infant up to 7 days old may be surrendered to any responsible adult. Anyone who receives a baby in this way must keep the baby safe and warm and call 911 or the county social services department immediately. The baby will be adopted. This law is properly called the law to "Decriminalize Abandonment of an Infant."

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Much care has been taken in creating schedules for students. It takes an enormous amount of time to schedule everyone with the classes that the students have selected while at the same time trying to make sure that their classes are not overcrowded. Please see your child's principal if you desire a schedule change.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

**** Students are expected to be at their assigned bus stop a minimum of 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.**

Walking to the Bus Stop

- ✓ Always walk on the sidewalk to the bus stop, never run. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left facing traffic.
- ✓ While at the bus stop, wait quietly in a safe place well away from the road. Do not run and play while waiting.

Getting on the Bus

- ✓ Wait until the driver signals you to begin boarding the bus.
- ✓ Enter the bus in a line with younger students in front. Hold the handrail while going up and down the stairs.
- ✓ When entering the bus, go directly to a seat. Remain seated and face forward during the entire ride.

Riding the Bus

- ✓ Always speak quietly on the bus so the driver will not be distracted. Always be silent when a bus comes to a railroad crossing so the driver can hear if a train is coming.
- ✓ Never throw things on the bus or out the windows. Keep the aisles clear at all times. Feet should be directly in front of you on the floor and book bags should be kept on your lap. Large instruments or sports equipment should not block the aisle or emergency exits.
- ✓ Never play with the emergency exits. If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- ✓ Hands should be kept to yourself at all times while riding on the bus. Fighting and picking on others creates a dangerous bus ride.

Exiting the Bus

- ✓ If you are crossing a road, wait until the driver signals you before crossing.
- ✓ If you leave something on the bus, never return to the bus to get it. The driver may not see you come back and he/she may begin moving the bus. Make sure that drawstrings and other loose objects are secure before getting off the bus so they do not get caught on the handrail or door.
- ✓ Respect the "Danger Zone" which surrounds all sides of the bus. The "Danger Zone" is ten feet wide on all sides of the bus.
- ✓ Always remain 10 steps away from the bus to be out of the "Danger Zone" and where the driver can see you.
- ✓ Always cross the street in front of the bus. Never go behind the bus. If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you attempt to pick it up, so they will know where you are.
- ✓ Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the care with a stranger. Always go straight to your home and tell your parents if a stranger tries to talk to you or pick you up.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS Policy Code: 5015

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") recognizes the valuable contributions that school volunteers make to the learning process and the educational goals of the school district. Instructional programs are enhanced through the contributions of students' parents, community members, and local business and industry. These volunteers contribute time, resources, and expertise that assist the school district to reach the goal of providing a sound basic education to all children.

The superintendent shall provide for parents to be notified of their right to take four hours of unpaid leave from their jobs every year in order to volunteer in their child's school as stated in G.S. 95-28.3.

The Board encourages school administrators to develop and implement plans and procedures for utilizing school volunteers. The superintendent and designees are responsible for implementing and supervising school volunteer programs. School volunteer programs must provide the following:

1. adequate screening of all volunteers based upon the amount of contact they will have with students;
2. the requirement that volunteers comply with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools;
3. reasonable supervision of volunteers based at least in part upon the amount of contact they will have with students; and
4. adequate training of volunteers, including familiarizing volunteers with applicable laws, Board policies (including policy 4040/7310 Staff-Student Relations), administrative procedures and school rules.

All school volunteers are expected to be professional and dependable in their volunteer activities. School volunteers must not be given access to confidential information in violation of law or Board policy. See policy 2125/7315, Confidential Information and policy 4705/7825, Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information. All school volunteers, including volunteers for any school related program or field trip, must submit to a criminal background check prior to volunteering. In addition, a parent or guardian accompanying a student(s) on any off-site school program or field trip must submit to a criminal background check and such other procedures as may be required by the superintendent.

Revised: February 3, 2020

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION Policy Code: 4351

A short-term suspension is the disciplinary exclusion of a student from attending his or her assigned school for up to 10 school days. A short-term suspension does not include (1) the removal of a student from class by the classroom teacher, the principal or other authorized school personnel for the remainder of the subject period or for less than one-half of the school day, (2) the changing of a student's location to another room or place on the school premises or (3) a student's absence under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school). A student who is placed on a short-term suspension will not be permitted to be on school property or to take part in any school function

during the period of suspension without prior approval from the principal.

The principal or designee has the authority to determine when a short-term suspension is an appropriate consequence and to impose the suspension, so long as all relevant Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) policies are followed.

In accordance with G.S. 115C-390.6(e) and 115C-45(c)(1), a student is not entitled to appeal the principal’s decision to impose a short-term suspension to either the superintendent or the Board unless it is appealable on some other basis.

A. Pre-Suspension Rights of the Student

Except in the circumstances described below, a student must be provided with an opportunity for an informal hearing with the principal or designee before a short-term suspension is imposed. The principal or designee may hold the hearing immediately after giving the student oral or written notice of the charges against him or her. At the informal hearing, the student has the right to be present, to be informed of the charges and the basis for the accusations against him or her, and to make statements in defense or mitigation of the charges.

The principal or designee may impose a short-term suspension without first providing the student with an opportunity for a hearing if the presence of the student (1) creates a direct and immediate threat to the safety of other students or staff or (2) substantially disrupts or interferes with the education of other students or the maintenance of discipline at the school. In such cases, the principal or designee shall give the student notice of the charges and an opportunity for an informal hearing as soon as practicable.

B. Student Rights during the Suspension

A student under a short-term suspension must be provided with the following:

1. the opportunity to take textbooks home for the duration of the suspension;
2. upon request, the right to receive all missed assignments and, to the extent practicable, the materials distributed to students in connection with such assignments; and
3. the opportunity to take any quarterly, semester or grading period examinations missed during the suspension period.

C. Notice to Parent or Guardian

When imposing a short-term suspension, the principal or designee shall provide the student’s parent or guardian with notice that includes the reason for the suspension and a description of the student conduct upon which the suspension is based. The principal or designee must give this notice by the end of the workday during which the suspension is imposed when reasonably possible, but in no event more than two days after the suspension is imposed. If English is the second language of the parent, the notice must be provided in English and in the parent’s primary language, when the appropriate foreign language resources are readily available. Both versions must be in plain language and easily understandable.

The initial notice may be by telephone, but it must be followed by timely written notice. The written notice must include all of the information listed above and may be sent by fax, e-mail or any other method reasonably designed to give actual notice.

School officials also shall maintain a copy of the written notice in the student’s educational record.

Multiple short-term suspensions for a student with disabilities will be addressed in accordance with the *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities* and other applicable state and federal law.

Revised: June 6, 2017

START AND END TIMES

- All schools, except Duplin Early College High School, will begin their instructional day at 7:50 AM and will conclude their instructional day at 3:05 PM.
- Duplin Early College High School will begin at 8:30 AM and will conclude at 3:30 PM.

STUDENT RECORDS (FERPA): Policy Code 4700

All student records must be current and maintained with appropriate measures of security and confidentiality. The principal is responsible for complying with all legal requirements pertaining to the maintenance, review and release of student records retained at the school. For purposes of this policy “student records” or “student education records” are those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to the student that are maintained by the school system or by a party acting for the school system.

A. ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

The Special Advisor for Accountability/Improvement Systems shall provide eligible students and parents with annual notification of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The notice must contain all information required by federal law and regulations, including the following

1. the right to inspect and review the student’s education records and the procedure for exercising this right;
2. the right to request amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student’s privacy rights; and the procedure for exercising this right;
3. the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent;
4. the type of information designated as directory information and the right to opt out of release of directory information;
5. that the school district releases records to other institutions that have requested the information and in which the student seeks

- or intends to enroll;
- 6. the right to opt out of releasing the student's name, address and phone number to military recruiters or institutions of higher education that request such information;
- 7. a specification of the criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest if a school official discloses or intends to disclose personally identifiable information to school officials without consent;
- 8. notification if the school district uses contractors, consultants, volunteers or similar persons as school officials to perform certain school district services and functions that it would otherwise perform itself; and
- 9. the right to file complaints with the Student Privacy Policy Office in the U.S. Department of Education.

School officials are not required to individually notify parents or eligible students of their rights but must provide the notice in a manner reasonably likely to inform the parents and eligible students of their rights. Effective notice must be provided to parents or eligible students with disabilities or those whose primary or home language is not English.

B. DEFINITION OF PARENT AND ELIGIBLE STUDENT

1. **Parent**
For purposes of this policy, the term "parent" includes a natural parent, a guardian or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. If the parents of a student are separated or divorced, both parents have the right to access the student's records as provided in this policy, unless the school district has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute or other legally binding document that specifically revokes these rights.
2. **Eligible Student**
For purposes of this policy, an eligible student is a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education. The rights afforded to parents under this policy transfer to an eligible student. However, parents may still have access to the records as long as the student is claimed as a dependent by the parent for federal income tax purposes. An eligible student who desires to prevent access to records by his or her parents must furnish to the principal information verifying that the student is not a dependent of his or her parents. If a parent of a student who is at least 18 and no longer attending a school within the district wishes to inspect and review the student's records, he or she must provide information verifying that the student is a dependent for federal income tax purposes.

A student under age 18 may have access to student records only upon the consent of his or her parents.

C. CLASSIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

1. **Student Education Records**
Student education records may be separated into several categories, including, but not limited to, the following.
 - a. **Cumulative Records**
The cumulative record is the official record for each student. The cumulative record includes student identification information, such as the student's name, address (or a homeless student's living situation), sex, race, birthplace and birth date; family data including the parents' names, addresses, work and home telephone numbers and places of employment; academic work completed; grades; standardized test scores; health screenings and immunization documentation; attendance records; withdrawal and reentry records; discipline records; honors and activities; class rank; date of graduation; and follow-up records.
 - b. **Discipline Records**
Student discipline records are part of the student's official record and must be maintained and reviewed pursuant to policy 4345, Student Discipline Records. Discipline records must be expunged and forwarded pursuant to the requirements of law and the procedures of policy 4345.
 - c. **Records of Students with Disabilities**
Students with recognized disabilities must be accorded all rights in regard to their records as provided by state and federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and policy 3520, Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities. Records for a student identified as a student with a disability are considered part of the student's official records and must be maintained in accordance with all appropriate federal and state regulations. Access to these records will be restricted to personnel having specific responsibility in this area. A list of all approved personnel having access to these restricted files will be updated as needed, and a current, dated list will be posted in the student records location.
 - d. **Records Received from the Department of Social Services**
The Department of Social Services may disclose confidential information to the school district in order to protect a juvenile from abuse or neglect. Any confidential information disclosed under these circumstances must remain confidential and may only be redisclosed for purposes directly connected with carrying out the school district's mandated educational responsibilities.
 - e. **Juvenile Records**
Juvenile records include documentation or information regarding students who are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. These records may be received from local law enforcement and/or other local agencies authorized to share information concerning juveniles in accordance with G.S. 7B-3100. These records also may include notice from the sheriff to the Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") that a student has been required to register with the sheriff because the student has been found to be a danger to the community under G.S. Chapter 14, Part 4. Such documents must not be a part of a student's official records but must be maintained by the principal in a safe, locked storage area that is separate from the student's other records. The principal shall not make a copy of such documents under any circumstances.

Juvenile records will be used only to protect the safety of or to improve the educational opportunities for the student or others. The principal may share juvenile records with individuals who have (a) direct guidance, teaching or supervisory responsibility for the student and (b) a specific need to know in order to protect the safety of the student

and others. Persons provided access to juvenile records must indicate in writing that they have read the document(s) and agree to maintain confidentiality of the records.

The principal or designee must destroy juvenile documents if he or she receives notification that a court no longer has jurisdiction over the student or if the court grants the student's petition for expunction of the records. The principal or designee shall destroy all other information received from an examination of juvenile records when he or she finds that the information is no longer needed to protect the safety of or to improve the educational opportunities for the student or others. If the student graduates, withdraws from school, transfers to another school, is suspended for the remainder of the school year or is expelled, the principal shall return all documents not destroyed to the juvenile court counselor. If the student is transferring, the principal shall provide the juvenile court counselor with the name and address of the school to which the student is transferring.

f. Other Student Records

School district personnel may also keep other student records but must review such records annually and destroy them in accordance with Section K of this policy.

2. Records Not Considered Education Records (Sole Possession, Employment and Law Enforcement Records) Student education records do not include, and release of information under this policy does not apply to:

- a. records made by teachers, counselors and administrators that are in the sole possession of the maker thereof and that are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute;
- b. employment records of student employees if those records relate exclusively to the student in his or her capacity as an employee and are not made available for any other use; and
- c. records created by a law enforcement unit of the school district if created for a law enforcement purpose and maintained solely by the law enforcement unit of the school district. However, a law enforcement record containing information that was obtained from a student's confidential file or other education record must be treated as an education record and may be released only in accordance with this policy.

D. RECORDS OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE NORTH CAROLINA ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

Students or parents enrolled in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (NCACP) must provide a valid NCACP authorization card to the school principal if they wish to keep their home address confidential. The school system will maintain a confidential record of the actual home address for admission and assignment purposes only and will not release that address except as provided by law. With the exception of such specially-maintained records, student records will include only the substitute address provided by the (NCACP) and not the actual home address of any students or parents for whom a valid NCACP authorization card is on file.

When transferring the record of a student participating in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program to a school outside of the district, the transferring school may send the files to the Address Confidentiality Program participant (parent or guardian) via the substitute address provided by the Address Confidentiality Program.

E. RECORDS OF MISSING CHILDREN

Upon notification by a law enforcement agency or the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons of the disappearance of a child who is currently or was previously enrolled in the school, school officials shall flag the record of that child. If the missing child's record is requested by another school district, the principal shall provide notice of the request to the superintendent and the agency that notified the school that the child was missing. The principal shall provide the agency with a copy of any written request for information concerning the missing child's record.

Any information received indicating that a student transferring into the district is a missing child must be reported promptly to the superintendent and the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons.

F. RECORDS OF CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

In compliance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and G.S. 115C- 407.12, school administrators shall assist in the timely enrollment of, children of military families, as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, by facilitating the transfer of their educational records.

1. For Students Leaving the School District

In the event that official education records cannot be released to the parents of military children who are transferring away from the school district, the custodian of records shall prepare and furnish to the parent a complete set of unofficial education records containing uniform information as determined by the Interstate Commission.

When a request for a student's official record is received from the student's new school, school officials shall process and furnish the official records to the student's new school within 10 days.

2. For Students Enrolling in the School District

Upon receiving an unofficial education record from the student's previous school, school administrators shall enroll the student and place him or her in classes as quickly as possible based on the information in the unofficial records, pending validation by the official records.

Simultaneous with the enrollment and conditional placement of the student, school administrators shall request the student's official record from his or her previous school.

G. REVIEW, RELEASE OF RECORDS TO PARENT OR ELIGIBLE STUDENT

1. Review by Parent or Eligible Student

A parent or eligible student may access the student's education records upon proper request. The principal or guidance office personnel of the student's school shall schedule an appointment as soon as possible but no later than 45 days after the request by the parent or eligible student. The parent or eligible student may formally review the student's complete education records only in the presence of the principal or a designee competent to explain the records. School personnel shall not destroy any education records if there is an outstanding request to inspect or review the records.

2. Review of Video or Audio Recordings and Photographs

a. Parent's Right to Review

Upon request, a parent or eligible student may inspect and review a video or audio recording or photograph that is determined to be an education record of the student. Individuals acting on behalf of a parent or eligible child, such as advocates or attorneys, will not be permitted to review a video or audio recording or photo unless accompanied by the parent or eligible student.

b. Status as Education Record

A video or audio recording or photo will be deemed an education record of the student if it is directly related to the student and is maintained by the school system or its agent, as provided by law. A photo, video, or audio recording (such as a surveillance video), that is created and maintained by a law enforcement unit for a law enforcement purpose, is not an education record; however, a copy of such photo, video, or audio recording provided to the school for disciplinary or other school purposes may be an education record if it is directly related to a student and is maintained by the school system.

c. Records of More Than One Student

If the recording or photo is an education record of multiple students, the school system shall make reasonable efforts to redact or segregate out the portions of the recording or photo directly related to other students before providing the parent or eligible student access, provided doing so would not destroy the meaning of the record. If redaction or segregation of the recording or photo cannot reasonably be accomplished or would destroy the meaning of the record, then the parent of each student to whom the recording or photo directly relates or such eligible students themselves shall be permitted to access the entire record.

d. Copies of Recordings and Photos

A copy of a video or audio recording or photo will be provided to a parent or eligible student only (1) if circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect the recording or photo, such as when the parent no longer lives within commuting distance of the school system; (2) when directed by a court order or subpoena; or (3) when otherwise required by law.

3. Request to Amend the Education Record

A parent or eligible student has the right to challenge an item in the student education record believed to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. The principal shall examine a request to amend a student record item and respond in writing to the person who challenges the item. Subsequent steps, if necessary, will follow the student grievance procedures as provided in policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure. If the final decision is that the information in the record is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, the principal shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of the school district.

H. RELEASE OR DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS TO OTHERS

Before releasing or disclosing education records as permitted by law, school officials shall use reasonable methods to identify and authenticate the identity of the party to whom the records are disclosed.

1. Release/Disclosure with Parental Consent

School officials shall obtain written permission from a parent or eligible student before releasing or disclosing student records that contain personally identifiable information, except in circumstances where the school district is authorized by law to release the records without such permission. The written permission must specify the records to be released, the purpose of the release and the party(ies) to whom they are to be released.

2. Release/Disclosure without Parental Consent

School district officials shall promptly release student records when a student transfers to another school. The records custodian may release or disclose records with personally identifiable information without parental permission to the extent permitted by law, including to other school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the records.

Personally identifiable information from a student's record may be released or disclosed to someone other than a parent or eligible student without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student only as specifically provided by federal law. Except as otherwise permitted by federal law, when personally identifiable information from a student's record is released or disclosed to someone other than a parent or eligible student without their written consent, the party to whom the information is released must agree not to disclose the information to any other party without the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student.

The superintendent shall employ reasonable methods to ensure that teachers and other school officials obtain access only to those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests.

3. Release of Directory Information

Permission of the parent or eligible student is not required for the release of information that is designated as directory

information by the Board, provided that the parent or eligible student has been given proper notice and an opportunity to opt out. (See policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement.)

- a. The Board designates the following student record information as directory information:
 - (1) name;
 - (2) address;
 - (3) telephone listing;
 - (4) email address;
 - (5) photograph or digital image, including still or video images of a student engaged in ordinary school activities;
 - (6) date and place of birth;
 - (7) participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
 - (8) weight and height of members of athletic teams;
 - (9) dates of attendance;
 - (10) grade level;
 - (11) diplomas, (including endorsements earned), industry credentials/ certifications, and awards received; and
 - (12) most recent previous school or education institution attended by the student.
- b. The telephone number and actual address of a student who is or whose parent is a participant in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program is not considered directory information and will not be released except as required by law.
- c. Information about a homeless student's living situation is not considered directory information and will not be released.
- d. As required by law, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of secondary school students shall be released, upon request, to military recruiters or institutions of higher learning, whether or not such information is designated directory information by the school district. In addition, secondary school students' email addresses (which will be the email addresses provided by the school, if available) must be provided to military recruiters upon request. Students or their parents, however, may request that the student's name, address, email address, and telephone number not be released without prior written parental consent. School officials shall notify parents of the option to make a request and shall comply with any requests made.
- e. All requests for directory information must be submitted to the superintendent or designee for approval. The superintendent has established regulations regarding the release of directory information. The regulation:
 - (1) specifies the types of organizations that are eligible to receive directory information, and for what purposes;
 - (2) provides for equal disclosure to organizations that are similar in purpose; and
 - (3) authorizes access to directory information to recruiters of military forces of the state or United States for the purpose of informing students of educational and career opportunities available in the military to the same extent that such information is made available to persons or organizations that inform students of occupational or educational options.

4. Records of Students with Disabilities

Students with recognized disabilities must be accorded all rights in regard to their records as provided by state and federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

5. Disclosure of De-Identified Information

Education records may be released without consent of the parent or eligible student if all personally identifiable information has been removed. Personally identifiable information includes both direct and indirect identifiers that, alone or in combination, would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty.

Unless specifically permitted by law, records that have been de-identified must not be released without the consent of the parent or eligible student if school officials reasonably believe that the person requesting the information knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

I. WITHHOLDING RECORDS

School district administrators shall not withhold records upon a valid request by a parent, eligible student or school to which the student is transferring for any reason, including in order to collect fines assessed to the parent or student.

J. RECORD OF ACCESS AND DISCLOSURE

The principal or designee shall maintain a record in each student's file indicating all persons who have requested or received personally identifiable information from a student's record and the legitimate reason(s) for requesting or obtaining the information. This requirement does not apply to requests by or disclosure to parents, eligible students, school officials, parties seeking directory information, a party seeking or receiving the records under a court order or subpoena that prohibits disclosure, or those individuals with written parental consent.

K. DESTRUCTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

To the extent required by law, school officials shall maintain student records in accordance with the applicable records retention and disposition schedule(s) issued by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. School officials shall not destroy student records if there is an outstanding request to inspect the particular records.

School officials shall notify parents and eligible students prior to the destruction of personally identifiable information in a student's special education records so that parents may collect the records from the school system if desired. Special education records must be destroyed at the request of parents if no longer needed to provide educational services to the child, including services to protect the safety of the student

or others. However, a record of a student's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed may be maintained permanently.

L. LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

School district administrators will comply with the data requirements and implementation schedule for the North Carolina Longitudinal Data System (NCLDS) and will transfer designated student record data to the system in accordance with the NCLDS data security and safeguarding plan and all other requirements of state law, provided that doing so does not conflict with the requirements of FERPA.

Revised: February 7, 2023

STUDENT SEARCHES Policy Code: 4342

School officials have the authority to conduct reasonable searches of students and to seize students' unauthorized materials for the purposes of maintaining a safe, orderly environment and upholding standards of conduct established by the board or school. Any searches or seizures must be conducted in accordance with the standards described in this policy and any other applicable legal requirements. All school officials carrying out a search or seizure are expected to be knowledgeable about the legal rights of students and the appropriate procedures for conducting the search or seizure. A search must be justified at its inception, permissible in scope, and conducted using methods that are narrowly tailored to be minimally intrusive. School officials shall make reasonable, good faith efforts to investigate allegations of misconduct before a student search is conducted.

This policy applies to searches conducted on school grounds, in school facilities, or at school-sponsored events.

Policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use, not this policy, applies to the search of school district-owned technological resources and the data located on school district-owned electronic equipment.

A. Searches Based on Individualized Reasonable Suspicion

A student or the student's possessions may be searched when a school official has reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the particular student has violated or is violating a specific law or school rule. This reasonable suspicion must be based upon specific and articulable facts, which have been acquired through reliable and/or corroborated information from employees, students, law enforcement officers, or other credible sources, or upon visual or other evidence (e.g., the smell of alcohol or marijuana, an alert from a metal detector or drug dog) viewed in light of the totality of the circumstances and the school official's professional judgment. The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search, and the methods used to conduct the search must be narrowly tailored to be minimally intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

Reasonable suspicion is not required if a student freely and voluntarily consents to the search of his or her person or possessions.

In accordance with the standards described above, the board authorizes the following types of searches based on reasonable suspicion.

1. **Searches of Personal Effects**
School officials may search a student's desk, locker, and/or personal effects, including but not limited to purses, book bags, and clothing (for example, coats or jackets) not currently being worn by the student. Policy 4318, Use of Wireless Communication Devices, addresses the circumstances under which searches of student cell phones and other electronic devices may be conducted.
2. **Searches of Motor Vehicles**
School officials may search the interior of a student's motor vehicle.
3. **"Pat-down" Searches**
A school official may conduct a frisk or "pat-down" search of a student's person. The search must be conducted in private by a school official with an adult witness present. Both the school official conducting the search and the adult witness must be the same sex as the student.
4. **More Intrusive Personal Searches**
More intrusive personal searches are discouraged and are to be used only in very limited circumstances. A personal search is more intrusive when it extends beyond a student's personal effects and outer clothing and potentially exposes intimate body parts and/or undergarments. Such intrusive personal searches will be permissible only if: (1) the school official has reasonable suspicion that a search of a particular student will yield dangerous contraband (e.g., drugs or weapons); and (2) the school official has reasonable suspicion that the student has hidden the contraband in his or her undergarments. This search must be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex as the student, with an adult witness of the same sex present, and only with the prior approval of the superintendent or designee, unless the health or safety of students will be endangered by the delay that might be caused by following these procedures. Body cavity searches and searches that require a student to completely disrobe are strictly prohibited.
5. **Metal Detector Searches**
Except as provided in Section B.2, below, a metal detector may be used to search a student's person and/or personal effects. The search must be conducted by a school official and will be done in private, when feasible.

B. Suspicionless General Searches

In an effort to maintain a safe, drug-free, and weapon-free learning environment, school officials may conduct certain types of general, suspicionless searches in the schools. All general searches must be conducted in a minimally-intrusive, nondiscriminatory manner (e.g., all students in randomly selected classrooms, every third individual entering a school-sponsored extracurricular activity) and may not be used to single out a particular individual or category of individuals. The searches must be conducted in accordance with standardized procedures established by the superintendent or designee. Absent exigent circumstances (e.g., a report of a weapon on campus), prior to conducting general searches, school administrators must: (1) demonstrate to the superintendent or designee the need for general searches based upon a

pattern or expectation of violence, drug activity, or disruption; and (2) provide written notice to students and parents of the school policy and/or procedures governing general searches, but not of specific times when or places where searches will be conducted.

When conducted in accordance with the standards described above and any corresponding procedures, the board authorizes the following types of general, suspicionless searches.

1. Searches of Desks and Lockers

School officials may conduct routine searches of student desks and lockers. Student desks and 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 desks and lockers. Student desks and lockers may not be used to store illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials.

A student's personal effects found within a desk or locker, such as a backpack, gym bag, or purse, may be searched only in accordance with the guidelines for individualized searches of personal effects described in Section A, above.

2. Point-of-Entry Metal Detector Searches

Due to the increasing problem of weapons in schools, school officials may use metal detectors to conduct general point-of-entry searches of students and other persons for weapons.

3. Use of Trained Dogs

With the prior approval of the superintendent, and in conjunction with local law enforcement, school officials may use trained dogs (canines) to locate illegal materials. All dogs must be accompanied by a certified and authorized trainer who is responsible for the dog's actions and who is able to verify the dog's reliability and accuracy in sniffing out illegal material. Trained dogs may sniff lockers, desks, book bags, motor vehicles, and other inanimate objects. Dogs may not be used to sniff students or other persons under any circumstances. No students should be present during a dog search. Before a search occurs in a classroom, students will first be moved to a location outside the classroom.

C. Seized Items

Any illegal contraband seized by school officials must be promptly turned over to the proper law enforcement authorities.

D. Failure to Cooperate

A student's failure to cooperate with a reasonable search or seizure as provided in this policy will be considered a violation of the expected standard of behavior, and will subject the student to appropriate consequences.

Any person who is not a student who refuses to permit a general metal detector search of his or her person and/or belongings at the point-of-entry to a school-sponsored activity may be denied entry to the activity.

E. Notice

School principals shall take reasonable steps to provide notice of this policy to students and parents at the start of each school year.

Revised: January 18, 2024

SUSPICIONLESS GENERAL SEARCHES: Administrative Regulation 4342-R

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This regulation governs suspicionless general searches for the purpose of maintaining a safe, drug-free, and weapon-free learning environment and any subsequent seizures of weapons, weapon-like items, and other unauthorized materials. For purposes of this regulation, a suspicionless general search is a routine or random search of individuals and/or their personal effects, including school-owned property used by such individuals, that is conducted without an individualized reasonable suspicion. Suspicionless general searches include point-of-entry metal detector searches, desk and locker searches, and the use of trained dogs to locate illegal materials when the searches are conducted or the trained dogs are used in school, on school property, or at school-sponsored activities or events. Nothing in this regulation will be construed to otherwise limit the authority of school officials to conduct a search pursuant to policy 4342, Student Searches.

II. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO ALL SUSPICIONLESS GENERAL SEARCHES

A. Compliance with School District and Legal Requirements

1. All suspicionless general searches must be conducted in accordance with this regulation, the standards described in policy 4342, Student Searches, and all other applicable legal requirements.
2. Suspicionless general searches must be conducted in a minimally-intrusive, nondiscriminatory manner, and may not be used to single out a particular individual or category of individuals.
3. All school officials carrying out a search or seizure are expected to be knowledgeable about the legal rights of students, applicable school policies, and the appropriate procedures for conducting the search or seizure.

B. Approval by Superintendent

1. A principal planning to conduct suspicionless general searches under this regulation must notify the superintendent and obtain his/her approval prior to conducting such searches. Absent exigent circumstances, the principal must demonstrate to the superintendent the need for suspicionless general searches based upon a pattern or expectation of violence, drug activity, or disruption.

2. Nothing in this regulation will otherwise limit the authority of the principal or designee to lawfully conduct suspicionless general searches without prior approval when necessary, due to exigent circumstances, including, but not limited to, the report of a weapon on campus.

C. Notice

At the beginning of each school year, the principal shall provide to students and parents written notice of policy 4342, Student Searches, this regulation, and any school-specific procedures related to searches. Such notice will be included in the student handbook, on the school's website, and/or posted prominently within the school.

D. Seized Items

1. All illegal or unauthorized items found during a search will be confiscated immediately and safely secured by the principal or designee.
2. Illegal or otherwise dangerous items will be promptly turned over to the proper law enforcement officials.

E. Failure to Cooperate

1. Students

A student who fails to cooperate with a reasonable search or seizure conducted pursuant to board policy and this regulation will be considered to be in violation of the expected standard of behavior and will be subject to appropriate consequences as determined by the principal or designee in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.
2. Visitors

Any individual who is not a student who refuses to permit a general search of his/her person and/or personal effects conducted at the point-of-entry to a school, school property, or a school-sponsored activity or event may be denied entry as determined by the principal or designee pursuant to policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools, and this regulation.

III. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO POINT-OF-ENTRY METAL DETECTOR SEARCHES

A. Notice

When any point-of-entry metal detector search is to be conducted at the entrance to a school, school property, or a school-sponsored activity or event, school officials shall prominently post written notice to all individuals seeking entry. Such notice will clearly state that all individuals may be required to pass through or submit to a metal detector search of their persons and personal effects as a condition of entry. This notice must be provided in addition to, not in lieu of, the notice required in subsection II.C, above.

B. Personnel and Equipment

1. Only school officials designated by the principal and trained in the use of metal detectors or law enforcement officers requested by the principal or designee will be authorized to use a metal detector to conduct a search.
 - a. The principal of the school and the superintendent or designee will coordinate training for school officials on an annual basis.
 - b. Any search involving the use of a metal detector under this regulation may be conducted with or without law enforcement officers present.
2. School officials are permitted to use any combination of metal-detecting equipment, including stationary, mobile, and/or hand-held metal detectors.
 - a. The principal or other designated employee shall ensure that all metal-detecting equipment is maintained in good working condition and serviced as needed.
 - b. Each metal detector will be regularly inspected and tested by school officials designated by the principal or other designated employee in order to ensure that it is functioning properly and effectively asintended.

C. Search Procedures

1. When entry into the school, onto school property, or into a school-sponsored activity or event is subject to a point-of-entry metal detector search, school officials shall direct all individuals to use designated entrances only. Any remaining non-designated entrances must be properly secured by school officials.
2. The principal or designee shall determine whether (1) all individuals will be required to pass through a metal detector or (2) a random selection of individuals will be required to pass through the metal detector (for example, scanning every third and fifth individuals). The principal or designee may authorize school officials to alter the pattern of random selection when necessary for efficiency or for some other justifiable reason (such as switching from scanning every third individual to scanning every fifth individual during inclement weather, when the availability of staff or equipment is limited, or when the line to enter becomes too long).
3. During a point-of-entry metal detector search, school officials are prohibited from singling out for search a particular

individual or group of individuals and/or their personal effects unless the school official has individualized reasonable suspicion as described in policy 4342, Student Searches. An individual who activates a metal detector may be subject to further search based on individualized reasonable suspicion acquired through the metal detector alert, as provided below.

4. School officials shall direct individuals as they approach the entrance and explain the scanning process. If a random selection process is used, individuals who are not selected for screening will be permitted to enter as usual. All individuals who are to be screened will be directed to the screening area.
5. School officials shall ask each individual who is to be screened to remove all metal objects from his/her person and personal effects (such as backpacks and purses). All personal property will be returned after the metal detector search is complete, unless the property is illegal or otherwise prohibited under board and/or school policy.
6. If the school is using a stationary or mobile metal detector, school officials shall ask the individual to walk through the metal detector. If the school is using a hand-held metal detector, the school official operating the metal detector shall ask the individual to stand in place while the operator uses the hand-held metal detector to scan the individual's person. The operator shall not intentionally touch the individual's body with the metal detector.
7. Individuals who do not activate the metal detector during screening will be permitted to enter the school, school property, or school-sponsored activity or event.
8. If the metal detector is activated during the screening, school officials shall ask the individual to remove any remaining metal objects from his/her person. School officials shall then ask the individual to submit to a second screening.
9. If the metal detector is activated a second time, school officials shall ask the individual to remove any remaining metal objects from his/her person and to submit to a third screening.
10. **If a student activates the metal detector a third time**, he or she will be subject to a frisk or "pat-down" search pursuant to board policy 4342, Student Searches. Such a search will be limited to identifying the item(s) activating the metal detector and will be conducted in private by a school official of the same gender with an adult witness present. When an item which could have activated the metal detector is identified and removed, school officials shall cease the search and ask the student to submit to another metal detector screening. The frisk or "pat-down" search will be continued only if the metal detector is activated again.
11. **If a visitor activates the metal detector a third time**, he or she may be denied entry as reasonably determined by the principal or designee consistent with the school's interest in maintaining a safe, drug-free, and weapon-free learning environment.
12. The individual's personal effects (such as backpacks and purses) will also be scanned. School officials shall inspect the contents of any backpack, purse, or other item that activates the metal detector for the limited purpose of determining whether a weapon or weapon-like item is concealed within its contents.
13. The metal detector search, and any resulting frisk or "pat-down" search, will be intended to search for weapons and weapon-like items. However, all other unauthorized materials and illegal contraband removed or otherwise discovered in the course of searching a student will be seized pursuant to subsection II.D, above, and policy 4342, Student Searches. If illegal materials are discovered in the course of searching a visitor, school officials shall deny entry and notify law enforcement.
14. Search procedures involving the use of a metal detector may be modified for individuals with disabilities or other medical conditions, such as a metal implant or prosthetic or other internal or external medical device. School officials and parents should coordinate to proactively identify such students and to modify these search procedures as necessary and appropriate for those students while maintaining the students' privacy and dignity.

IV. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO SEARCHES OF DESKS AND LOCKERS

A. Use of Desks and Lockers

Pursuant to board policy, student desks and 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 desks and lockers. Student desks and lockers may not be used to store illegal, unauthorized, or other contraband materials.

B. Personnel and Equipment

1. School officials designated by the principal are authorized to conduct routine and/or random searches of the interiors of student desks and lockers.
2. Searches of desks and lockers under this regulation may be conducted with or without law enforcement officers present; however, at least two school officials should be present for all searches.
3. Any inspection of desks or lockers with the use of a trained dog must also follow the procedures required in Section V, below, as applicable.

C. Search Procedures

1. In performing the search, the principal or designee may search (1) all student desks or lockers, (2) the desks or lockers of all students in one grade, or (3) desks or lockers which were randomly selected (such as the desks of a randomly

selected classroom or the lockers of a randomly selected hallway). Searches of desks and lockers will be conducted when students are not present, such as searching a classroom of desks while students are at lunch or searching a hallway of lockers while students are in class.

2. The contents of a student's personal effect, such as a backpack, gym bag, purse, or other container, found within a desk or locker may be searched only based on individualized reasonable suspicion in accordance with policy 4342, Student Searches.

D. Notice

The principal must provide notice of any school-specific procedures related to searches of desks and lockers but need not reveal the specific times when or places where such searches will be conducted. This notice must be provided as part of the notice required in subsection II.C, above.

V. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO THE USE OF TRAINED DOGS

A. Personnel and Equipment

1. School officials designated by the principal, in conjunction with law enforcement, are authorized to use trained dogs on a routine or random basis to detect the presence of illegal, unauthorized, or other contraband materials.
2. All trained dogs must be accompanied by a certified and authorized trainer who is responsible for the dog's actions and who is able to verify the dog's reliability and accuracy in detecting illegal material.

B. Procedures for Use of Trained Dogs

1. Trained dogs may sniff only inanimate objects, such as desks, lockers, backpacks, and motor vehicles. Principals must ensure that dogs are never used to sniff students or other individuals.
2. Trained dogs will not be used to sniff objects when students are present. All students must be moved to an appropriate alternate location when a trained dog is working in a classroom or other area where students would otherwise be present.
3. The contents of a student's personal effect, such as a backpack, gym bag, purse, or other container, which trigger a response from a trained dog, may be searched based on individualized reasonable suspicion in accordance with policy 4342, Student Searches.

C. Notice

The principal must provide notice of any school-specific procedures related to the use of trained dogs but need not reveal the specific times when or places where trained dogs will be used. This notice must be provided as part of the notice required in subsection II.C, above.

Revised: January 18, 2024

TOBACCO PRODUCTS – STUDENTS: Policy Code 4320

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to creating safe, orderly, clean and inviting schools for all students and staff. To this end, the Board supports state laws that prohibit the sale or distribution of tobacco products to minors and that prohibit the use of tobacco products by minors. The Board also supports state and federal laws that prohibit the use of tobacco products in school buildings, on school campuses, and in or on any other school property owned or operated by the school Board. For the purposes of this policy, the term "tobacco product" means any product that contains tobacco and is intended for human consumption. The term "tobacco product" also includes alternative nicotine products (noncombustible products that contain nicotine, whether natural or synthetic, but do not contain tobacco and are intended for human consumption whether chewed, absorbed, dissolved, ingested, or by other means), consumable products (nicotine liquid solutions or other materials containing nicotine that is depleted as a vapor product is used), vapor products (noncombustible products that employ a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit regardless of shape or size and that can be used to heat consumable products) including electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic cigarillos, and electronic pipes, and components of vapor products.

A. Prohibited Behavior

In support of the Board's commitments and state and federal law, students are prohibited from using or possessing any tobacco product (1) in any school building, on any school campus, and in or on any other school property owned or operated by the school Board, including school vehicles; (2) at any school-related activity, including athletic events; or (3) at any time when the student is subject to the supervision of school personnel, including during school trips.

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use or possession of tobacco products for an instructional or research activity conducted in a school building, provided that the activity is conducted or supervised by a faculty member and that the activity does not include smoking, chewing or otherwise ingesting tobacco.

B. Consequences

The disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy shall be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of this policy.

In determining appropriate consequences for violations of this policy, school officials are encouraged to identify programs or opportunities that will provide students with a greater understanding of the health hazards of tobacco use, the hazards of secondhand smoke, and the impact of

tobacco use on efforts to provide a safe, orderly, clean and inviting school environment.

C. Services for Students

The administration shall consult with the county health department and other appropriate organizations to provide students with information and access to support districts and programs to encourage students to abstain from the use of tobacco products. The school district may, from time to time, provide free non-smoking programs and services to its students.

D. Notice

Students will be provided with notice of the information in this policy through the Code of Student Conduct, student handbooks, or other means identified by the principal. In addition, the principal shall post signs in a manner and at locations that adequately notify students, school personnel, and visitors about prohibitions against the use of tobacco products in all school facilities, on all school grounds, and at all school-sponsored events.

Revised: January 14, 2025

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS Policy 5020

The Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) encourages the community and parents to be involved in and support the schools and the educational program of the schools.

A. OPPORTUNITIES TO VISIT THE SCHOOLS

To encourage involvement, the following opportunities are provided to visit the schools.

1. Visitors are welcome to observe and learn about the educational program at each school subject to reasonable rules developed by school administrators.
2. Visitors are encouraged to use school facilities made available to the public, such as media centers or meeting spaces, as provided in policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities.
3. Visitors are invited to attend school events that are open to the public, such as athletic events, musical programs, and dramatic productions.

B. REQUIREMENTS OF VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

While the school Board welcomes visitors to the schools, the paramount concern of the Board is to provide a safe and orderly learning environment in which disruptions to instructional time are kept to a minimum. The superintendent and each principal shall establish and enforce reasonable rules to address this concern.

1. All school visitors during the school day must report immediately to the administrative office at the school to request and receive permission to be in the school. Each principal shall ensure that signs are posted in the school to notify visitors of this requirement.
2. School visitors are expected to comply with all school rules and school Board policies, including policy 5025, Prohibition of Drugs and Alcohol; policy 5026/7250, Smoking and Tobacco Products; and policy 5027/7275, Weapons and Explosives Prohibited.
3. Persons who are subject to policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders, must comply with the provisions of that policy.
4. All school visitors must comply with policy 5021, Public Conduct on School Property.

C. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF PROBATION OFFICERS

To minimize disruption to student learning and school operations, the Board establishes the following additional requirements for visits by probation officers during the school day:

Probation officers may not visit students on school property during school hours unless the visit is conducted through the Division of Community Corrections’ School Partnership Program.

1. Visits by probation officers must be authorized in advance by the school principal or designee or be the result of a request for assistance by a school counselor or school resource officer. The principal or designee at each school shall coordinate with probation officers to plan and schedule visits to occur at times least disruptive to the student’s academic schedule and to school operations.
2. To protect the privacy of students, the principal or designee shall designate a private area for probation officers to meet with students away from contact with the general student population. Initial contact with the student will be made by a designated school employee, who shall direct the student to the private area to meet with the probation officer.
3. Probation officers may not initiate direct contact with any student while the student is in class or between classes.
4. All visits must be conducted in accordance with this policy and any additional guidelines developed by the superintendent or designee.

D. UNAUTHORIZED, DISRUPTIVE OR DANGEROUS VISITORS

If a school employee becomes aware that an individual is on a school property without having received permission or that an individual is exhibiting unusual, threatening or dangerous behavior, the employee must either direct the individual to the administrative office or notify the principal, designee or school resource officer, depending on the circumstances.

If a school employee suspects that an individual is on school property in violation of policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders, the employee must immediately notify the principal, designee or school resource officer.

Students will be instructed to notify a school employee of any unusual or suspicious behavior by visitors. School employees shall inform the principal or designee immediately of a student’s report of suspicious behavior on the part of a school visitor.

When an individual disrupts the educational environment, acts in a disorderly manner, damages school property, or violates Board policy or the law, the principal or designee has authority to:

1. order the individual to leave school property;

2. notify law enforcement; or
3. take any other action deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Failure to comply with a request to leave school grounds may result in the filing of trespass charges or other charges as appropriate against the offending individual.

The superintendent, upon recommendation from the principal, may deny an individual permission to come onto school grounds or enter a school facility for up to one school year if the individual is guilty of disruptive or dangerous behavior on school grounds.

E. PROFESSIONAL VISITORS AND OBSERVERS TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

To ensure the continuity of educational programs and guard against classroom interruption, all persons desiring to visit more than one of the schools in the district and all groups or delegations desiring to visit one or more of the Duplin County Schools must make arrangements in advance through the office of the superintendent. Those arriving unannounced, will be directed to the superintendent's office. If a single school is visited, permission may be granted by the principal who will inform the superintendent of the visit.

Revised: August 10, 2021

Behavior Expectations

GENERAL INFORMATION

This guide is meant to provide general information for students, parents and staff. Please note that some policies may have been updated since this guide was published and the current versions as well as specific information, including legal and cross references, can be found in the policies located online on the DCS website under Board policies. Any time you have questions, concerns, or suggestions throughout the year you are encouraged to talk with your child's teacher and principal as needed. Should you need additional guidance, please feel free to contact our Central Office at 910-296-1521.

All students, staff, and visitors are expected to display proper behavior before, during and after school hours while at school, in any school building, and on any school premises; on any school-owned vehicle or any other vehicle used to transport students to and from any school or school activity; bus stops; off school property at any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event, or function; and during any period of time when students are subject to the authority of school personnel; to include conduct which occurs off school property which has or is reasonably expected to have a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the schools or the safety of individuals in the school environment.

The principal of the school to which the student is officially enrolled shall be responsible for imposing any disciplinary action upon the student for rule violations occurring away from the student's home school. Any student who drives a vehicle onto Duplin County Schools' property is responsible for the contents of that vehicle. Prior to coming onto Duplin County Schools' property, students should ensure that the vehicle does not contain any contraband that would violate the law or any school rule. Possession shall be defined as the (prohibited item) being on the person, in the student's personal effects, vehicle, locker, desk, or in the immediate control of the student. The principal and superintendent may consider the student's intent, disciplinary and academic history, the potential benefits to the student of alternatives to suspension, and other mitigating or aggravating factors when deciding whether to recommend or impose a disciplinary reassignment or suspension.

In assigning the appropriate disciplinary consequences under the Student Code of Conduct, students will be given all rights as provided by the IDEA, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act if applicable.

During the period that a student is suspended or disciplinarily reassigned to an alternative program, he/she is prohibited from entering the grounds of any school in the Duplin County School system or from attending any school-related functions, including graduation, without the express permission of the building principal. During a period in which a student is long-term suspended or disciplinarily reassigned to an alternative program, the student is prohibited from any Duplin County School system property other than the alternative school/program to which the student has been reassigned unless approved by the school principal.

BEHAVIOR STANDARDS FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS: Policy Code 4115

This policy applies to transfer students seeking admission to the school district. Transfer students are students who have been enrolled in or who have attended a private school or a public school in this state or another state.

In accordance with state law, the student's parent, guardian or custodian must provide a statement made under oath or affirmation before a notary indicating (1) whether at the time of the admission request the student is under suspension or expulsion from attendance at a private or public school in this or any other state and (2) whether the student has been convicted of a felony in this or any other state.

STUDENTS UNDER SUSPENSION/EXPULSION OR CONVICTED OF A FELONY

If at the time of the admission request the student is under a suspension or an expulsion or has been convicted of a felony, the parent, guardian or custodian must provide to the school district all requested information related to the conduct. The superintendent or designee shall review the information and make a recommendation to the Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") as to whether the student should be admitted and, if so, whether any reasonable conditions should be imposed.

1. Suspension: The Board may deny admission to a student who is under a suspension for conduct that could have led to a suspension from a school within the school district. The Board may deny admission until the suspension has expired.
2. Expulsion: The Board may deny admission to a student who has been expelled from a school pursuant to G.S. 115C-390.11 or who has been expelled from a school for behavior that indicated the student's continued presence in school constituted a clear threat to the safety of other students or employees. The student may request reconsideration of the Board's decision in accordance with G.S. 115C-390.12.
3. Felony Conviction: The Board may deny admission to a student who has been convicted of a felony in this state or any other state. The student may request reconsideration of the Board's decision in accordance with G.S. 115C-390.12.
4. In any of the above-described circumstances in which admission may be denied, the Board alternatively may place reasonable conditions on the admission of the student.

Such conditions include, but are not limited to, behavior contracts, alternative school placement and limits on free time and extracurricular activities. Drug testing and weapon searches also may be reasonable conditions so long as they meet any constitutional requirements.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, students under a suspension or an expulsion who have been identified as having a disability pursuant to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and otherwise meet the requirements for enrollment in the school district are entitled to services to the extent mandated by federal and state law.

Adopted: September 20, 2011

DUE PROCESS

The Board of Education mandates and the law requires that all students be treated fairly and honestly in resolving grievances, complaints, or suspensions/expulsions. Due process will be defined as fair and reasonable notices and approaches to all areas of student governance and discipline on the part of all school officials. The principal shall give full and complete consideration to the defense or excuses, if any, made by the student and dismiss the charges if not satisfied as to the guilt of the student or reduce the punishment if not satisfied with the reasonableness of the proposed disciplinary action under all the circumstances. Due process procedures will be followed in accordance with Policies 4351, 4353, and 4370. A summary of those relevant procedures is provided below. Students and parents should consult the relevant policy for complete information.

STUDENT READMISSION Policy Code: 4362

In accordance with G.S. 115C-390.12 and Policy 4362- Requests for Readmission of Students Suspended for 365 Days or Expelled, all students suspended for 365 days or expelled may, after 180 calendar days from the date of the beginning of the student's suspension or expulsion, request in writing readmission to Duplin County Schools. Students and parents should consult Policy 4362 for complete information.

Student Code of Conduct

Last Revision: July 1, 2025

A. Purpose:

An educated citizenry is essential to good government in this country and cannot exist without effective public schools. The effectiveness of the public schools depends in large part on the maintenance of discipline and good order. The Board earnestly solicits the cooperation of every student, every parent, and the community at large in its effort to maintain order and safety in the Duplin County Schools.

All decisions related to student behavior are guided by the board's educational objectives to teach responsibility and respect for cultural and ideological differences and by the Board's commitment to create safe, orderly and inviting schools. Student behavior policies are provided in order to establish expected standards of student behavior, principles to be followed in managing student behavior, consequences for anti-social behavior or drug/ alcohol policy violations, and required procedures for addressing misbehavior.

The purpose of this Student Code of Conduct is for the Superintendent to set forth rules and regulations to implement the policies of the Board of Education and notify students of the behavior expected of them, conduct that may subject them to discipline, and the range of disciplinary measures that may be used by school officials.

B. Principles:

1. The reasons for managing student behavior are: to create an orderly environment where students can learn; to teach expected standards of behavior; to help students learn to accept the consequences of their behavior; and to provide students with the opportunity to develop self-control. The following principles apply in managing student behavior;
2. Student behavior management strategies should complement other efforts to create a safe, orderly and inviting environment.
3. Responsibility, integrity, civility and other standards of behavior should be integrated into curriculum.
4. Disruptive behavior in the classroom or any school-related event will not be tolerated.
5. Consequences for unacceptable behavior should help a student learn to comply with rules, to be obedient at a minimum, and when able, to learn to accept responsibility and develop self-control.
6. Age and developmentally appropriate strategies and consequences are to be utilized.

When feasible, consequences for unacceptable behavior should take into account differences between individual students.

C. Authority of School Personnel:

This code is not intended to restrict in any way the authority of principals or teachers to make such rules, not inconsistent with this code, as they are authorized by law to make for the operation of their respective schools or classes. In accordance with Policy 4301 Authority of School Personnel, the Board encourages and supports the right of principals to employ a variety of disciplinary actions which may include but are not limited to in-school suspension, suspension from school events and activities, before and after-school detention, lunch detention, and out-of-school suspension.

It shall be the responsibility of students and parents to be familiar with all rules of behavior in the Code of Student Conduct, Board

policies, and school rules. Students are to assist in promoting a safe and orderly school environment. Students are encouraged to report to school authorities any serious violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Any student who refuses to comply with reasonable rules, regulations, or directives imposed by any principal, assistant principal, teacher, or authorized school employee shall be held in violation of this Code of Student Conduct.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal to investigate fully the case of students appropriately referred to his/her office for misbehavior and to determine what if any disciplinary action is warranted. The teacher shall have the responsibility and authority to discipline students, except in those cases requiring the attention of the principal.

D. Applicability of Behavior Policies and this Code of Student Conduct:

Students must follow all Board and school behavior policies in all of the following circumstances:

1. While in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
2. While on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. At any bus stop;
4. During any school function, extracurricular activity or other activity or event; and
5. At any time or place when the students' behavior has a direct and immediate effect on the orderly and efficient operation of the schools or the safety of individuals in the school environment

E. Communication of Expected Student Behavior:

As stated in Policy Code 4300: Student Behavior Policies, "at the beginning of each school year, principals shall make available to each student

and parent all of the following: (1) the Code of Student Conduct; (2) any Board policies related to behavior that are not part of the Code of Student Conduct; (3) any related administrative procedures; (4) any additional discipline-related information from the school's student behavior management plan, including behavior standards, prohibited conduct or disciplinary measures; and (5) any other school rules. This information must be available at other times upon request and must be made available to students enrolling during the school year and their parents." Duplin County Board of Education Policies and the Student Code of Conduct shall also be available on the school system's website under "Parents" and under "Students."

F. Possible Disciplinary Actions:

The Board shall delegate to the Superintendent and his/her staff the responsibility for establishing and enforcing necessary regulation and procedures not in conflict with state or federal law so as to govern and control the conduct of students. The Board of Education expects school administrators to provide for and maintain an environment suitable for an orderly learning process. These disciplinary measures are consequences of violating the Student Code of Conduct and may include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Student Conferences**
2. **Conference with the Parents:** Parents are encouraged to set up an appointment with any teacher, counselor, or administrator to discuss their child's misconduct. School officials may require such a conference.
3. **Detention:** Any teacher or administrator may have a student serve detention before or after regular school hours or on Saturday.
4. **Parent attendance in the classroom:** Parents may be requested to sit in on the student's classroom to observe behaviors of their child.
5. **Student temporary reassignments:** Students may be sent to another teacher's classroom in an attempt to provide a different environment and correct behaviors.
6. **In-School Suspension:** A student may be excluded from attending regular classes but not from attending school and is required to do assignments developed by his/her teachers. Credit is given for the work. A student will not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities during the period of in-school suspension. Principals shall notify parents when a student is assigned to in-school suspension.
7. **Confiscation:** Any student property that disrupts the learning environment may be removed from the student's possession.
8. **Restitution:** The replacement of or payment for property taken, damaged, or destroyed will be required.
9. **School Work Service:** Students may be required to participate in work service at the school. This duty will not be performed on any dangerous equipment or around any hazardous materials.
10. **Isolation:** A student may be removed from regular class activities for any portion of the school day as long as he/she is under the supervision of an adult.
11. **Court Referral:** In the case of drug offense, assault, weapons charge, or any of the 17 reportable offenses listed in Section J, or any violation of the NC Statutes, the student will be referred to law enforcement.
12. **Loss of privileges:** Principals, teachers, and their designees may withdraw specific school privileges from a student who exhibits inappropriate behaviors.
13. **Parent Contacts:** Teachers, counselors, and other school administrators may contact parents by telephone or letter in an effort to inform them of student misconduct and to gain their support in altering that behavior.
14. **Removal from school provided transportation:** Students exhibiting inappropriate behavior may be prohibited from riding the bus or other school provided transportation for periods of time specified in the bus transportation rules or for any period of time up to the remainder of the school year.
15. **Suspension from extra-curricular activities:** A student may be suspended from participating in any or all extra-curricular activities, including graduation exercises.
16. **Referral to the Student Staff Support Team (SSMT):** Students who are referred to the principal for discipline two or more times may be referred to the SSMT or another multi-disciplinary committee to provide other services.
17. **Alternative placement:** Students can be referred for alternative educational settings upon the recommendation of a placement committee of the Superintendent or his designee.
18. **Out of school suspension from attendance at school for violations of the Student Code of Conduct.**
 - a. Short-term suspension - 10 days or less
 - b. Long-term suspension-more than ten days
 - c. 365 Day Suspension-suspension for 365 calendar days (See Policy 4353)
19. **Expulsion:** Permanent prohibition/exclusion from the school system requires the recommendation of the principal and Superintendent and Board action.

G. Interrogation:

If the administrative questioning of a student indicates that the completion of the investigation should be carried out by a law enforcement officer or other legal officer, the principal shall make a reasonable attempt to notify the parents (except in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect by the parent) and give them an opportunity to be present at the time of questioning/interrogation. Any student age fourteen (14) or over must be advised of his/her rights but the presence of the student's parents, guardians, or attorney may be waived by the student. If the student is under the age of fourteen (14) he or she may only be interrogated by law enforcement in the presence of a parent or guardian or with parental consent. The student shall be advised of his/her rights as set forth in statute.

H. Code of Conduct:

All students shall comply with all rules and regulations governing behavior and conduct. Violation of Board policies, rules or regulations, the Student Code of Conduct of the Duplin County Schools, regulations issued by the individual school, or the North Carolina General Statutes may result in disciplinary action including suspension of the student from the Duplin County Schools pursuant to Duplin County School Board Policies.

Students/Parents shall be informed by local school authorities of any local school rules or infractions not listed in this Code of Conduct. Any such rule may not conflict with this Code. During the period that a student is suspended, he/she is prohibited from entering the grounds of any school of the Duplin County Schools and from attending any school-related functions without express permission of the school principal.

Short Term Suspensions: Policy Code 4351

A short-term suspension is the disciplinary exclusion of a student from attending his or her assigned school for up to 10 school days. A short-term suspension does not include (1) the removal of a student from class by the classroom teacher, the principal or other authorized school

personnel for the remainder of the subject period or for less than one-half of the school day, (2) the changing of a student's location to another room or place on the school premises or (3) a student's absence under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school). A student who is placed on a short-term suspension will not be permitted to be on school property or to take part in any school function during the period of suspension without prior approval from the principal.

The principal or designee has the authority to determine when a short-term suspension is an appropriate consequence and to impose the suspension, so long as all relevant Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") policies are followed.

In accordance with G.S. 115C-390.6(e) and 115C-45(c)(1), a student is not entitled to appeal the principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension to either the superintendent or the Board unless it is appealable on some other basis.

Pre-Suspension Rights of the Student

Except in the circumstances described below, a student must be provided with an opportunity for an informal hearing with the principal or designee before a short-term suspension is imposed. The principal or designee may hold the hearing immediately after giving the student oral or written notice of the charges against him or her. At the informal hearing, the student has the right to be present, to be informed of the charges and the basis for the accusations against him or her, and to make statements in defense or mitigation of the charges.

The principal or designee may impose a short-term suspension without first providing the student with an opportunity for a hearing if the presence of the student (1) creates a direct and immediate threat to the safety of other students or staff or (2) substantially disrupts or interferes with the education of other students or the maintenance of discipline at the school. In such cases, the principal or designee shall give the student notice of the charges and an opportunity for an informal hearing as soon as practicable.

Student Rights during the Suspension

A student under a short-term suspension must be provided with the following:

1. The opportunity to take textbooks home for the duration of the suspension;
2. upon request, the right to receive all missed assignments and, to the extent practicable, the materials distributed to students in connection with such assignments; and
3. the opportunity to take any quarterly, semester or grading period examinations missed during the suspension period.

Notice to Parent or Guardian

When imposing a short-term suspension, the principal or designee shall provide the student's parent or guardian with notice that includes the reason for the suspension and a description of the student conduct upon which the suspension is based. The principal or designee must give this notice by the end of the workday during which the suspension is imposed when reasonably possible, but in no event more than two days after the suspension is imposed. If English is the second language of the parent, the notice must be provided in English and in the parent's primary language, when the appropriate foreign language resources are readily available. Both versions must be in plain language and easily understandable.

The initial notice may be by telephone, but it must be followed by timely written notice. The written notice must include all of the information listed above and may be sent by fax, e-mail or any other method reasonably designed to give actual notice. School officials also shall maintain a copy of the written notice in the student's educational record.

Multiple short-term suspensions for a student with disabilities will be addressed in accordance with the Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities and other applicable state and federal law.

Revised: June 6, 2017

I. Definitions:

1. **Student:** any person attending any school of the Duplin County Schools.
2. **Board:** Duplin County Board of Education.
3. **Principal:** The school principal or any school professional to whom the principal may officially delegate authority.
4. **Parent:** natural parent, legal guardian, or another caregiver adult authorized to enroll a student under Board policy.
5. **Short-term suspension:** suspension from school, school activities, and school grounds for up to and including ten (10) days.
6. **Long-term suspension:** suspension from school, school activities, and school grounds for more than ten (10) days, up to the remainder of the school year.
7. **365-Day Suspension:** a 365-day or one year suspension from the Duplin County School System
8. **Expulsion:** the indefinite exclusion of a student from school enrollment for disciplinary purposes.
9. **Immediately:** within twenty-four (24) hours.
10. **Restitution:** compensation for loss, damage, or injury caused; indemnification.

J. Criminal Behavior and Reporting of Incidents:

Pursuant to Criminal Behavior Policy 4335, criminal or other illegal behavior is prohibited. Any student who the principal reasonably believes has engaged in criminal behavior on school premises or at school activities will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, as stated in applicable Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") policies, and also may be criminally prosecuted.

School officials shall cooperate fully with any criminal investigation and prosecution. School officials shall independently investigate any criminal behavior that also violates school rules or Board policy.

i. Students Charged with or Convicted of Criminal Behavior

The superintendent and principal may take reasonable or legally required measures to preserve a safe, orderly environment when a student has been charged with or convicted of a serious crime, regardless of whether the alleged offense was committed on school grounds or was related to school activities. Depending upon the circumstances, including the nature of the crime or

alleged crime, the child's age, and the publicity within the school community, reasonable or legally required efforts may include changing a student's classroom assignment or transferring the student to another school. Transfer to an alternative school may be made in accordance with the criteria established in policy 3470/4305, Alternative Learning Programs/Schools. The student will continue to be provided with educational opportunities unless and until the student is found to have violated Board policy or school rules and is suspended or expelled in accordance with procedures established in Board policy.

ii. Reporting Criminal Behavior

A school employee is permitted to report to law enforcement an assault by a student on a school employee. Principals or other supervisors shall not, by threats or in any other manner, intimidate, or attempt to intimidate the school employee from doing so.

Principals must immediately report to law enforcement the following acts when they have personal knowledge or actual notice from school personnel that such acts have occurred on school property, regardless of the age or grade of the perpetrator or victim: (1) assault resulting in serious personal injury; (2) sexual assault; (3) sexual offense; (4) rape; (5) kidnapping; (6) indecent liberties with a minor; (7) assault involving the use of a weapon; (8) possession of a firearm in violation of the law; (9) possession of a weapon in violation of the law; and (10) possession of a controlled substance in violation of the law. A principal who willfully fails to make a required report to law enforcement will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The principal or designee shall notify the superintendent or designee in writing or by e-mail of any report made by the principal to law enforcement. Such notice must occur by the end of the workday in which the incident occurred, when reasonably possible, but not later than the end of the following workday. The superintendent must inform the Board of any such reports.

In addition, the principal or designee must promptly notify the parents if a school district employee suspects that any criminal offense has been committed against the parents' child, including but not limited to any of the offenses required to be reported to law enforcement, regardless of where the offense allegedly occurred, unless the incident has been reported to law enforcement or the county child services agency and notification of the parents would impede the investigation.

Certain crimes must be reported to the Department of Public Instruction in accordance with 16 N.C.A.C. 6E.0107.

Revised: October 3, 2023

K. Application of Code of Student Conduct to Exceptional Children:

The local Board, upon recommendation by the Superintendent, may modify any suspension requirement on a case-by-case basis that includes, but is not limited to, the procedures established for the discipline of students with disabilities and may also provide, or contract for the provision of, educational services to any student suspended under this subsection in an alternative school setting that provides educational and other services. According to Disciplinary Action for Exceptional Children/Students with Disabilities Policy Code: 4307: "The principal or designee shall notify the Director of Exceptional Children when disciplinary actions involve the removal of exceptional children or students with disabilities from a classroom setting, whether that removal be within the school setting or outside of the school setting."

VIOLATIONS OF THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Any physical or verbal disturbance which occurs within the learning environment and which interrupts or interferes with teaching or orderly conduct of school activities is prohibited. No student shall by use of passive resistance, noise, threat, fear, intimidation, coercion, force, violence or any other form of conduct, intentionally cause the disruption of any lawful function, mission, or process of the school to which he/she is assigned or any other school in the school system, nor shall any student urge any other student to engage in such conduct.

Each school should implement consequences for non-administrative offenses and for any other offenses not specified in the county-wide discipline code. These consequences will be stated in each school's discipline policy.

In accordance with Parental Involvement Policy Code: 1310/4002 the Board encourages school personnel to have regular contact with parents for informational purposes and for commendation as well as for notification of concerns.

Parent notification is always best practice even when "parent notification" is not specified as a consequence.

Non-administrative Offenses should be handled by the teacher in most circumstances.

These non-administrative offenses include but are not limited to:

1. Excessive talking in class
2. Inappropriate behavior in hallways cafeteria, outside areas or in the gym
3. Minor altercations between students
4. Classroom rule infractions
5. Eating or drinking in inappropriate areas
6. Chewing gum in inappropriate areas
7. Minor classroom disruptions
8. Littering
9. Being in inappropriate areas
10. Throwing objects
11. Being unprepared for class
12. Repeated failure to do homework or class-work
13. Non-participation in class such as having head on desk or sleeping

14. Not having appropriate pass
15. Use of non-allowed electronic devices or approved devices at inappropriate times or in an inappropriate manner

Other more serious offenses will be handled by the principal or designee. These offenses will incur consequences consistent with the severity of the offense, as described below. The principal or designee has the authority to assign appropriate consequences for violation of the Duplin County Schools Code of Conduct.

Severity of Offenses / Consequences for K-8:

Level 1: Level 1 offenses are inappropriate behaviors that can usually be addressed through in-school interventions, such as detention or in-school suspension, rather than out-of-school suspensions. Repeated offenses, refusal of in-school consequences, or other aggravating circumstances may lead to short-term suspension of up to five (5) days.

Level 2: Level 2 offenses involve more serious misconduct that warrants more significant disciplinary measures, usually short-term suspension of up to five (5) days. Aggravating factors involved in the offense may support a short-term suspension of up to ten (10) days or a recommendation for long-term suspension.

Level 3: Level 3 offenses involve severe misconduct that supports long-term suspension. Mitigating factors related to the offense may support a reduction to short-term suspension of ten (10) days or less.

Level 4: Level 4 offenses compromise the safety and welfare of students and staff and require a suspension under North Carolina law.

Aggravating and Mitigating Factors:

Aggravating factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Prior discipline history or repeat offenses
- Obstructing the investigation or falsely blaming others
- Inducing others to participate
- The misconduct was associated with gang activity
- The victim of the misconduct was a teacher or other staff member, or a significantly younger or disabled student
- Attempting to flee or conceal guilt
- Receiving money or something of value for the misbehavior
- Repetitive blatant disrespect for authority
- Taking advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit the offense
- Committing an offense on another school property
- Causing substantial disruption of the educational environment
- Causing physical injury or destruction of school or personal property

Mitigating factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lack of prior discipline history
- Cooperating or aiding during investigation
- Age, maturity, and developmental level
- Acting under strong provocation
- Being a passive participant or playing a minor role in the offense
- Reasonably believing the conduct was allowed
- Making appropriate restitution
- Giving a full and truthful statement admitting guilt early in the investigation

LEVEL ONE OFFENSES K-8 Students

Aggressive Behavior: behavior that can cause physical or emotional harm to others. It may range from verbal abuse to physical abuse, but does not constitute a fight. This behavior can involve harm to personal property and can violate social boundaries.

Attendance: Students shall comply with Board Policy 4400 (Attendance) and attend classes in a timely and regular fashion. Students shall come to school, remain at school once they have arrived and be present in their designated homeroom and/or their assigned classroom unless they have been authorized to do otherwise by the principal or his/her designee. Consequences shall comply with Board Policy 4400.

Profanity and Vulgarity: Students shall not use profanity or vulgar language or gestures. Vulgar language or gestures include remarks or gestures intended to demean a person's race, religion, sex, national origin, handicapping condition or intellectual ability. Profanity or vulgar language/gestures directed at a staff member or other adult will be treated as a Level Two offense (see Directed Profanity and Vulgarity).

Dress Code: Appearance or clothing which is disruptive, provocative, obscene, or endangers the health or safety of the student or others is prohibited. Any clothing or accessories that depicts gang-related activities or displays words or images directly or indirectly advertising illegal or prohibited substances or which promote the use of these products or which are profane, obscene, or sexually suggestive are strictly prohibited.

Appropriate attire adheres to the guidelines in the attached Dress Code.

Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices: Students shall comply with Board Policy and HB 959/S.L. 2025-38. Students are prohibited from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time unless otherwise directed by a teacher or administrator for educational purposes or for use in the event of an emergency; OR as required by the student's individualized education plan or section 504 plan; OR as required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition. Wireless communication devices are defined as any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, including but not limited to the following:

1. Cellular telephones.
2. Tablet computers.
3. Laptop computers.
4. Paging devices.
5. Two-way radios.
6. Gaming devices.

School employees may immediately confiscate any electronic device that is on, used, displayed or visible in violation of Board policy or HB 959/S.L. 2025-38. Students in violation of Board Policy or HB 959/S.L. 2025-38 are subject to disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Duplin County Schools Student Code of Conduct. Generally, first time offenses of inappropriate use of electronic devices during instructional time will be handled by the teacher.

Gambling: Students shall not engage in any form of games of chance or gambling for money or things of value. Participation in any unauthorized event, action or statement, which relies on chance for the monetary advantage of one participant at the expense of others, is prohibited. This includes exchanging items of value as well as currency and extends to keeping score for later settlement.

Inappropriate Affection: No student shall engage in behavior which is immoral, indecent, disrespectful, or of any overly romantic, affectionate or sexual nature in the school setting.

Inappropriate Internet Usage: Students shall comply with Board policy Technology and Responsible Use Policy Code: 3225/4312/7320.

Insubordination: Students who willfully and intentionally disregard directives of school personnel are considered insubordinate. Examples include continued dress code violations, walking out of class, giving false identification, refusing to go to the office, back-talking, etc.

Tardies: Students shall comply with Board Policy 4400 (Attendance) and attend classes in a timely and regular fashion. Students shall not be tardy to assigned classes or homeroom. Repeated tardies may result in disciplinary action under this Student Code of Conduct. Consequences shall comply with Board Policy 4400.

Tobacco Use: Consistent with Board policy Tobacco Products- Students Policy Code: 4320 no student shall possess, smoke or use any tobacco product on any school-controlled grounds, in any school building or school vehicle, at any school sponsored or school related activity, at any authorized school event before, during, or after regular school hours, or during any period of time he/she is subject to the authority of school personnel. The term "tobacco product" means any product that contains or that is made or derived from tobacco and is intended for human consumption, including all lighted and smokeless tobacco products, as well as electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, and other electronic smoking devices even if they do not contain tobacco or nicotine. The contents of a vaping device may result in a more severe offense and consequence. Use of a vaping device could result in a more severe disciplinary consequence than possession of a vaping device.

Trespassing: No student shall be on the campus of another school in the Duplin County Public School System during the school day without the knowledge and consent of the officials of the school he/she is visiting. Students who loiter at any school after the close of the school day without specific need or supervision will be considered trespassers and may be prosecuted if they do not leave when instructed to do so. Any student who has been suspended from school may be considered trespassing if he/she appears on school property during the suspension period without the express permission of the principal.

LEVEL TWO OFFENSES K-8 Students

Alarm Systems, Tampering and Misuse: Misuse of fire alarms or security alarms—including false setting of, or other tampering with alarms—is prohibited in all cases. Misuse of fire extinguishers is included in this policy. Violation of this policy may result in the filing of charges in accordance with fire marshal regulations.

Blatant Noncompliance/Insubordination: Students who willfully and intentionally defy directives of school personnel with the intention of being disrespectful. Examples include walking out of class, refusing to report to the office, etc.

Bullying: All forms of Bullying, including cyber bullying, are prohibited. Bullying is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school- sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- (1) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- (2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Bullying in some instances may be considered assault and/or extortion.

Damage to Property: Students shall not intentionally damage or attempt to damage any school or private property while under school jurisdiction, including while on buses. Students shall not vandalize, damage or attempt to damage property belonging to others. In addition to general disciplinary

consequences, restitution may be required under certain circumstances.

Directed Profanity and Vulgarity: Students shall not use profanity, vulgar gestures, and/or vulgar comments directed to a staff member or adult.

Disorderly Conduct and Inciting Student Disorder: Disorderly conduct includes behavior that is defiant and uncontrollable such that the student's removal from school is necessary. Students shall not lead or participate in any activity that has as its purpose the disruption of school business or which significantly affects the educational process. In the event that the disruption does not abate immediately or if the principal deems it appropriate, law enforcement will be called and the Superintendent shall be notified.

Disruptive Behavior: Disruptive behavior in the school setting is prohibited. Disruptive behavior includes:

- 1) any physical or verbal action which reasonably could or does substantially disrupt, disturb, or interfere with the peace, order, and/or discipline within the learning environment or during any school-related activity;
- 2) any verbal, physical, or visual behaviors or displays (including cell phone and /or other digital images) of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or abusive educational environment for other students; or
- 3) any action, comments, or written messages intended to cause others to fight or which might reasonably be expected to result in a fight.

In addition, no student shall possess or wear any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs or other items, which indicate a student's membership or desired membership or affiliation with a gang.

Extortion: A student shall not gain or demand through verbal, written or physical threats, coercion or intimidation anything of value (personal property, money, or information) from any other student or school employee. Extortion may be considered bullying.

Fighting: No student shall intentionally hit, shove, scratch, bite, block the passage of, or throw objects at a student or other person. No student shall take any action or make any comments or communicate any messages intended to cause others to fight or which might reasonably be expected to result in a fight.

A student who is attacked may use reasonable force in self-defense but only to the extent necessary to free himself/herself from the attack and notify proper school authorities. A student who exceeds this reasonable force may be disciplined even though he/she may not have provoked the fight.

Students who are intimidated or harassed by another student should report that to a teacher or administrator immediately. Students who instigate a fight but who are not actively involved are considered in violation of this rule. Examples include carrying rumors, carrying information back and forth, and urging others to fight. These students subject themselves to the same consequences as those who participate in the fight.

Students who actively prevent adults and administrators from disbursing the fight are subject to the same disciplinary action as those who participate in the fight.

Students who see a fight should report it to the nearest adult and remove themselves from the area by entering the nearest classroom or safe space. (See Assaults and Threats Policy Code: 4331)

Hazing: No group or individual shall require any student to wear abnormal dress or costume on campus, or subject students to harassment by abusive and humiliating tricks usually by way of initiation.

Inappropriate Literature and Illustrations: The possession of literature or illustrations, in print or digital format, which significantly disrupt the educational process or which are obscene is prohibited.

Integrity: In accordance with Integrity and Civility Policy Code: 4310 all students are expected to demonstrate integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control. This expectation is directly related to the Board's educational objectives for students to respect cultural diversity and ideological differences. Integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control are critical for establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly and inviting environment. Examples of behaviors that violate this policy include but are not limited to:

- a. **Cheating** - Including the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance or the actual giving or receiving of an unfair advantage on any form of academic work. This also applies to national and state testing, i.e., End-of-Grade, End-of-Course, SAT, PSAT.
- b. **Plagiarism** - Including the copying of the language structure, idea and/or thought of another person or of a work produced by artificial intelligence and representing it as one's own original work.
- c. **Falsification** - Making an untrue verbal or written statement, including forgery on attendance notes, etc.
- d. **Violating copyright laws** - Including unauthorized reproduction, duplication and or use of printed or electronic work, computer software, or other copyrighted material.
- e. **Playing abusive or dangerous tricks** or otherwise subjecting a student or personnel to personal indignity.

Major Disrespect Toward an Adult: Students shall not use profanity, vulgar gestures, and/or vulgar comments directed to a staff member or adult.

Misconduct on a School Vehicle: School transportation service is a privilege, not a right. Students shall observe the directive of the school bus driver at all times. The following conduct is specifically prohibited and may result in temporary or permanent suspension from school transportation services and/or from school:

1. Delaying the bus schedule
2. Fighting
3. Smoking, using profanity or refusing to obey the driver's instructions
4. Tampering with or willfully damaging the school vehicle. (This offense may involve restitution in addition to other disciplinary consequences)
5. Possession or use of unauthorized drugs or intoxicating beverages as outlined in Board policy.
6. Getting off at an unauthorized stop.
7. Distracting the driver's attention by participating in disruptive behavior while the vehicle is in operation.

8. Failing to observe established safety rules and regulations.
9. Willfully trespassing upon a school bus.
10. Violating any other rule of the Code of Student Conduct while on the school bus or other school vehicle. All other disciplinary policies will be adhered to in addition to any bus-specific disciplinary action.

Prohibited Materials: No student shall possess, handle or transmit pepper gas, mace or any other similar substance nor shall a student possess a laser pointer or similar electronic device. Any material intended or reasonably likely to result in a fire on school property is prohibited unless specifically authorized by school officials. These items include lighters and matches.

Except with the permission of the principal or other designated school official, students shall not possess any "look alike" gun such as a plastic gun, rubber gun, candy gun, or water pistol.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other inappropriate sexual advancement made by one student to another student constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Continued remarks or displays of words or pictures having a sexual connotation;
- 2) Pressure for sexual activity;
- 3) Deliberate unwelcome touching;
- 4) Suggestions or demands for sexual involvement that may be accompanied by implied promises of preferential treatment or threats;
- 5) Intentionally exposing one's body (genitals) on school property or at school-sponsored events.

Student Demonstrations: No student shall, on or off school premises, engage in any protest, march, picket or sit-in or similar activity which has as its purpose the disruption of any lawful function, mission or process of the school to which the student is assigned or to any school in the school system. If the demonstration results in damage to property, restitution may be required as part of any disciplinary consequence.

Theft: No student shall steal or attempt to steal or knowingly be in possession of stolen property.

Threats: No student shall direct toward any school employee, toward any other student, or toward any other person within the school context, any language or action which threatens force or violence, or any sign or act which constitutes a threat of force or violence. Any threatening action may result in the requirement of a psychological or psychiatric evaluation of the student(s) involved in the threatening action. The details of a threat may result in a higher-level offense and consequence.

LEVEL THREE OFFENSES K-8 Students

Arson: No student shall set a fire in the school building or on the school grounds. Violations of this policy will result in a complaint in adult court or a petition in juvenile court in accordance with fire marshal codes and city and state laws, and a report to the Superintendent and the appropriate law enforcement agency immediately.

Assault on Another Student: No student shall behave in such a manner as could reasonably cause serious physical injury to any student. Assault includes, but is not limited to, striking, spitting, shoving, hitting, slapping, kicking, biting, pushing, or otherwise attempting to cause physical injury to any student.

Assault of a School Employee: No student shall attempt to cause physical injury to any school employee or behave in such a manner as could reasonably cause physical injury to any school employee. School employees under this policy may include, but are not limited to, game officials, referees, coaches, advisors, custodians, SRO's, child nutrition, volunteers, etc.

Assault Involving a Weapon: No student shall assault another person using a weapon, dangerous instrument, or dangerous substance. (See Weapons/Dangerous Instruments)

Bomb Threat or Hoax: No student shall, by any means of communication make a report, knowing or having reason to know the report is false, that there is located on any school premises or any school sponsored event, a device designed to cause damage or destruction by explosion, blasting, or burning.

Gang Activity: No student shall commit any act that furthers gangs or gang related activity. A gang is defined as a group or organization of three or more people either formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, or the purposeful violation of any Duplin County School policy, and having a common name or common identifying sign, symbol or colors.

Illegal Drugs and Alcohol: According to the law and Policy 4325 (Drugs and Alcohol), students are prohibited from possessing, using, transmitting, selling or being under the influence of any of the Refer to following substances:

- Narcotic drugs
- Hallucinogenic drugs
- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Marijuana or any other controlled substance
- Synthetic stimulants, such as MDPV and mephedrone (e.g. "bath salts"), and synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. "Spice," "K2")
- Any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage or fortified wine or other intoxicating liquor or any chemicals or products procured or used with the intention of bringing about a state of exhilaration or euphoria or of otherwise altering the student's mood or behavior

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, transmitting, or selling drug paraphernalia or counterfeit (fake) drugs. Students may not in any way participate in the selling or transmitting of prohibited substances, regardless of whether the sale or transmission ultimately occurs on school property.

Possession or use of prescription or over the counter drugs is not a violation of this policy if possessed or used in accordance this policy. The principal may authorize other lawful uses of substances prohibited by this policy, such as for approved school projects.

Weapons and Dangerous Instruments: No student shall possess, handle, or transmit any:

- Knives, including pocket knives, bowie knives, switchblades, box cutters, dirks and daggers;
- Slingshots and slungshots;
- leaded canes;
- blackjacks;
- metal knuckles;
- BB guns
- Air rifles and air pistols;
- Stun guns and other electronic shock weapons such as tasers;
- Icepicks;
- Razors and razor blades (except those designed and used solely for personal shaving);
- Fireworks;
- Gun powder, ammunition, bullets
- Any sharp pointed or edged instruments except unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for the preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance.

**** (See Level Four – Firearms/ Destructive Devices for loaded and unloaded firearms, including guns, pistols and rifles and destructive devices including explosives such as dynamite cartridges, bombs, grenades, and mines)*

LEVEL FOUR OFFENSES

Firearm/Destructive Device: As required by law, a student who brings or possesses a firearm or destructive device on school property or at a school-sponsored event shall be suspended for 365 calendar days and referred to law enforcement.

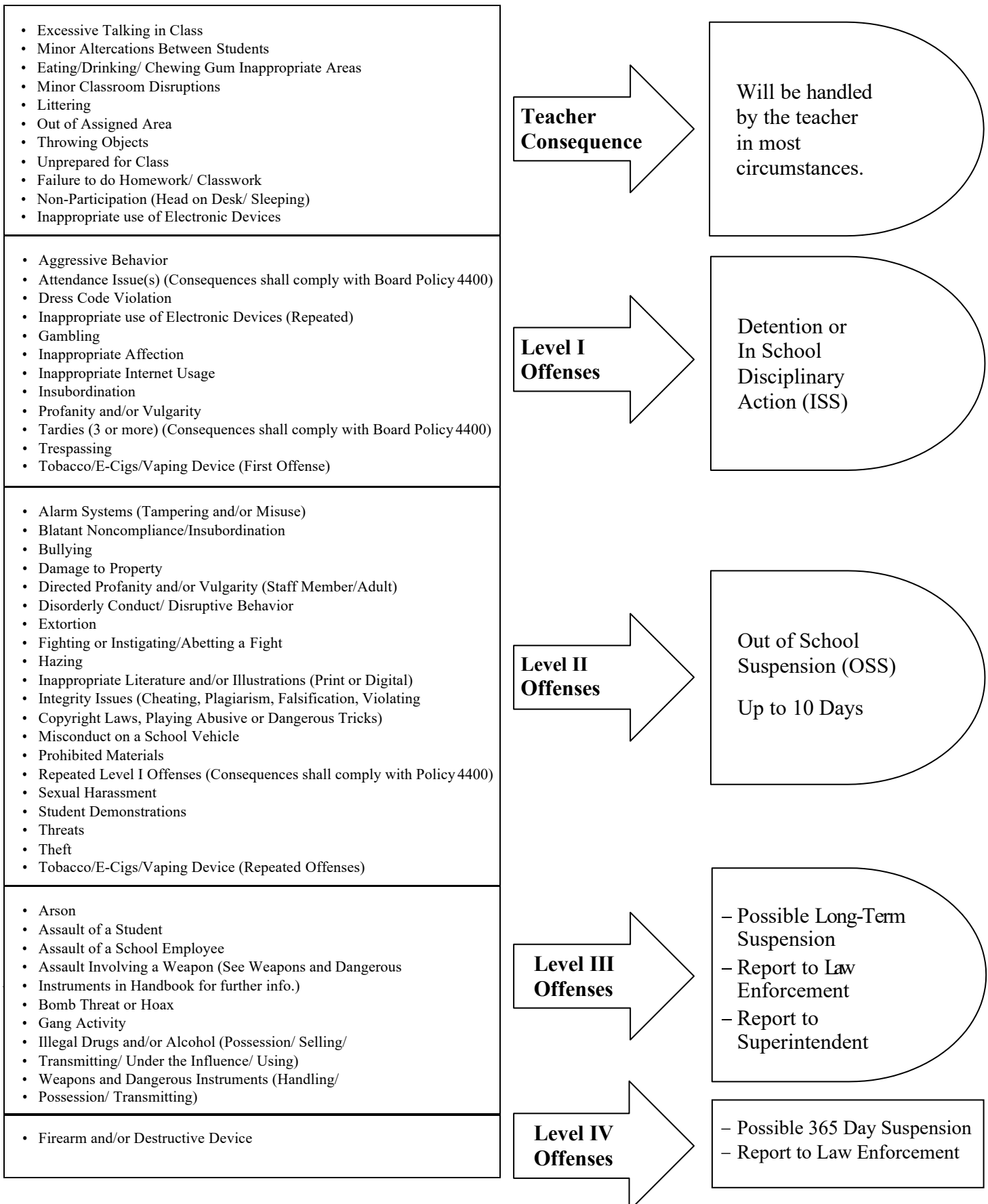
Firearm - For the purpose of this subsection, a firearm is (1) a weapon, including a starter gun, that will or is designed to or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, (2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon or (3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer. A firearm does not include an inoperable antique firearm, a BB gun, a stun gun, or an air rifle or air pistol.

Destructive Device - For the purposes of this subsection, a destructive device is an explosive, incendiary or poison gas (1) bomb, (2) grenade, (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (5) mine, or (6) similar device.

Violation of this section shall result in suspension from school for 365 days unless the Superintendent modifies, in writing, the required 365-day suspension for an individual student on a case-by-case basis. The Superintendent shall not impose a 365-day suspension if the Superintendent determines the student (1) took or received the firearm or destructive device from another person at school or found the firearm or destructive device at school, (2) delivered or reported the firearm or destructive device as soon as practicable to law enforcement officer or school personnel, and (3) had no intent to use the firearm or destructive device in a harmful or threatening way.

A student may not be suspended for 365 days for weapons violation except in accordance with this subsection. See Policy 4333 Weapons, Bomb Threats, Terrorist Threats, and Clear Threats to Safety

Duplin County Schools K-8 Discipline and Infraction Chart



No one can possibly foresee all of the infractions that can occur nor the magnitude of each violation. Therefore, this is intended as a guideline only and in no way restricts administration from applying consequences that are judged to be most fair.

Severity of Offenses/Consequences - High School Students:

Level 1: Level 1 offenses are inappropriate behaviors that can usually be addressed through detention.

Level 2: Level 2 offenses are inappropriate behaviors that can usually be addressed through in-school interventions such as in-school suspension, rather than out-of-school suspensions. Repeated offenses, refusal of in-school consequences, or other aggravating circumstances may lead to short-term suspension of up to five (5) days.

Level 3: Level 3 offenses involve more serious misconduct that warrants more significant disciplinary measures, usually short-term suspension of up to five (5) days. Aggravating factors involved in the offense may support a short-term suspension of up to ten (10) days or a recommendation for long-term suspension.

Level 4: Level 4 offenses involve severe misconduct that supports long-term suspension. Mitigating factors related to the offense may support a reduction to short-term suspension of ten (10) days or less.

Aggravating and Mitigating Factors:

Aggravating factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Prior discipline history or repeat offenses
- Obstructing the investigation or falsely blaming others
- Inducing others to participate
- The misconduct was associated with gang activity
- The victim of the misconduct was a teacher or other staff member, or a significantly younger or disabled student
- Attempting to flee or conceal guilt
- Receiving money or something of value for the misbehavior
- Repetitive blatant disrespect for authority
- Taking advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit the offense
- Committing an offense on another school property
- Causing substantial disruption of the educational environment
- Causing physical injury or destruction of school or personal property

Mitigating factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lack of prior discipline history
- Cooperating or aiding during investigation
- Age, maturity, and developmental level
- Acting under strong provocation
- Being a passive participant or playing a minor role in the offense
- Reasonably believing the conduct was allowed
- Making appropriate restitution
- Giving a full and truthful statement admitting guilt early in the investigation

LEVEL ONE OFFENSES- High School

Dress Code: Appearance or clothing which is disruptive, provocative, obscene, or endangers the health or safety of the student or others is prohibited. Any clothing or accessories that depicts gang-related activities or displays words or images directly or indirectly advertising illegal or prohibited substances or which promote the use of these products or which are profane, obscene, or sexually suggestive are strictly prohibited. Appropriate attire adheres to the guidelines in the attached Dress Code.

Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices: Students shall comply with Board Policy and HB 959/S.L. 2025-38. Students are prohibited from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time unless otherwise directed by a teacher or administrator for educational purposes or for use in the event of an emergency; OR as required by the student's individualized education plan or section 504 plan; OR as required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition. Wireless communication devices are defined as any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, including but not limited to the following:

1. Cellular telephones.
2. Tablet computers.
3. Laptop computers.
4. Paging devices.
5. Two-way radios.
6. Gaming devices.

School employees may immediately confiscate any electronic device that is on, used, displayed or visible in violation of Board policy or HB 959/S.L. 2025-38. Students in violation of Board Policy or HB 959/S.L. 2025-38 are subject to disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Duplin County Schools Student Code of Conduct. Generally, first time offenses of inappropriate use of electronic devices during instructional time will be handled by the teacher.

Gambling: Students shall not engage in any form of games of chance or gambling for money or things of value. Participation in any unauthorized event, action or statement, which relies on chance for the monetary advantage of one participant at the expense of others, is prohibited. This includes

exchanging items of value as well as currency and extends to keeping score for later settlement.

Inappropriate Affection: No student shall engage in behavior which is immoral, indecent, disrespectful, or of any overly romantic, affectionate or sexual nature in the school setting.

Inappropriate Internet Usage: Students shall comply with Technology and Responsible Use Policy Code: 3225/4312/7320.

Noncompliance/Insubordination: Students who willfully and intentionally disregard directives of school personnel are considered insubordinate. Examples include continued dress code violations, etc.

Out of Assigned Area: Students shall be in assigned areas unless otherwise approved by school staff.

Profanity and Vulgarity: Students shall not use profanity or vulgar language or gestures. Vulgar language or gestures include remarks or gestures intended to demean a person's race, religion, sex, national origin, handicapping condition or intellectual ability. Profanity or vulgar language/gestures directed at a staff member or other adult will be treated as a Level Two offense (see Directed Profanity and Vulgarity).

Tardies (3 or more): Students shall not be tardy to assigned classes or homeroom. Repeated tardies may result in disciplinary action under this Student Code of Conduct. Consequences shall comply with Board Policy 4400.

LEVEL TWO OFFENSES- High School

Aggressive Behavior: behavior that can cause physical or emotional harm to others. It may range from verbal abuse to physical abuse, but does not constitute a fight. This behavior can involve harm to personal property and can violate social boundaries.

Attendance: Students shall comply with Board Policy 4400 (Attendance) and attend classes in a timely and regular fashion. Students shall come to school, remain at school once they have arrived and be present in their designated homeroom and/or their assigned classroom unless they have been authorized to do otherwise by the principal or his/her designee. Consequences shall comply with Board Policy 4400.

Not reporting to detention: Students shall report to detention as assigned.

Tobacco Use: Consistent with Board Tobacco Products- Students Policy Code: 4320 no student shall possess, smoke or use any tobacco product on any school-controlled grounds, in any school building or school vehicle, at any school sponsored or school related activity, at any authorized school event before, during, or after regular school hours, or during any period of time he/she is subject to the authority of school personnel. The term "tobacco product" means any product that contains or that is made or derived from tobacco and is intended for human consumption, including all lighted and smokeless tobacco products, as well as electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, and other electronic smoking devices even if they do not contain tobacco or nicotine. The contents of a vaping device may result in a more severe offense and consequence. Use of a vaping devices could result in a more severe disciplinary consequence than possession of a vaping device.

LEVEL THREE OFFENSES- High School

Alarm Systems, Tampering and Misuse: Misuse of fire alarms or security alarms—including false setting of, or other tampering with alarms—is prohibited in all cases. Misuse of fire extinguishers is included in this policy. Violation of this policy may result in the filing of charges in accordance with fire marshal regulations.

Blatant Noncompliance/Insubordination: Students who willfully and intentionally defy directives of school personnel with the intention of being disrespectful. Examples include walking out of class, refusing to report to the office, etc.

Bullying: All forms of Bullying, including cyber bullying, are prohibited. Bullying is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school- sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- (1) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- (2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Bullying in some instances may be considered assault and/or extortion.

Damage to Property: Students shall not intentionally damage or attempt to damage any school or private property while under school jurisdiction, including while on buses. Students shall not vandalize, damage or attempt to damage property belonging to others. In addition to general disciplinary consequences, restitution may be required under certain circumstances.

Disorderly Conduct and Inciting Student Disorder: Disorderly conduct includes behavior that is defiant and uncontrollable such that the student's removal from school is necessary. Students shall not lead or participate in any activity that has as its purpose the disruption of school business or which significantly affects the educational process. In the event that the disruption does not abate immediately or if the principal deems it appropriate, law enforcement will be called and the Superintendent shall be notified.

Disruptive Behavior: Disruptive behavior in the school setting is prohibited. Disruptive behavior includes:

- 1) any physical or verbal action which reasonably could or does substantially disrupt, disturb, or interfere with the peace, order, and/or discipline within the learning environment or during any school-related activity; any verbal, physical, or visual behaviors or displays (including cell phone and /or other digital images) of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or abusive educational environment for other students; or

- 2) any action, comments, or written messages intended to cause others to fight or which might reasonably be expected to result in a fight.

In addition, no student shall possess or wear any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs or other items, which indicate a student's membership or desired membership or affiliation with a gang.

Fighting: No student shall intentionally hit, shove, scratch, bite, block the passage of, or throw objects at a student or other person. No student shall take any action or make any comments or communicate any messages intended to cause others to fight or which might reasonably be expected to result in a fight.

A student who is attacked may use reasonable force in self-defense but only to the extent necessary to free himself/herself from the attack and notify proper school authorities. A student who exceeds this reasonable force may be disciplined even though he/she may not have provoked the fight.

Students who are intimidated or harassed by another student should report that to a teacher or administrator immediately. Students who instigate a fight but who are not actively involved are considered in violation of this rule. Examples include carrying rumors, carrying information back and forth, and urging others to fight. These students subject themselves to the same consequences as those who participate in the fight. Students who actively prevent adults and administrators from disbursing the fight are subject to the same disciplinary action as those who participate in the fight. Students who see a fight should report it to the nearest adult and remove themselves from the area by entering the nearest classroom or safe space. Assaults and Threats Policy Code: 4331

Hazing: No group or individual shall require any student to wear abnormal dress or costume on campus, or subject students to harassment by abusive and humiliating tricks usually by way of initiation.

Inappropriate Literature and Illustrations: The possession of literature or illustrations, in print or digital format, which significantly disrupt the educational process or which are obscene is prohibited.

Integrity: In accordance with Integrity and Civility Policy Code: 4310 all students are expected to demonstrate integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control. This expectation is directly related to the Board's educational objectives for students to respect cultural diversity and ideological differences. Integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control are critical for establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly and inviting environment. Examples of behaviors that violate this policy include but are not limited to:

- a. **Cheating** - Including the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance or the actual giving or receiving of an unfair advantage on any form of academic work. This also applies to national and state testing, i.e., End-of-Grade, End-of-Course, SAT, PSAT.
- b. **Plagiarism** - Including the copying of the language structure, idea and/or thought of another person or of a work produced by artificial intelligence and representing it as one's own original work.
- c. **Falsification** - Making an untrue verbal or written statement, including forgery on attendance notes, etc.
- d. **Violating copyright laws** - Including unauthorized reproduction, duplication and or use of printed or electronic work, computer software, or other copyrighted material.
- e. **Playing abusive or dangerous tricks** or otherwise subjecting a student or personnel to personal indignity.

Major Disrespect Toward an Adult: Students shall not use profanity, vulgar gestures, and/or vulgar comments directed to a staff member or adult.

Not identifying Self to Adult: No student shall deliberately either refuse to give his name when asked by an adult or give false identification.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other inappropriate sexual advancement made by one student to another student constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Continued remarks or displays of words or pictures having a sexual connotation;
- 2) Pressure for sexual activity;
- 3) Deliberate unwelcome touching;
- 4) Suggestions or demands for sexual involvement that may be accompanied by implied promises of preferential treatment or threats;
- 5) Intentionally exposing one's body (genitals) on school property or at school-sponsored events.

Student Demonstrations: No student shall, on or off school premises, engage in any protest, march, picket or sit-in or similar activity which has as its purpose the disruption of any lawful function, mission or process of the school to which the student is assigned or to any school in the school system. If the demonstration results in damage to property, restitution may be required as part of any disciplinary consequence.

Theft: No student shall steal or attempt to steal or knowingly be in possession of stolen property.

Threats: No student shall direct toward any school employee, toward any other student, or toward any other person within the school context, any language or action which threatens force or violence, or any sign or act which constitutes a threat of force or violence. Any threatening action may result in the requirement of a psychological or psychiatric evaluation of the student(s) involved in the threatening action. The details of a threat may result in a higher-level offense and consequence.

Trespassing: No student shall be on the campus of another school in the Duplin County Public School System during the school day without the knowledge and consent of the officials of the school he/she is visiting. Students who loiter at any school after the close of the school day without specific need or supervision will be considered trespassers and may be prosecuted if they do not leave when instructed to do so. Any student who has been suspended from school may be considered trespassing if he/she appears on school property during the suspension period without the express permission of the principal.

LEVEL FOUR OFFENSES- High School

Arson: No student shall set a fire in the school building or on the school grounds. Violations of this policy will result in a complaint in adult court or a petition in juvenile court in accordance with fire marshal codes and city and state laws, and a report to the Superintendent and the appropriate law enforcement agency immediately.

Assault on Another Student: No student shall behave in such a manner as could reasonably cause serious physical injury to any student. Assault includes, but is not limited to, striking, spitting, shoving, hitting, slapping, kicking, biting, pushing, or otherwise attempting to cause physical injury to any student.

Assault of a School Employee: No student shall attempt to cause physical injury to any school employee or behave in such a manner as could reasonably cause physical injury to any school employee. School employees under this policy may include, but are not limited to, game officials, referees, coaches, advisors, custodians, SRO's, child nutrition, volunteers, etc.

Assault Involving a Weapon: No student shall assault another person using a weapon, dangerous instrument, or dangerous substance. (See Weapons/Dangerous Instruments)

Bomb Threat or Hoax: No student shall, by any means of communication make a report, knowing or having reason to know the report is false, that there is located on any school premises or any school sponsored event, a device designed to cause damage or destruction by explosion, blasting, or burning.

Gang Activity: No student shall commit any act that furthers gangs or gang related activity. A gang is defined as a group or organization of three or more people either formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, or the purposeful violation of any Duplin County School policy, and having a common name or common identifying sign, symbol or colors. Gang-Related Activity Policy 4328

Illegal Drugs and Alcohol: Students are prohibited from possessing, using, transmitting, or selling drug paraphernalia or counterfeit (fake) drugs. Students may not in any way participate in the selling or transmitting of prohibited substances, regardless of whether the sale or transmission ultimately occurs on school property.

Possession or use of prescription or over the counter drugs is not a violation of this policy if possessed or used in accordance this policy. The principal may authorize other lawful uses of substances prohibited by this policy, such as for approved school projects. According to the law and Policy 4325 (Drugs and Alcohol), students are prohibited from possessing, using, transmitting, selling or being under the influence of any of the Refer to following substances:

- Narcotic drugs
- Hallucinogenic drugs
- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Marijuana or any other controlled substance
- Synthetic stimulants, such as MDPV and mephedrone (e.g. "bath salts"), and synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. "Spice," "K2")
- Any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage or fortified wine or other intoxicating liquor or any chemicals or products procured or used with the intention of bringing about a state of exhilaration or euphoria or of otherwise altering the student's mood or behavior

Prohibited Materials: No student shall possess, handle or transmit pepper gas, mace or any other similar substance nor shall a student possess a laser pointer or similar electronic device. Any material intended or reasonably likely to result in a fire on school property is prohibited unless specifically authorized by school officials. These items include lighters and matches. Except with the permission of the principal or other designated school official, students shall not possess any "look alike" gun such as a plastic gun, rubber gun, candy gun, or water pistol.

Weapons and Dangerous Instruments: No student shall possess, handle, or transmit any:

- Knives, including pocket knives, bowie knives, switchblades, box cutters, dirks and daggers;
- Slingshots and slungshots;
- leaded canes;
- blackjacks;
- metal knuckles;
- BB guns
- Air rifles and air pistols;
- Stun guns and other electronic shock weapons such as tasers;
- Icepicks;
- Razors and razor blades (except those designed and used solely for personal shaving);
- Fireworks;
- gun powder, ammunition, bullets
- Any sharp pointed or edged instruments except unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for the preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance.

*******(See Firearms/ Destructive Devices for loaded and unloaded firearms, including guns, pistols and rifles and destructive devices including explosives such as dynamite cartridges, bombs, grenades, and mines)

Firearm/Destructive Device: This type of offense compromises the safety and welfare of students and staff and requires a suspension under North Carolina law. As required by law, a student who brings or possesses a firearm or destructive device on school property or at a school- sponsored event shall be suspended for 365 calendar days and referred to law enforcement.

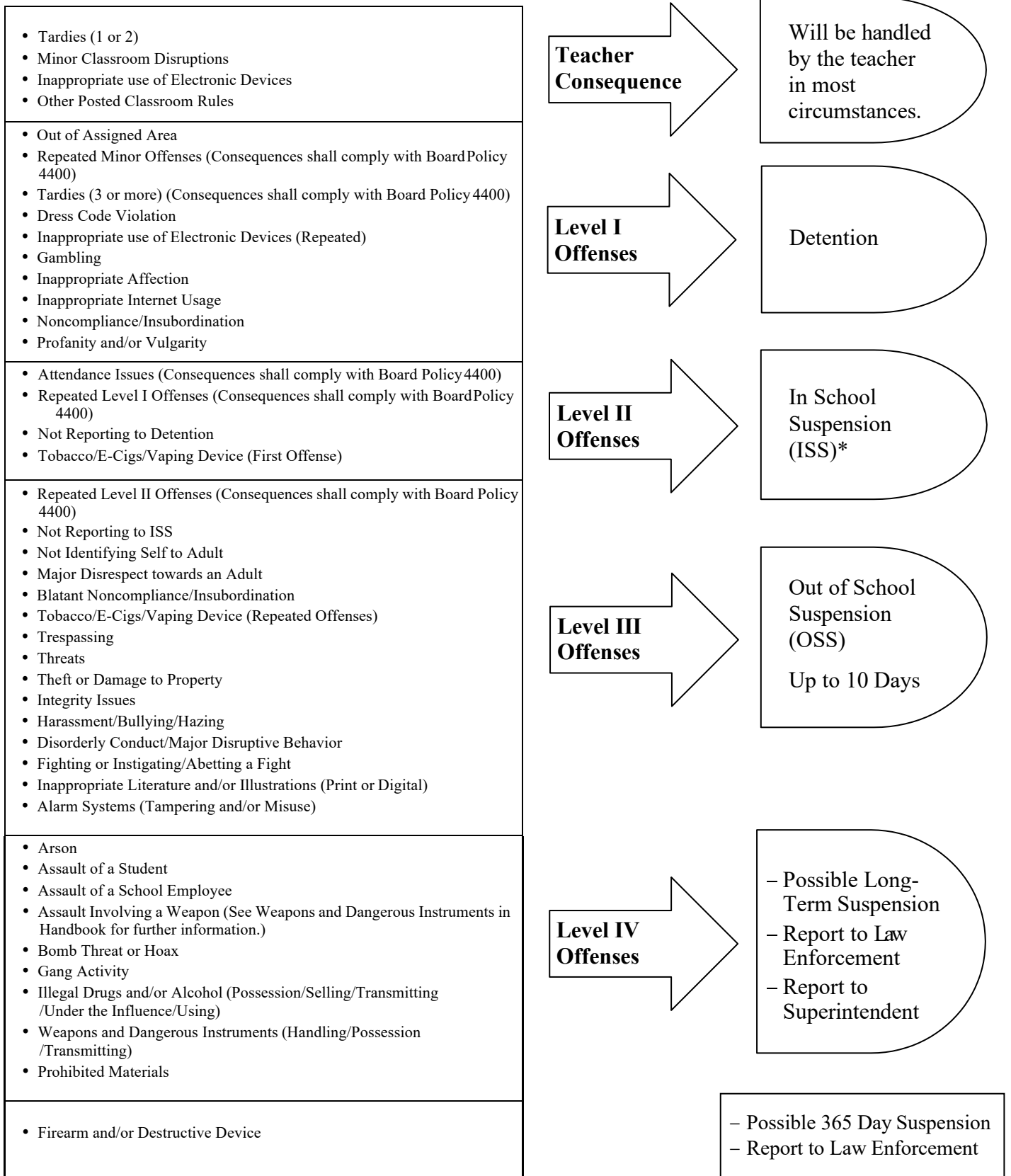
Firearm - For the purpose of this subsection, a firearm is (1) a weapon, including a starter gun, that will or is designed to or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, (2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon or (3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer. A firearm does not include an inoperable antique firearm, a BB gun, a stun gun, or an air rifle or air pistol.

Destructive Device - For the purposes of this subsection, a destructive device is an explosive, incendiary or poison gas (1) bomb, (2) grenade, (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (5) mine, or (6) similar device.

Violation of this section shall result in suspension from school for 365 days unless the Superintendent modifies, in writing, the required 365- day suspension for an individual student on a case-by-case basis. The Superintendent shall not impose a 365-day suspension if the Superintendent determines the student (1) took or received the firearm or destructive device from another person at school or found the firearm or destructive device at school, (2) delivered or reported the firearm or destructive device as soon as practicable to law enforcement officer or school personnel, and (3) had no intent to use the firearm or destructive device in a harmful or threatening way.

A student may not be suspended for 365 days for weapons violation except in accordance with this subsection. Policy 4333 Weapons, Bomb Threats, Terrorist Threats, and Clear Threats to Safety.

Duplin County Schools Discipline and Infraction Chart for High Schools



* Schools without In-School-Suspension will make adjustments as needed.

No one can possibly foresee all of the infractions that can occur nor the magnitude of each violation. Therefore, this is intended as a guideline only and in no way restricts administration from applying consequences that are judged to be most fair.

Duplin County Schools Bus Discipline and Infraction Chart

- Out of seat while bus is in motion
- Delaying the bus
- Profanity, obscenity, or vulgar body language
- Litter
- Minor disrespect
- Food, drink, or candy on the bus

Level I Offenses

Offense

1. Sweep bus
2. Assigned seat
3. Bus suspension (1 day)
4. Bus suspension (at least 3 days)
5. Bus suspension (at least 5 days)

- Tampering with emergency door or emergency windows
- Riding an unassigned bus without permission from the office
- Writing on or defacing school property
- Property damage
- Smoking/possession of tobacco products
- Fighting or abetting a fight
- Major disruption
- Major disrespect
- Profanity towards an adult
- Inappropriate affection
- Insubordination
- Throwing objects out of a window
- Head, arm, etc. hanging out of the window

Level II Offenses

Offense

1. Bus suspension (at least 3 days)
2. Bus suspension (at least 5 days)
3. Removed permanently from the bus.

IN CASES WHERE PROPERTY DAMAGE HAS OCCURRED, RESTITUTION WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED.

In addition to the consequences listed above for school bus infractions, some offenses may also warrant consequences such as detentions, ISS, or OSS.

No one can possibly foresee all of the infractions that can occur nor the magnitude of each violation. Therefore, this is intended as a guideline only and in no way restricts administration from applying consequences that are judged to be most fair.

STUDENT DRESS CODE Regulation Code 4316-R

The Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) believes that the dress and personal appearance of students greatly affect their academic performance and their interaction with other students. The Board requests that parents outfit their children in clothing that is conducive to learning. Generally, dress and grooming standards as determined by the student and his or her parents will be deemed acceptable. However, the Board prohibits any appearance or clothing that does the following:

1. violates a reasonable, nondiscriminatory dress code adopted and publicized by the school;
2. is substantially disruptive (for information on gang-related attire, see policy 4328, Gang-Related Activity);
3. is provocative or obscene; or
4. endangers the health or safety of the student or others.

I. Attire and Appearance Guidance

- **Shirts**
 - Chest, midriff, and back must be completely covered.
 - Sleeveless shirts must be at least 2” in width at the shoulder.
 - Shirts must not be sheer or see through.
 - Cleavage may not show.
 - Cut-outs exposing the torso are not permitted.
 - Overly tight clothing is not permitted
 - Shirts will be worn at all times, including during physical education class
 - Oversized shirts must remain tucked in
- **Skirts, Dresses, Shorts**
 - The hem of skirts, dresses, and shorts must be below the fingertips when the arms are extended downward, even if leggings/jeggings are worn beneath.
- **Pants/Slacks**
 - Cut-outs or excessively ragged pants/clothing exposing the skin above the fingertip level are not permitted.
 - If leggings/jeggings or excessively tight pants are worn, there must be a skirt, dress, or shorts meeting the minimum length requirement worn over them.
 - Pants revealing the buttocks or groin area are not permitted.
- **Other**
 - Belts and buckles must be fastened. Hats, hoods, and/or sunglasses, shall not be worn inside the school.
 - Undergarments must not be visible.
 - Any item of clothing, jewelry, or accessory that creates a substantial disruption of the school environment/learning activities, or that poses a threat to the safety and well-being of students or staff is prohibited.
 - Wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs or other items with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang are prohibited.
- **Shoes**
 - Shoes must be worn at all times according to state law.
 - Bedroom/house shoes may not be worn to school.
 - Athletic shoes must be worn during physical education classes.
- **Athletic Attire**
 - Athletic uniforms shall not be worn during the regular school day except for special occasions as granted by the principal.
 - Athletes will be expected to adhere to the coach’s recommendations for dress in their particular sport.
 - Students must “dress out” in designated physical education attire as required by the physical education teacher.

II. Reasonable Accommodations

Principals shall exempt students from specific provisions of this dress code or make other reasonable accommodations when required by law. Students and/or parents are encouraged to contact their principal to request a reasonable accommodation when needed. An accommodation will not be considered reasonable if it would result in undue hardship to the school system’s operations. Reasonable accommodations will be made:

1. when a student’s religious affiliation, creed, or any legitimate practice related thereto, requires a clothing or otherwise makes the employee unable to fully comply with the dress code;
2. to accommodate a student’s physical disabilities or for other legitimate health reasons; or
3. under other circumstances as may be required by law.

III. Consequences

Before receiving disciplinary consequences, a student who is not in compliance with Policy 4316- Student Dress Code or a school dress code will be given a reasonable period of time to make adjustments so that he or she will be in compliance. Disciplinary consequences for a student who fails to comply after being offered this opportunity shall be consistent with Section D of Policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violation of the dress code.

Issued by the Superintendent: August 9, 2022

