Washington County Public Schools

2025-2026 HANDBOOK & GUIDE

WCPS

Washington County Public Schools

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IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND THAT ALL PUBLIC AND PUBLICLY FUNDED SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS OPERATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH:

(1) TITLE VI OF THE FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; AND

(2) TITLE 26, SUBTITLE 7 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE OF THE MARYLAND CODE, WHICH STATES THAT PUBLIC AND PUBLICLY FUNDED SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS MAY NOT:

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(III) DISCIPLINE, INVOKE A PENALTY AGAINST, OR TAKE ANY OTHER RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST A STUDENT OR PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A STUDENT WHO FILES A COMPLAINT ALLEGING THAT THE PROGRAM OR SCHOOL DISCRIMINATED AGAINST THE STUDENT, REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF THE COMPLAINT.

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Notice: The contents of this guide reflect procedures, policies, and information as of July 2025. Updates, changes, or revisions may occur during the year.

General Information

Introduction and Scope of Handbook and Guide

The Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) Handbook and Guide for parents, legal guardians, students, and staff includes school system guidelines, policies, and procedures that apply to all public schools in Washington County. In addition to this handbook and guide, administrative teams at each school may include additional expectations for their students at the school level with the approval of appropriate WCPS administrators. **Please review this handbook and guide during the early days of the school year. Sign the Student Handbook Forms that were distributed in school, and have your student return them.**

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Parent Involvement and Parents Helping Students

WCPS, in its effort to provide quality education for all students, seeks a full partnership with parents, legal guardians, family members, and the community. WCPS recognizes that parents, family members, and communities need a full understanding of the educational opportunities for children and that schools need maximum involvement of parents, family members, and communities in the school improvement process.

Parent involvement enhances the academic and social development of students.

Definitions

- **Parent—**the adult(s) responsible for the direct care of the child, i.e., biological parent(s), custodial parent(s), legal guardian(s), foster parent(s).
- **Family—**the people directly involved with the well-being of the child, i.e., brother(s), sister(s), aunt(s), uncle(s), grandparent(s), step-parent(s).
- **Community—**all other people involved in supporting the child, i.e., neighbors, schools, businesses, etc.
- **Parent and Family Engagement—**any action or behavior which directly or indirectly enhances or encourages a child's education, i.e., providing breakfast for the child prior to going to school, reviewing homework with the child each night, being active in a PTA/PTO, communicating often with teachers, serving on committees, attending school functions, etc.

Belief Statement

Parents, legal guardians, and other family members are the child's first teachers. Therefore, parents and family members are encouraged to provide a home atmosphere that supports learning and to express to their children the importance of education. Further, parents, legal guardians, and family members are encouraged to cooperate and collaborate with teachers and school administrators in matters relating to their child's education and to participate in school program planning and decision making.

To promote effective education, schools also need the support of other members of the community, including parent and service organizations, public libraries, businesses, and faith-based organizations. Community groups will be made aware that an investment in education is an investment in the community. Further, community groups will be encouraged to help schools develop and, as appropriate, implement school programs that promote educational goals and support high academic expectations for all students.

Goals

In partnership for student success and achievement, WCPS will work towards the following goals, based on the National P.T.A. Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

- **Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.**
- **Standard 2: Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.**
- **Standard 3: Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.**
- **Standard 4: Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.**
- **Standard 5: Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.**
- **Standard 6: Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.**

Title I Schools

To provide parents and families of students in Title I schools with opportunities to provide input to the school, each Title I school will:

- Convene an annual meeting to explain the Title I program and inform parents of their right to be involved in the program.
- Involve parents and families in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I program, as appropriate.
- Provide information about the Title I program and describe curricula, student assessments, and proficiency levels.
- Provide parents and families with the opportunity to submit dissenting views about the school's Title I program.
- Offer a flexible number of meetings and may use Title I funds to pay related expenses, such as child care, transportation, or home visits.

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Accessing the WCPS Student Information System

Parents are encouraged to view student educational information online by signing up for Synergy "ParentVUE" portal. Through ParentVUE, parents and legal guardians are able to access real-time information about their child's schedule, assignments, and

grades. In fact, a single login will allow parents/legal guardians to view information on all WCPS students in the family. Parents/legal guardians must use a computer and web browser to log in to ParentVUE for the first time and to create an account. To log in for the first time, contact your child's school for a username and password.

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Visiting Schools

Schools and school grounds are places of learning and work. To maintain security and safety, the school staff, parents, students, and community must work as partners. Parents and visitors must initially use the visitor's entrance, which is usually the main entrance. A video intercom system is available at the front door of each school.

VISITING A SCHOOL—Parents and visitors must check in at the school vestibule, located at the front office (or marked visitor entrance). Most interaction or exchange will take place in the vestibule. This practice supports a safer school. If a visitor is authorized to enter the school, a pass will be issued. Without a pass, access will be denied.

Parents or visitors requesting to meet with a teacher or administrator may be required to schedule an appointment. Teachers will not be available for unscheduled meetings during the school day.

When visiting or picking up a child, the office staff will ask to see the visitor's driver's license or other Maryland approved identification.

Due to federal and state laws regarding the privacy of student information, only parents, legal guardians, and/or those with written authorization will be permitted to visit or access students during the school day.

See page 18 for information on Consent to Permit Access to Student and/or Student Information.

STUDENTS CAN HELP—Students are encouraged to be alert for unusual or suspicious activity in the school or on the school grounds. Talk of violence or threats should be reported immediately to a teacher or an administrator.

Video Surveillance Cameras

WCPS and the Washington County Board of Education believes that the safety and security of students are top priorities. The Board has authorized the installation and use of video surveillance cameras in schools.

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Food and Nutrition Services

It is the mission of the Food and Nutrition Services Department to prepare and serve nutritious and appealing meals that meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for students, staff, and the community in a positive, cheerful manner, while maintaining financial soundness and contributing to the quality and excellence of the educational process. The nutritional balance of each meal is available daily on our menu web page *www.linqconnect.com*.

Meal Prices

Students must select three (3) items (one must be a fruit or vegetable) to be considered a complete meal. A la carte items will be available for purchase in most schools. Student breakfast $1.65, Student Elementary lunch $2.65, and Student Secondary lunch $2.90. Lunch for staff and visitors is $5.95.

Student Accounts

All students have a debit account which is accessed with their student ID card or student identification number. Parents have the ability to deposit money in their child's account for meals, milk, or a la carte purchases. A la carte items may not be purchased by any student until a negative balance is paid in full, even if payment for a la carte is with cash. Student account activity can be monitored, low balance alerts can be sent, and online deposits may be paid at *www.linqconnect.com*. Parents can also limit their child's a la carte purchases by contacting the Food and Nutrition Services office at 301-766-2890. WCPS will notify parents of negative account balances by phone, text, and mail. When all efforts to collect negative account balances have been exhausted with no communication from the family, WCPS will turn delinquent accounts over to a collection agency. The complete charge policy and regulation is included as an appendix to the handbook and available on WCPS website.

Free and Reduced Priced Meals

A new application must be completed each year. Applications are to be completed electronically at *www.linqconnect.com* or by scanning the QR code below. If you are not able to complete the application in this format, a paper application will be made available to you by calling the Food and Nutrition Services office at 301-766-2890. Paper applications can be returned to your child's school or to the Food and Nutrition Services office, 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

WCPS works to ensure that students with allergies or special dietary needs are served accordingly. Parents/legal guardians should contact the school health office and the Food and Nutrition Services office at 301-766-2890 as soon as a special dietary need is identified. Parents must also complete a Medical Form for Students with Special Dietary Needs, which is located on the Food and Nutrition Services website at *https://wcpsmd.com/food-nutrition-services*.

Contact Us

Suggestions and questions about the food services program are welcome!

301-766-2890

www.facebook.com/WCPSFoodNutritionServices

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Media Permission

WCPS works cooperatively with representatives of the news media to disseminate information concerning school system programs and activities. With approval of the school principal and/or the Chief Communications Officer, news media representatives and school system employees may capture video or photographs of students participating in school programs and activities for publications or broadcasts, including online platforms and Antietam Cable Channel 99.

The following notice is provided on the Student Health/Family Information form and distributed to all families the first week of school.

> *In the course of school activities, WCPS staff and/or the news media occasionally wish to interview, photograph, or capture video of students, display their work, or publish their names. Unless otherwise informed in writing, WCPS will assume permission has been granted to do so (WCPS cannot control media coverage of events that are open to the public).*

School system staff and media representatives will be given appropriate access to students for media/publicity-related purposes unless the parent/legal guardian indicates, in writing, that permission is denied.

At times, teachers and authorized students may use recording devices as part of an assignment. Those recordings (audio/video) are used for classroom purposes and are not made available to the media.

In addition, teachers may use recording devices to record (audio/video) the classroom environment for educational purposes, such as professional development and self-evaluation. These recordings will not be shared or posted publicly. WCPS teachers who are pursuing National Board Certification are required to submit video recordings and student work. Those teachers will send parents and legal guardians a separate release form that has additional information.

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Overview of Information Resources

WCPS on the Web

The WCPS website is a constantly changing method of communication for WCPS staff, students, parents, and anyone who is interested in the school system. The site contains a wealth of information from telephone numbers and school addresses to employment opportunities, district publications, news of honors and awards received, news releases, and general system information. Information and documentation for Board meetings are posted on BoardDocs, the Board of Education's website, which can be accessed through the WCPS website. See: *wcpsmd.com/boarddocs*

Social Media

WCPS shares information and engages with our school community through a variety of social media platforms, including:

- Facebook *(facebook.com/wcpsmd)*
- Twitter *(twitter.com/wcpsmd)*
- Instagram *(instagram.com/wcpsmd)*
- YouTube *(youtube.com/wcpsmd)*
- LinkedIn *(www.linkedin.com/company/wcpsmd)*

Some individual schools also maintain a presence on social media outlets. For more information, simply search the name of the school on the social media platform or speak with a school administrator.

Connect Mass Notifications/WCPS Mobile App

WCPS utilizes technology to keep families informed of events, emergencies, and other school system news. Contact methods range from phone calls and emails to text messages and mobile app notifications. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to provide a mobile phone number and an email address when filling out student information forms or call the home school to add this information so the school system can contact families with important information, including school closures, emergency notifications, and specific school news. The WCPS mobile app can be downloaded for iOS and Android devices by searching "Washington County ps" in app stores. Allow notifications in phone settings to receive alerts about new information posted to the app about your child's school.

Remind

Remind is a communication platform used by WCPS that makes it easier for educators, students, and parents/legal guardians to communicate.

Parent/legal guardian expectations

- Parents/legal guardians can expect to receive messages from WCPS, schools, teachers, and other school staff on Remind. Parents/legal guardians can choose if they would like to receive Remind messages via text message, in app notifications, and/or by email.
- Parents/legal guardians are expected to follow WCPS community guidelines when using Remind.
- Parents/legal guardians are expected to keep their contact information in Synergy up to date and share any contact updates with school staff via the ParentVue App or through the school secretary.
- Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to reply to teachers' messages when questions arise and engage in direct communication with teachers.
- Parents/legal guardians are expected to keep notifications enabled for at least one point of contact in Remind (email, mobile number, or app notifications). Parents/legal guardians should not use Remind for personal communication needs. Communication content on Remind should be limited to school and student topics, such as class assignments student behavior, academic performance, attendance, school news and events
- Parents/legal guardians can expect to be made aware of teachers' office hours. These are the hours teachers are usually available to communicate.
- Parents/legal guardians should report inappropriate behavior on Remind to the school administration immediately.
- Parents/legal guardians who own classes on Remind not related to WCPS should not link their classes to the school.
- Parents/legal guardians should contact the school or the Remind help center with any questions about Remind.
- For technical support on individual accounts, parents/legal guardians should contact the Remind support team via the Remind help center at rmd.me/help.

Student expectations

- Students must comply with WCPS Acceptable Use Policy and follow WCPS Code of Conduct.
- Students can expect to receive messages from WCPS, schools, teachers, and other school staff on Remind.
- Students may access messages on their school device using Quick Links.
- Students may not opt out or unsubscribe from receiving Remind messages.
- Students under the age of 13 can only receive one-way class announcements. They cannot send messages in Remind, upload profile pictures, reply to class announcements, or communicate directly with the class owner.
- For teachers with students under the age of 13, Remind requires at least one parent/legal guardian linked to each student.
- Students should consistently check for Remind messages on the approved devices (email, text message or app).

Antietam Cable Channel 99

Channel 99 is a Public Education/Government (PEG) channel available to Antietam Broadband cable subscribers. Programming includes school system news, live and re-broadcast Board of Education public meetings, and other special programming. Emergency communications will be posted on the scroll when circumstances warrant.

Board Advisory Committees

Advisory committees are valuable resources in the WCPS system. The committees study important topics and make recommendations to the Board of Education. They also help facilitate communication between system stakeholders and the Board. For more information, contact the Secretary to the Board of Education at 301-766-2971. Interested individuals can also complete an application on the WCPS website at: *https://www.wcpsmd.com/school-board/committees*.

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Student Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment and Transfer

A parent/legal guardian must be physically present with appropriate documentation in order to enroll a student in WCPS. If an in-person enrollment is not possible because the school is temporarily closed to the public, school staff will schedule a video conference with the parent/legal guardian or make a home visit to verify the identity of the enrolling adult, review completed enrollment forms, discuss student needs, and to identify a start date.

Photo ID: To validate the identity of the parent/legal guardian responsible for the student's enrollment, photo identification must be provided at the time of enrollment.

Proof of Age: Students new to WCPS need to provide documentation to establish proof of age in the form of a birth certificate or passport if birth certificate is not available. The name of the enrolling parent/legal guardian must be included on the birth certificate or official documentation establishing legal custody must be provided.

Age Requirements: Children are eligible for pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), kindergarten (K), and first grade based on their birth dates and ages:

- Children must be four years old on or before September 1 for pre-kindergarten.
- Children must be five years old on or before September 1 for kindergarten.
- Children must be six years old on or before September 1 for first grade.

See page 41 for information on the Early Admission process for kindergarten.

According to Maryland State Department of Education regulations, a one-year exemption from school enrollment may be granted if a parent/legal guardian believes that a delay in school attendance is in the best interest of the child. The exemption is also permitted for five-year-old children enrolled in a full-time licensed child care center, full-time registered family day care home, or part-time or full-time Head Start program.

Questions regarding mandatory kindergarten may be directed to the Office of Early Childhood Education at 301-766-8722.

The School: Generally, a student entering WCPS for the first time must enroll in a school based on the legal residence of the student and the parent/legal guardian. The parent/legal guardian may access the Washington County Interactive School District Map on the WCPS website in order to determine the appropriate school.

Custody: The person enrolling a student must be the parent/legal guardian of the student and reside in the appropriate school district with the student. Biological parent(s) are presumed to be the legal custodian of a child unless legal documentation exists that alters this fact. Accordingly, legal custody, not simply physical custody, must be determined at the time of enrollment. Any legal documentation pertaining to the custody of the student must be provided and maintained in the student's cumulative file. A student under age 18 living with a person other than their parent/legal guardian may not enroll in school until an application for legal custody is filed. In Washington County, application to transfer or modify custody is filed with the Circuit Court for Washington County (form DR4 or DR7 along with DR-50). Notarized statements from parents transferring custody to a relative or another person are not legal documents and are not acceptable for school enrollment.

Residency Verification: The custodial parent/legal guardian must provide proof of residency, current within three (3) months of enrollment date, including applicant's name, address, and date. Proof of residency consists of one of the following: real estate tax bill/statement, lease or mortgage statement, utility bill (water, sewer, gas, electric, oil), or deed, title, or settlement sheet. A termination notice will not be accepted and in such cases, school staff will collaborate with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to obtain an acceptable proof of residency. Proof of residency must have been issued or executed within 3 months of the date it is presented. Proof of residency must be provided upon initial enrollment, with any change of address, and when a student is transferring from one school to another.

Health Enrollment Requirements: The Maryland State Immunization Regulations require that children who are starting school have the appropriate immunizations. For each new

entrant, a Maryland Immunization Certificate, Form 896, is required by law so that immunization information may be recorded in the school file. Children will not be enrolled in school unless they have had the required immunizations. All WCPS students must have a physical examination performed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner within a 9-month period before the child enters the school system or within a 6-month period after entering the school system. All WCPS students must have a Blood Lead Testing Certificate completed when enrolling a child in Pre-K, K, or first grade. *(See Student Health Immunization Requirements on page 30)*

Questions concerning school enrollment should be directed to the **Department of Student Services** at 301-766-2960.

Special Permission

WCPS' Policy and regulation for student enrollment stipulates that each student shall attend the appropriate school in the student's designated attendance area. However, a parent/legal guardian may request permission for a student to attend a school in another WCPS attendance area for specific reasons including, but not limited to: childcare; the need for a specific academic program; hardship; or other unique set of circumstances. Each request for a student to attend a school outside their designated attendance area will be reviewed and decided on its own merit and school capacity. A request for special permission may be approved if the school has adequate local-rated capacity to accommodate the student, if the student is in good standing (academics, behavior, and attendance), and if an approved special permission criteria is deemed to exist.

To request permission for a student to attend a school outside of their designated attendance area:

- A *Special Permission Application* or the *WCPS Pre-K Special Permission Application* (for Pre-K students) for the appropriate school year may be obtained from any WCPS school, the Center for Educational Services, or downloaded from the WCPS website under the Student Services Department.
- The application must be submitted between April 1 and May 15 of the current school year for the following school year to the principal of the requested school. The WCPS Pre-K Special Permission Application must be submitted within the same time period to the WCPS Early Learning Department located at the Center for Education Services. Applications received at any time during the year other than April 1 - May 15 must make note of special or changing circumstances.
- The principal will issue either an approval or a request for further consideration by the Department of Student Services on or before June 15. The Coordinator for Early Learning will make notification regarding special permission requests based on the student's tier level in accordance with Blueprint for Maryland's Future law. Notifications regarding Pre-K Special Permission Applications made outside of the period from April 1 through May 15 will be made within fifteen (15) days of approval or denial for special permission.
- If an application is approved, the principal or Coordinator for Early Learning will send a copy of the approved special permission application to the applicant.
- If an application is forwarded to the Department of Student Services, the applicant will receive an outcome in writing by June 30 of the year in which the application is submitted.
- If the request for special permission is approved, transportation to the school outside their designated attendance area will be the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian.
- If the applicant wishes to appeal the decision, an appeal should be submitted in writing to the Office of Student Services within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the denial letter. An appeal of a decision regarding a Pre-K Special Permission Application must be made in writing to the Office of Student Services within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the denial letter.

Questions concerning special permission should be directed to the Coordinator of Student Services & Transition at 301-766-2987.

Students in Magnet Programs

Students from many areas in Washington County travel outside of their attendance areas to participate in magnet programs. All students should have the opportunity to be successful, which requires a partnership between each family and the magnet school community. Student success is predicated on the following:

Academic Commitment

Magnet program students demonstrate a strong work ethic, take coursework seriously, and possess a willingness to be challenged. Magnet program teachers hold high, yet attainable, expectations for their students. Should a student struggle academically, the school team will work with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and student to determine specific areas of need and create a plan. Progress according to the plan will be evaluated after a time period that is determined by the parent/legal guardian, student, and teacher. If the student fails to make adequate progress toward a predetermined benchmark, then he/she may no longer continue in the magnet program at that site. The student would then return to the school in the student's designated attendance area of current residence.

Cooperative Behavior: Magnet program students are active and considerate members of the school community; they are respectful to both adults and peers. Repeated or severe behavior infractions may result in a student's dismissal from the magnet program and require a student to return to his/her school in the student's designated attendance area.

Student Health/Family Information Forms

Parents/legal guardians must complete the Student Health/Family Information Form for each student upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year. This vital information is kept on file in the school office and shared with the School Health Office, so that it will be available, should an emergency occur or there is a need to make contact with the home. Parents/legal guardians **MUST** provide the contact information for at least three individuals who will serve as "Emergency Contacts." Contact persons listed should be those persons who will be accessible to the school and may be entrusted to assume temporary care or supervision of the student if contacted by school staff because the school is unable to reach the parent/legal guardian. Parents//legal guardians are also requested to provide up to date health information for each student on this form, including any health conditions, medications, allergies, etc. so that school health staff can provide appropriate assistance, if necessary. This information should be updated annually, or sooner, if information changes.

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School Bus Transportation

Provision of Service to and From School

1. Students must ride the bus to which they have been assigned. School staff and school bus drivers are ***not authorized to accept notes*** from a parent/legal guardian for their student to ride a bus other than the one to which he or she has been assigned.
2. **Changes to your student's transportation, due to residential relocation or change of a consistent care provider, can be made only by submitting a Transportation Location Change Form (TLC).** The form is available on the WCPS website in the Quick Links column. It is a "fill-in" form that can be completed and either emailed to wcpstransportation@wcps.k12.md.us or faxed to 301-766-2911.
3. Parents/legal guardians must complete a TLC Form (See Exhibit EEA-E) ***to request student transportation to and/or from any location other than the student's home address.*** Any such request is subject to the approval of the Transportation Supervisor or designee. A TLC Form **must be submitted annually** or when a student's transportation change becomes necessary.
4. To promote safety, consistency, and accountability, submitting a TLC Form will allow, within the student's assigned school zone, two consistent a.m. stop locations and two consistent p.m. stop locations per student for the school year. Exceptions will be made only in case of an emergency, as determined by the Transportation Supervisor or designee. A maximum of ten working days may be required to process and implement a TLC request.
5. Consistent stop locations mean that a student must maintain the same schedule from week-to-week. Alternation of days or weeks is not permissible.

Transportation of Students with Special Permission Approval

Generally, students who receive special permission to attend a school outside of their designated attendance area must provide their own transportation to the "new" school. Parents/legal guardians may request access to an existing bus stop inside the attendance area of the "new" school's approved school zone. **All requests are subject to the submission of required information and the approval of the Transportation Department.**

1. A parent or legal guardian who is requesting transportation for a student with special permission must submit a TLC Form to the Transportation Department.
2. The TLC Form is subject to the approval of the Transportation Department. Available seating on the bus is one of the considerations in the approval process.
3. Students, for whom transportation is approved, will be dropped off at a pre-designated location which, in most cases, will not be in proximity to the student's home. It is the obligation of the parent or legal guardian to be present at the designated drop-off location at all times.
4. The TLC Form must also provide an alternate adult and a dwelling in the immediate area of the designated bus drop-off location. This information is important in the event the parent or legal guardian is unable to meet the student at the designated stop at the designated time.

Failure of the parent or legal guardian to adhere to these obligations will result in the immediate termination of special permission bus services.

(See also, Policy JC and Administrative Regulation JC-R – "Permission to Attend School Out of Home School Attendance Area")

School Bus Riders Rules and Regulations

The school bus is an extension of the school day. Conduct should be the same as in the classroom. The safety of all passengers on the school bus is paramount to WCPS. The school bus riding rules are posted on every bus.

I. SCHOOL BUS RIDING RULES
   - A. Follow directions from the driver the first time that they are given.
   - B. Driver is authorized to assign seats.
   - C. Remain properly seated at all times during the ride.
   - D. Use classroom voice on the bus. No loud talking and no profanity.
   - E. Keep aisle clear at all times. Do not block the rear emergency door.
   - F. Keep all body parts to yourself and inside the bus at all times.
   - G. The school bus is a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free zone.
   - H. Use of cell phones is restricted to games, music, or texting. No phone conversations, no use of cameras, and maintain possession at all times.
   - I. Never tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
   - J. Maintain quiet when crossing a railroad track.

Students may transport musical instruments as long as it can be held on his/her lap or placed at his/her feet. The instrument may not protrude into the aisle or occupy the seat space of another passenger, nor can it impede the view of the rear window, or of the other students, to the driver. Other items, such as classroom projects, may be transported so long as the container size meets the same guidelines for storage as musical instruments. Glass containers and animals, including birds, fish, and insects, may not be transported.

II. AFTER LEAVING THE BUS
   - A. The driver will not discharge students at stops other than the regular bus stop, at the home, or at school, unless proper authorization is received from the Transportation Department.
   - B. When it is necessary to cross the road, students should always walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus, looking to be sure that no traffic is approaching from either direction. Students should never cross behind the bus.
   - C. Students should proceed straight home upon exiting the school bus.

III. EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS
   - A. The above rules and regulations apply to any field trip under school sponsorship.
   - B. Students shall respect the directions of a competent chaperone appointed by the school and follow directions given by the driver.

School Bus Stop Laws

Excerpted from the Maryland Vehicle Law, Titles 1, 2, and 11 to 27 of the Transportation Article, and COMAR 13A.06.07, Pupil Transportation.

Md. Code, Transportation Article

§ 21-706. Overtaking and Passing School Vehicle

The driver must stop on meeting or overtaking any stopped school vehicle. If a school vehicle has stopped on a roadway

and is operating the alternately flashing red warning lights specified in §22-228 of this article, the driver of any other vehicle meeting or overtaking the school vehicle:

- Shall stop at least 20 feet from the rear of the school vehicle, if approaching the school vehicle from its rear, or at least 20 feet from the front of the school vehicle, if approaching the school vehicle from its front.
- May not proceed until the school vehicle resumes motion or the alternately flashing warning lights are deactivated.

Parental Responsibilities

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Student behavior directly affects the safety of all passengers. School buses are an extension of the school day and all school rules and regulations apply accordingly. All elementary students will be assigned a seat. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats to middle and high school students at any time. Parents/legal guardians must ensure that their student(s) understands the rules and regulations for riding the bus.

1. Parents/legal guardians should notify their student's school immediately of a change of address or to request a change in transportation. Complete a Transportation Location Change Form (TLC) for bus stop location changes other than your student's home address.
2. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to provide supervision for their student(s) while walking to, from, or waiting at the designated bus stop, or while walking to and from school if they reside in the designated non-transported area. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for identifying the appropriate walk route from home to school or to the bus stop.
3. Parents/legal guardians are expected to have students at the assigned bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus in the morning. Traffic volume or accidents, beyond the control of the Transportation Department, may affect the bus schedule. Please allow a window of time for the bus to arrive. For information regarding a late bus, please call 301-766-2903.
4. **Pre-K and Kindergarten students must be met at the bus stop at the end of the school day by a parent, legal guardian, or care provider who has been identified on the student's emergency contact list.** In the event that an authorized adult or appropriately aged sibling is not at the bus stop, the Pre-K or Kindergarten student will be returned to the school. Repeated occurrences of no one meeting a Pre-K or Kindergarten student at the bus stop may result in suspension of bus services, pending a meeting with the parent/legal guardian, school administrator, Assistant Supervisor of Transportation, and bus driver.
5. Parents/legal guardians are liable for damage caused by their student(s) to the property of others, including the school bus.
6. Parents/legal guardians are not authorized to board the bus at the bus stop. If a parent/legal guardian has a concern regarding their student's transportation, they should contact their school or the Transportation Department.
7. Parents/legal guardians should learn their student's bus number for safety and security purposes, and to expedite assistance when contacting the school or Transportation Department.

The application of common sense is the best method for determining the role of the parent/legal guardian regarding the safety of their student traveling to and from school, either as passengers on a school bus or as pedestrians.

Student Bus Discipline

Discipline problems on the school bus distract the driver's attention from driving safely, which could potentially lead to an accident. To minimize that type of situation from occurring, it is very important for students to know and follow the School Bus Riding Rules and for parents/legal guardians to communicate the importance of the rules to their student(s).

If a student chooses to break a rule, the following consequences may be applied:

Step 1 – The driver will give a verbal warning, describing the action for which the student is being warned.

Step 2 – The driver has the right to select and implement one or more of the following actions:

- Consult with school staff who have knowledge of the student for guidance and support.
- Assign student to a specific seat for a defined period of time.

Step 3 – The driver will prepare a written referral and deliver it directly to school administration for action.

- School administration is responsible for speaking with the referred student and for administering appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with Administrative Regulation EEA-R.
- School administration will complete their portion of the written referral, noting action taken, and return a copy to the school bus driver.
- If a student is suspended from the bus, the driver should be notified of the start date and duration of the suspension.
- A driver may be present at a student conference with school administration and/or a parent/legal guardian during the discipline process as appropriate.

Severe offenses, such as possession of weapons, drugs, or fighting, etc., will escalate the consequences as reflected in the Disciplinary Guidelines set forth on page 28-29 of this handbook.

If a student loses his/her bus riding privileges, it is for all school buses operating in Washington County.

MARYLAND LAW: Transportation – Interfering with Transit Operators and School Bus Drivers - Penalties prohibits a person from obstructing, hindering, or interfering with a school bus driver while the driver is engaged in the performance of official duties. A violator is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to maximum penalties of a $1,000 fine and/or 90 days imprisonment (§ 26-104 of the Annotated Code of Maryland Education Article).

Audio and Video Surveillance Cameras

The Washington County Board of Education believes that the safety and security of students are top priorities. The Board has authorized the installation and use of audio and video surveillance cameras on school buses operating in Washington County.

Staff and students are informed of the presence of audio and video surveillance cameras on the school bus in the annual WCPS Handbook and Guide and through the posting of audio and video surveillance signs on each school bus.

See also Policy EFGH.

For more information contact the WCPS Transportation Department at 301-766-2902 or 301-766-2903.

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School Closings and Delays

General Process for School Delay or Closure Decisions for Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

Inclement Weather

On inclement weather days, including snow, ice, or flooding conditions, WCPS Transportation staff travel inclement weather routes that are representative of some of the critical areas for safe school bus travel throughout the county. Additionally, Transportation staff communicates with the County Roads Department, State Highway Administration, and other surrounding counties' transportation departments as to the conditions in the neighboring areas. After reviewing local information and the satellite weather service information, Transportation staff contacts executive administrators to recommend changes in school status, as needed. Final determination is normally made prior to 5:30 a.m. with notifications using area media outlets, the WCPS website, social media, and the WCPS mass notification system immediately following a decision. Depending on specific weather situations, the timeline may be earlier or later. The primary consideration for delay or closure decisions is the safety of students traveling to and from school.

Zone Closing Options

WCPS has implemented two specific weather zones, in Hancock and Cascade. These areas sometimes experience more severe inclement weather than the majority of the county. Schools located in these zones may be delayed or closed separately from the rest of the county.

Other Emergencies

In addition to school delays or closings due to inclement weather, the superintendent may determine the need to close a school, schools, or the school system based on other emerging situations (power outages, etc.). In the event of a school closing or delay, notification will occur using area media outlets, the WCPS website, social media, and the WCPS mass notification system.

Notification

Communications regarding a delayed opening, closing, or early dismissal of schools will be shared with parents/legal guardians using area media outlets, the WCPS website, social media, and the WCPS mass notification system. Families who have provided updated contact information to schools will be notified with a text message, phone call, and/or email around 5:30 a.m. for school closures or delays. An announcement will also be posted to the WCPS website and WCPS social media platforms. Parents/legal guardians should also check local radio stations and television broadcasts for this information.

In case of a breakdown in the communication plan due to power outages or other technical difficulties, parents/legal guardians and staff should familiarize themselves with more than one source for this information.

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Acceptable Use of Technology Systems and Equipment (Regulation IIBH-R)

The acceptable use of technology systems and equipment is addressed in Regulation IIBH-R. Portions of the regulation applicable to students are noted below.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this administrative regulation the following definitions apply:

A. Administrative Purpose: The use of the network and equipment for the purpose of conducting school system business-related activities.

B. Educational Purpose: The use of the network and equipment for classroom activities and projects, actions relevant to the application of learner outcomes and curriculum, instructional methodologies, research, communications, professional or career development, and self-directed educational activities.

C. Network: The entire school system technological infrastructure that handles voice, video, and data traffic that either begins or ends within school system buildings or surrounding grounds.

D. User or Users: School system employees, students, contractors, parents/legal guardians, organizations, or guests accessing and/or utilizing school system computers and telecommunication services.

E. Unified Communications Systems: A communication system that includes services such as voice and video calling, instant messaging, text messaging, and web and video conferencing

IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

A. General Guidelines

1. Users shall not use the network for commercial purposes, defined as offering, providing, or purchasing goods or services for personal use. School system procurement policies will be followed when purchasing goods or services for school system purposes.
2. Users may not employ the network for lobbying or other personal political activities. School system employees and students may use the network to communicate with their elected representatives for educational purposes.
3. Users may be granted access to the internet through the school system's networked computers.
4. Users, including representatives of school-related organizations (PTA, athletic support groups, booster organizations, etc.), may be granted email accounts upon the request of the appropriate central office or school building administrator to the Technology Department. Such access is granted for instructional, educational, or school-related purposes only. A signed agreement will be required. All email accounts belong to the school system and can be reviewed at any time without the consent of the user. Some email records may be considered

public information and may be produced as such in accordance with Maryland's Public Information Act without the consent of the user.
5. A copy of this administrative regulation shall be included in the school system's student handbook.

B. Due Process

1. The school system shall cooperate fully with local, state, federal, or other authorized officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activity conducted through the network.
2. The school system will comply with due process policy and procedures when students violate the student discipline policy.
3. User violations of this administrative regulation will be addressed in accordance with Board of Education policy.
4. A school system administrator may request the termination of a user account by sending a request to the Technology Department. Accounts that remain inactive for more than 60 days may be removed without notice to the user.

C. Privacy Issues

1. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their personal files on the network or stored in cloud services provided by the school system. Users shall comply with laws, regulations, and policies covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in handling student educational records and, as applicable, with the Maryland Public Information Act.
2. All computer files on school system-owned computers, or stored in cloud services provided by the school system, belong to the school system. Therefore, accessing these computer files is not considered surveillance and privacy laws do not apply.
3. WCPS may use various methods to monitor and inspect data transmitted on the network, and users of the network should have no expectation that their data will remain private when transmitted across the WCPS network or accessed via WCPS equipment. WCPS monitoring actions may include, but are not limited to, copying and decrypting traffic and recording activity.
4. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the network or audits may lead to the discovery that a user has or is violating the law or this administrative regulation. If this occurs, an investigation into the violations will be conducted.
5. An individual search of computer files will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or this administrative regulation. The nature of the investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged violation.
6. Users should be aware that their personal computer files may be available under state public records laws and are discoverable in litigation. Information written or transmitted on the network may be read or viewed by any properly authorized individual, organization, or agency.

D. Selection of Material Used in Schools

1. School system employees will preview and select internet materials that are appropriate to grade level, course content, age, and developmental level prior to displaying material to students or directing students to access specific material. The material accessed at a website must be relevant to the course objectives and consistent with the curricula adopted by the school system.
2. Teachers will provide guidelines and lists of resources to assist the students in directing research activities in an effective and appropriate manner. Teachers will instruct students to learn and apply the skills necessary to determine the truthfulness of information, distinguish fact from opinion, and engage in discussions about controversial issues while demonstrating tolerance and respect for those who hold divergent views.
3. Users must respect copyright, trademarks, and patent laws concerning the work products or intellectual property of others. Such products include, but are not limited to, ideas, concepts, and written, audio, or visual media. The Board of Education policies, procedures, and regulations governing compliance with copyright laws apply to all written or electronic communications and media produced and published on the school system's network.
4. The school system strictly forbids any unlicensed or unauthorized software to be installed. Software should only be installed from sources approved by the Technology Department.
5. The purchase and installation of educational software, or any software that will be made available to students, must meet federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines on accessibility (i.e. 508 compliant). The Digital Tools Review Committee must approve the purchase of the software.
6. The Microsoft Office Suite and Google Workspace are the standard sets of software applications to be used for administrative and productivity functions within the school system's network.

E. Security Regulations

1. Users shall only access information, computer systems, and network devices for which they are authorized and have educational and/or job-related purposes.
2. Users are expressly prohibited from sharing information related to network accounts or passwords.
3. Users shall log off or lock the system before leaving a computer workstation or allowing someone else access to it.
4. Users shall not disable or modify security settings or software such as anti-virus software or permission access rights.
5. Users may only remove from schools or the Center for Education Services ("CES") computers, tablets, and other technology equipment that has been properly issued to them. Equipment that is not generally recognized as portable such as desktop computers, monitors, and printers may not be removed from schools or CES without proper authorization from the school principal, CES administrator, or their designee. Users may be required to return any equipment removed from school facilities at any time. School principals, CES administrators, or their designees may prohibit users from removing portable equipment that may generally be removed from school facilities.
6. All technology equipment remains the property of the school system. The school system retains the right to reclaim any technology equipment at any time for any reason.

7. Users are responsible for ensuring the network is used for educational or administrative purposes only.
8. Users may make limited reasonable personal use of the network so long as it does not interfere with the completion of their job duties, violate Board of Education policy, or negatively impacts the operation of the network. If notified by Information Technology staff or their supervisor that their activity is negatively impacting the network, users are expected to immediately cease the activity. Employees and students, or any other individual assigned a school system email address, may not use such email address for personal use or personal business. The school system email account should only be used for communications related to the employee's professional responsibilities. There is no guarantee that the network will be available for personal use at any time, and there is no expectation of privacy when using the network for personal use.
9. The school system is not responsible for, nor does it control, information and content found on outside networks including the internet. The school system shall utilize filters to prevent or minimize access to inappropriate information and content.

F. Rules and Regulations

1. Users shall operate the network only for legitimate, approved, and appropriate educational, administrative, or professional development activities.
2. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to access or use their account.
3. Users shall promptly disclose to appropriate school personnel any communication or materials that are or may be inappropriate or make them feel uncomfortable.
4. Users shall not alter, tamper with, interfere with, or disrupt computer systems, network infrastructure components (including, but not limited to, routers and switches), network accounts, services, or equipment of others by, but not limited to, the propagation of computer "worms," "viruses," or by changing permissions, access rights, or configurations.
5. Users shall not post or send via email chain letters or other unsolicited messages, also known as sending spam. Spam is strictly prohibited. Broadcasted emails, or messages to a large number of individuals or groups through the network, must be administrative, educational, or instructional related. Solicitation emails for fundraisers or other noneducational events are considered spam. In addition, personal emails are prohibited from being forwarded to school system email accounts.
6. Users shall comply with requests from appropriate school system employees to cease activities that threaten the operation or integrity of any component of the network.
7. Users shall not scan the network to examine or determine security or monitoring measures. The Executive Director of Technology may authorize members of the Technology Department or outside agencies to perform such scans.
8. No person may install wiring, wireless connections, or any extension or retransmission of network services unless properly authorized by the Technology Department.
9. Users may not gain unauthorized access to the school system network or to any other computer network through the school system's network. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account, accessing another person's files, or impersonating another user. These actions are strictly prohibited at all times.
10. Users shall not damage, destroy, or tamper with the integrity of electronic information or content.
11. Users must conform to guidelines as established by the Technology Department concerning use of all telecommunication connections, networks, and applications.
12. Users shall not engage or participate in any illegal act such as arranging for the purchase of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of any person, or participating in any activity that may be improper, unethical, or inappropriate.
13. Users will not use the school system network to access, write, or publish material that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people.
14. Users shall not communicate using obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language, pictures, or gestures.
15. Users shall not engage in personal attacks, including the writing and/or posting of any defamatory, prejudicial, or discriminatory media.
16. Users will not use the network to make statements that are libelous, slanderous, or that harass another person. In general, harassment is acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. For more detailed information regarding harassment, see the Board of Education policies on harassment (Files: JFH and GBGA).
17. Users shall not copy or transfer copyrighted materials and software without proper authorization. (Reference Policy EGAD - "Copyright Compliance")
18. Users are prohibited from using unauthorized e-mail, instant messaging, and chat rooms.
19. Anyone who becomes aware of suspicious or inappropriate use of network resources, including abuse and possible breaches of security, should alert his or her immediate supervisor or the school principal.

G. Additional Guidelines for Personally Owned Cell Phones and other Personal Communication Devices

1. Users shall operate school system cell phones for legitimate, approved, and appropriate educational, administrative, or operational activities.
2. Visitors', parents'/legal guardians', and staff's personal electronic communication devices should be silenced during the normal instructional school day.
3. Staff are prohibited from using personal computers, phones, tablets, or other electronic devices for school business purposes while on school system premises. All school business-related tasks requiring a computer must be completed on school system-issued devices to ensure proper security, compliance, data privacy, and access to necessary software. Occasional exceptions may apply with prior approval from the Executive Director of Technology or designee.
4. Cell phones, video, and audio recording devices are not allowed in testing facilities unless turned off and stored in a bag, purse, or pocket. Storage on "belt clips" is not acceptable.

5. Picture or video recording of students, staff, facilities, or sensitive papers (e.g. tests) is prohibited unless approved by the principal or other supervisory-level school system employee.
6. Audio recording of students is prohibited unless approved by the principal or other supervisory-level school system employee.
7. Employee personal communication devices should be connected only to networks established for such purposes as communicated to employees by the Technology Department. They are not authorized to be connected to other school system networks.
8. Using a personal communication device in an unethical manner, including but not limited to, harassing or bullying other individuals and violating academic integrity and copyright infringement is forbidden.
9. Using a personal communication device to violate confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual is forbidden.
10. Violation of these personal communication device policies will result in disciplinary action.

H. Disclaimer of Liability

1. The school system cannot guarantee the availability of or access to the internet and other telecommunication services. Further, the school system will not be responsible for any information or data that may be lost, damaged, or become unavailable due to technical, hardware, software, or power difficulties and failures.
2. The school system cannot guarantee the accuracy and quality of information acquired via any component of the network.
3. The school system provides no assurance or guarantee that information, email, or any other communications transmitted via the network is or will remain private and confidential.
4. Even though the network employs blocking and restriction technologies, the school system cannot guarantee comprehensive control of, or censor, illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, obscene, or potentially offensive materials that may be transmitted via the Internet or through the network.

J. Google Additional Services as Part of Curriculum

1. The school system utilizes Google for Education as a platform to support instruction and enhance learning experiences. In addition to core Google Workspace for Education tools, the curriculum may require the use of Google's Additional Services. A complete list may be obtained from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

2. By using school system-provided technology devices, parents/legal guardians are opting into Google's Additional Services that the school system has deemed essential to the core curriculum.

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Use of Personally-Owned, Electronic Devices (Policy JICJ)

The use of personally-owned, electronic devices is addressed in Policy JICJ. Portions of the policy applicable to students are noted below.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definition applies:

A. Instructional Time: Allocated time for instruction during the school day.

B. Personally-Owned, Electronic Device: Any electronic or battery-powered instrument which transmits or receives voice, text, data, pictures, video, or information in any form including, but not limited to, cell phones, laptop computers, smart phones, beepers, two-way radios, tablets, electronic readers, smart watches, earbuds, headphones, and language translators, not owned by Washington County Public Schools (WCPS).

C. Property: Any school or other facility including grounds owned or operated by the Board of Education, Board owned buses and contractor owned buses, and other Board vehicles, and the facility and/or grounds of any Board-sponsored activity involving students.

D. School Day: Time of arrival on school property until departure from school property.

IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

Student use of a personally-owned, electronic device during instructional time (as defined in this policy) is prohibited.

A. Basic Rules and Procedures

1. A personally-owned, electronic device that a student brings to school is his/her sole responsibility. The Board of Education assumes no responsibility for a personally-owned, electronic device if it is lost, loaned, damaged, destroyed, or stolen.
2. All students are expected to keep their personally-owned, electronic device secure at all times and not loan it to others. During instructional time (class time) such devices are to be kept out of sight and turned off.
3. Due to confidentiality, privacy, and legal concerns, a student may not use his/her personally-owned, electronic device to take photographs or record audio or video in school, during the school day, or on a school bus.
4. All students are expected to exhibit digital responsibility and to follow the Board of Education's Acceptable Use of Telecommunications Administrative Regulation IIBH-R.
5. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict the use of a personally owned electronic device for assistive technology use identified by a student's 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
6. The use of technology is a privilege, not a right. This privilege can be revoked.

B. Emergency Situations and Other Exceptions

1. The use of a personally-owned, electronic device may be granted in an emergency situation as determined by the supervising adult.
2. The use of a personally-owned, electronic device may be granted by the supervising adult outside of instructional time including lunch time and in between classes.
3. The use of a personally-owned, electronic device on a school bus is permitted provided such usage does not disrupt bus operations. Due to confidentiality and privacy and legal concerns, a student may not use his/her personally-owned, electronic device to take photographs or record audio or video on the bus.

C. No Technology Support

1. School system staff will NOT provide technology support for a student's personally owned, electronic device.
2. There should be no expectation that the school system will provide network connectivity (Wi-Fi, etc.) for students' personally-owned, electronic devices.
3. If the school system chooses to provide network connectivity, this access may be more limited than that provided to school-system owned equipment; may require the installation of software to verify the integrity of the personally-owned, electronic device; and connectivity may be revoked at any time.
4. The school system is not responsible for any damage or other issues (malware infections, etc.) that may occur as a result of connecting a personally-owned, electronic device to the network.
5. The school system will not provide software or accessories for personally-owned, electronic devices.

D. Disciplinary Consequences

Violation of this policy or of the administrative regulation will result in disciplinary measures in accordance with the student discipline guidelines (see Exhibit JK-E). A school administrator may take temporary possession of a personally-owned, electronic device if a student is attempting to use the device during any time when such usage is prohibited or if the use of the device violates any of the previously outlined inappropriate uses, disrupts the learning environment, creates safety concerns, violates the confidentiality or privacy of others, or otherwise contradicts this policy.

Legal Reference: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article 7-305
Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.08.01.11

Administrative Regulation JICJ-R sets forth the procedures for the use of students' personally-owned, electronic devices.

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Communication Expectations

Recommendations for Staff, Students, and the Community

Email
Email is a valuable communication tool that is widely used. As such, staff, parents/legal guardians, students, and other members of the general school community are encouraged to use email to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication. Because not every parent/legal guardians has access to email, staff members cannot make it the only option for communicating with parents/legal guardians. Similarly, neither a student nor a parent/legal guardian may demand that a staff member correspond via email.

Representatives of WCPS using email to correspond will adhere to the following expectations:

1. The staff members should respond or acknowledge receipt to student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) in a timely manner.
2. Staff and students should use only WCPS-provided accounts to receive or send email and not use personal email accounts for professional correspondence.
3. WCPS has the right and responsibility to access and disclose the contents of all email messages as required for legal, audit, and legitimate operational purposes.
4. Users are responsible for all email sent from their accounts; they should take care to protect access to the account by keeping their password secret.
5. Messages should be consistent with professional practices for other correspondence, including grammar, punctuation, and formatting.
6. Careful consideration should be used when discussing contentious, emotional, or confidential issues via email.

Web Pages
Websites must comply with these expectations and all other relevant Washington County Board of Education (WCBOE) policies. Failure to do so could result in the loss of website privileges. The Chief Communications Officer or designee can revoke website privileges for web pages that do not meet these expectations:

1. Schools, departments, and divisions of WCPS are encouraged to participate in publishing student and community-focused information on the web. School-related groups should work with their schools to publish information on the schools' custom web pages or have a link off these pages to their own website.
2. The school principal or program administrator of a participating group shall designate at least one WCPS employee in the participating group as the website manager or content contributor.
3. Website managers and content contributors must ensure the content on their sites follow these expectations and all relevant BOE policies.
4. Contents must be school, curriculum, or school system-related.
5. All copyright laws and regulations must be followed. Written permission for the use of copyright material used on a website must be obtained and kept on file by the website manager or content contributor.
6. Personally identifiable information of students and staff shall NOT be published on any publicly accessible system/school website (FERPA).
7. WCPS employees' full name and WCPS email is considered public information and may be posted on the web page.
8. Personal pages of students or teachers will NOT be posted on, or have links from, WCPS websites.
9. No advertisements for or from private businesses are allowed on school system websites. Acknowledgement of sponsors for school or system events with links to a sponsor's web page is permissible.

10. Links to external sites should be tested prior to publishing on a web page to ensure the pages are active and they do not lead to areas that are inappropriate for K-12 school environments. These external links should be tested at least quarterly. For information, call 301-766-2809 or email info@wcps.k12.md.us.

Social Media

The responsible use of social media can promote exceptional teaching, learning, and community interaction when used appropriately and in a professional manner. WCPS has crafted Policy GBEE and Administrative Regulation GBEE-R to clarify the use of social media. In professional and instructional roles, employees and students need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents/legal guardians, alumni, general public, media, and other WCPS constituents apply online as in the real world. The following are the expectations for communications via social media:

1. Employees and students should familiarize themselves with the aforementioned policy and regulation regarding the use of social media.
2. Personally identifiable information of students and staff shall NOT be published on any social media site (FERPA).
3. Respect copyright and fair use laws.
4. Any use of the WCPS logo or any other school system images or iconography must be approved by school system administration.
5. The use of WCPS' name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate is prohibited.
6. Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the person posting the content and/or WCPS and its respective schools.
7. Ensure the accuracy of any posted facts and credit sources prior to posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.
8. Prior to posting photographs, consult the Student Health/Family Information Form for parental permission to post student images, interviews, videos, student-generated work or when publishing names.
9. When posting on behalf of a WCPS school or department on a social media platform, state your name and position.

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Academic Integrity

Academic integrity enables the social value of regard for others and their work to exist within the school community. It ensures that achievements are honestly earned and can stand on their own merit. Academic integrity also instills values that will serve students well in all of their intellectual endeavors. Striving for high achievements must rest on a foundation of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

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Artificial Intelligence Guidance

The WCPS Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance outlines the appropriate and responsible use of AI for our students, staff, and school communities. WCPS recognizes that responsible uses of AI will vary depending on the context, curriculum, or assignment. Teachers will clarify if, when, why, and how AI tools will be used. Students are expected to maintain academic integrity by properly citing all sources, including AI-generated content. AI tools may be used for brainstorming or preliminary research, but using AI to generate answers or complete assignments without proper citation or passing off AI-generated content as one's own is considered plagiarism. Using AI tools to manipulate media to impersonate others for bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation is strictly prohibited, as referenced in Policy JFH. WCPS may use AI software for inspecting and evaluating student work.

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Code of Conduct (Policy JFC)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

A. Promote a safe and supportive environment where students can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

B. Promote responsible behavior and citizenship among all members of the school community.

C. Promote and uphold academic integrity by ensuring that students understand and adhere to ethical standards in their scholarly pursuits.

D. Promote responsible and respectful use of digital resources and technology.

II. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

A. Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, copying, curating information from digital sources and not respecting copyright and intellectual property rights, forging the signature of teacher and/or parent/legal guardian, plagiarizing, altering records, or assisting another in such actions.

B. Academic Integrity: The commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage in an academic community.

C. Integrity: Being honest and truthful in one's actions, decisions, and conduct.

III. Policy Statement/Procedures

A. Code of Conduct: Respect and Responsibility and Integrity
The Board of Education commits to the following principles in fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and integrity for all members of the Washington County Public Schools ("WCPS") community:

1. Respect for others: The Board of Education will value and celebrate each member of its school community. Teachers and staff will model respectful and supportive relationships while students engage in responsible and respective behavior.
2. Safe Learning Environment: Every student has the right to learn in an environment free from threats, intimidation, and harm. The Board of Education will take measures to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all students and staff.

3. Positive Behavior and Citizenship: The Board of Education will promote responsible behavior, ethical decision-making, and good citizenship among students. Teachers and staff will model these behaviors and provide guidance to students.
4. Education and Awareness: The Board of Education will provide education and awareness programs to foster respect, empathy, integrity, and understanding among students and staff. This will include promoting inclusion, anti-bullying initiatives, and supporting the well-being of students.
5. Conflict Resolution: The Board of Education will provide conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms to address issues among members of the school community. Restorative practices may be implemented to repair harm and rebuild relationships.
6. Reporting and Response: Established WCPS procedures will be followed for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, academic dishonesty, and/or other violations of this policy. All allegations will be taken seriously, investigated, and verified incidents will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Code of Conduct: Academic Responsibility
The Board of Education commits to the following principles in promoting academic integrity and digital responsibility:

1. Obligation to Act with Integrity: It is expected that students will act with integrity in scholarship and academic work. Expression of original, well-formulated ideas is a fundamental skill for academic and career success.
2. Academic Honesty: Students are expected to complete their academic assignments and assessments honestly and independently, citing sources and ideas that are not their own.
3. Education and Awareness: WCPS will provide education and awareness programs to teach students about academic integrity and digital responsibility. These programs will emphasize the importance of original thought and ethical digital behavior.
4. Responsible Digital Citizenship: Students are expected to maintain a healthy balance between virtual and physical activities while using technology in a responsible, ethical, and respectful manner. This includes evaluating the validity of digital media and curating information from digital sources while respecting copyright and intellectual property rights. Students create safe online spaces as thoughtful, empathetic citizens. (ISTE, 2023)
5. Reporting and Response: Established WCPS procedures will be followed for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, academic dishonesty, and/or other violations of this policy. All allegations will be taken seriously, investigated, and verified incidents will be subject to disciplinary action.

C. The Superintendent is authorized to promulgate an administrative regulation to implement this policy.

Legal References: Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, Section 7-306
Policy JK, Administrative Regulation JK-R, and Exhibit JK-E – Student Discipline

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Dress Code

I. Purpose
The purpose of Administrative Regulation JFCA-R is to set forth Washington County Public Schools' student dress code.

II. Background
Schools have three primary responsibilities with respect to students. The first responsibility is to foster student academic achievement. The second responsibility is to create and foster a school environment that is safe, secure, and conducive to student learning. The third responsibility is to promote and support positive community standards and values such as civility, respect for others, self-respect, citizenship, and other constructive character traits and behaviors. Without these standards, values, traits, and behaviors, a schoors climate would inevitably deteriorate, teaching and learning would be negatively impacted, and students would be deficient in the knowledge and skills that are critical for success in community life, no matter how proficient they were academically.

III. Definitions
Within the context of this administrative regulation, the following definitions apply:

A. Health: A state of positive physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

B. Indecent exposure: A willful or intentional public exposure of a portion of one's body in a manner contrary to standards of appropriate behavior and state law, which will likely be observed, was observed, or was likely to have been observed by one or more persons.

C. Safety: The condition of being protected against physical and/or emotional harm.

IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

A. All students are required to wear appropriate clothing and footwear as outlined in this administrative regulation. The dress code shall apply to all students, at all school activities, and at all school-owned, leased, or occupied facilities.

B. The school administration reserves the right to make a final decision to approve or disapprove any items not addressed in this administrative regulation based on the goal of providing a safe and orderly environment for the education of all students.

C. Head and Face Coverings
1. Head coverings, excluding hats, visors, caps and hoods, may be worn for religious or medical reasons provided they allow a student's face to remain identifiable, are not used to disguise one's identity, do not interfere with instruction, or the safety of the student or others.
2. Sunglasses are not permitted inside the school building or during other school events unless expressly permitted otherwise.

D. Clothing
1. Tops must be worn at all times and cover all undergarments. Tops must not be translucent and sleeveless tops must have shoulder straps worn on the top of each shoulder. Tops must be worn in such a manner that they

do not cause a disruption of a safe learning environment and/or result in indecent exposure. Appropriate clothing for a safe learning environment includes:
   a. clothing that does not create a health and/or safety hazard;
   b. clothing appropriate for the school-related activity; and
   c. clothing that covers a student's torso throughout the school day, and at all school related activities, except where otherwise permitted.
2. Skirts, shorts, bottoms, and dresses must cover all undergarments and not result in indecent exposure when sitting, standing, or crouching.
3. All other pants (bottoms) must be worn in such a manner as to:
   a. cover undergarments at all times; and
   b. not be excessively long so as to drag on the floor; and
   c. not be excessively baggy or worn on the hip in a manner which exposes undergarments and the wearing of such cannot result in indecent exposure.
4. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes and footwear must fit to allow safe movement, be appropriate to school activities, and not damage school property.

E. Jewelry and Accessories
Jewelry or accessories which can be used as or perceived to be a weapon or threat to others are a safety hazard and are prohibited. Accessories such as flags, blankets, or other items not intended to be worn as clothing/attire and/or that pose a safety hazard are prohibited.

F. Language, Symbols, and Messages
Words, emblems, badges, objects, pictures, or symbols deemed to be inappropriate for the school setting such as: lewd, vulgar, obscene, rude, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions; communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory of a protected group; evidences gang membership or affiliation; or approves, advances, or provokes any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals as defined in Policy JFH and accompanying Administrative Regulation JFH-R; or which may substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the educational setting are expressly prohibited on student apparel and person. Student appearance and apparel must not show any reference to or inference to:
1. profanity;
2. drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other products or activities that are illegal for use by minors;
3. violence;
4. harassment;
5. suggestive, sexual messages;
6. language or symbols that offend, demean, or promote hatred toward an identifiable person or group; or
7. derogatory words, phrases, symbols or images.

Section F also applies to body art, whether permanent or temporary. Body art which violates this administrative regulation must be completely covered during the traditional school day or at any district sponsored or sanctioned event.

G. Consequences for Violation of the Dress Code
1. First Offense - Discussion of violation(s) and review of student handbook will take place with student. Student will be required to adjust or change clothes. It is expected that the first offense conference will prevent any further infractions.
2. Subsequent Offenses - Discipline procedures as described in the Board of Education Discipline Policy and Procedures will be followed (Policy JK & Administrative Regulation JK-R).

H. Administration may recommend a form of dress considered for a specific event or activity and communicate the recommendation or requirement to students and parents/legal guardians.

Administrative Regulation Adopted: August 1, 2013. Revised: June 22, 2022. Amended: July 7, 2025 Washington County Public Schools

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Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

WCPS seeks to maintain an environment that is safe for all members of the school community. School safety is of the highest priority in schools. An essential element of safe schools is ensuring all children feel accepted and comfortable in their schools.

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any individual, by any person or group of people, will not be tolerated in WCPS because these behaviors compromise the learning environment and well-being of students. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any person on school property during school hours or at school-sponsored functions, or by the use of electronic communication devices at a public school or by use of a school system-owned electronic communication device regardless of location is prohibited. The Board of Education prohibits reprisal or retaliation against students who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, or those who are victims, witnesses, or bystanders, with reliable information about an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation means unwanted, demeaning behavior among students that involve a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and include: 1) an imbalance of power (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social or academic power to control, exclude or harm others) and 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered).

Sexual Harassment

The Washington County Board of Education encourages and expects an atmosphere free of sexual harassment and one that is conducive to high quality performance in the school setting. The Board of Education prohibits sexual harassment of, or by, employees and students.

"Sexual harassment" is defined as: (1) unwelcomed, inappropriate sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, (2) verbal or physical conduct/behavior of a sexual nature, (3) verbal or physical conduct/behavior of a sexual nature that is a form of intimidation, hostile or offensive to the educational environment, and (4) adverse actions against a student as a result of the rejection of, reaction to, or filing of a harassment complaint.

Reporting acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation

WCPS, in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education, is committed to eliminating incidences of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in schools. To address this issue, WCPS has adopted a procedure for parents and students to report alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

A student who reports an alleged incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation (including sexual harassment) should report the alleged incident using the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form* (included in Appendix). This form may be obtained in the school's main office, counselor's office, on the WCPS website or WCPS Handbook and Guide. A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the form. A student, parent or guardian, close adult relative or staff member may submit the form to the school administration.

If a student expresses a desire to discuss an alleged incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member may provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.

If the alleged incident is brought to the attention of an adult other than the principal or the principal's designee, that adult shall assist the individual in bringing the allegation to the attention of the principal or the principal's designee.

If a school system employee observes or otherwise becomes aware of an incident that appears to constitute bullying, harassment, or intimidation under the administrative regulation prohibiting bullying, harassment or intimidation (JFH-R), the employee shall immediately report this information to the principal or the principal's designee.

An allegation of bullying, harassment, or intimidation made against a WCPS employee shall be reported to the Director of Human Resources at the Center for Education Services (CES).

Procedures for the prompt investigation of acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation

All reports must be written using the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form, which can be found at any school, in this Handbook or on the WCPS website. For all allegations of sexual harassment, the principal or the principal's designee will consult with the district's Title IX Coordinator before proceeding with the investigation. After receipt of a reporting form, the principal or the principal's designee will promptly investigate the allegation, within two (2) school days, consistent with due process rights, using the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Investigation Form. Based on the school administrator's findings, appropriate actions will be taken to address any substantiated allegations.

WCPS will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Parent and student involvement in reporting alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will support the efforts of the WCPS staff to address this behavior. For additional information concerning this matter, please contact your child's school counselor, school administrator, or the Office of School Counseling at 301-766-2966.

See also: Policy JFH and Administrative Regulation JFH-R – Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation.

Gangs and Gang-Related Activities

In conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) adopted a gang policy during the 2011-2012 school year that prohibits gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior on school property, school buses, or at school-sponsored functions.

A "criminal gang" is defined as a group or association of three or more persons whose members:

1. Individually or collectively engage in a pattern of criminal gang activity.
2. Have as one of their primary objectives or activities the commission of one or more underlying crimes, including acts by juveniles that would be underlying crimes if committed by adults.
3. Have in common an overt or covert organizational or command structure.

A "pattern of criminal gang activity" means the commission of, attempted commission of, conspiracy to commit, or solicitation to two or more underlying crimes or acts by a juvenile that would be an underlying crime if committed by an adult.

WCPS is committed to addressing and reducing gang activities that potentially disrupt the school climate and interfere with student learning. All WCPS employees are required to report any incidents of suspected gang activity or destructive or illegal group behavior to the principal or, in the absence of the principal, to the school security coordinator.

WCPS has adopted procedures for stakeholders to report gangs and gang-related activities. Gang-Related Incident Reporting Forms are available in the guidance and administrative offices of each school for parents, students, and staff members. Gang-Related Incident Reporting Forms may also be obtained electronically from the school system's website or the individual school's website. Individuals reporting incidents should submit the completed form to the principal or school security coordinator. Upon receipt of a Gang-Related Incident Report, the principal or designee and the school security coordinator shall initiate an investigation. If the report is of a high level of severity, (criminal activity, imminent danger or disruption), every effort will be made to initiate the investigation within 24 hours after receipt of the written report.

WCPS considers gangs and gang-related activity a serious matter and will not allow its presence on school property. Your involvement in reporting gangs and gang-related behavior will support the efforts of WCPS officials to address this issue. If you have additional questions concerning this matter, please contact your child's school administrator or the WCPS Safety and Security/Risk Manager, at 301-766-8757.

Reportable Offense Notification

Maryland Code – EDUCATION Article, Section 7-303 and COMAR 13A.08.01.17

Arrest for Reportable Offense:

The police are required to notify WCPS when a juvenile commits a crime listed as a Reportable Offense. The information will be used to provide appropriate educational programming and related services to the student and to maintain a safe and secure school environment for students and school personnel. The school system assessment team will follow WCPS Administrative Regulation JGA-R to develop a plan for appropriate educational programming.

The assessment team will consider the student's attendance, academic, and behavior history, the current charges, and the impact upon the school community. The student's parent/legal guardian will be requested to submit information that is relevant to developing the plan. The assessment team's plan may range from no action to a change in the student's educational programming.

The assessment team will consider prohibiting a student who is arrested for a reportable offense involving rape or a sexual offense from attending the same school or riding the same school bus as the alleged victim of the reportable offense if such action is necessary or appropriate to protect the physical or psychological well-being of the alleged victim. If the student is convicted of or adjudicated delinquent for the rape or sexual offense, the student may not attend the same school or ride on the same school bus as the victim.

If the plan results in a change to the student's educational programming, the school principal shall schedule a parent conference to inform the student and/or the student's parent/legal guardian of the plan with the student's attorney, if the student has an attorney. If the student has a disability, the assessment team will not make a decision until after the manifestation determination has been made by the student's IEP or 504 Plan team. The student's attorney, if the student has an attorney, shall be invited to the manifestation determination review.

The student or student's parent/legal guardian may appeal the removal of the student from the student's regular school program to the Board of Education within fifteen (15) calendar days after the receipt of the written determination and notice of appeal rights.

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Rights to Education Records & Student Access/Release

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Maryland Student Records Regulations protect the privacy of student records and also give biological parents, legal guardians, or eligible students (18 years of age or older) the right to inspect and review the student's education records and to request that inaccuracies in the record be corrected.

A policy and procedure statement about the protection of parents' and students' privacy and rights to access student records under FERPA is available to interested individuals in all schools. It specifies procedures for inspection and review of educational records.

Upon request, WCPS provides parents, legal guardians, and/or an eligible student access to the education records of the student. Explanation and interpretation of the educational records will be provided to the parents, legal guardians, and/or eligible students in their native languages. A request to access educational records must be submitted in writing to and granted by the principal.

WCPS will not permit access to, or release of, education records of students, or personally identifiable information contained therein, without the written consent of the parents, legal guardians, or the eligible student with the exception of those reasons listed below.

Directory Information

As specified by FERPA, WCPS will permit the release of directory information, unless parents, legal guardians, and/or eligible students notify the school to the contrary.

"Directory information" includes, but is not limited to:

- **student's name,**
- **address,**
- **telephone number,**
- **WCPS issued electronic mail address,**
- **photograph,**
- **date and place of birth,**
- **major field of study,**
- **grade level,**
- **participation in officially recognized activities and sports,**
- **weight and height of members of athletic teams,**
- **dates of attendance,**
- **diplomas, honors, and awards received,**
- **the most recent school attended by the student,**
- **list of graduates.**

For the most up-to-date list of directory information, please see Administrative Regulation JOB-R.

Outside organizations to whom directory information may be released include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

Parents, legal guardians, and/or eligible students who do not want student directory information released must complete the Restriction of Access to Directory Information Annual Parental Opt-Out Form available at each school and return it within 10 days of enrollment.

The third party receiving directory information from the school may not re-disclose the information to any party without prior written consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible student.

Release of Personally Identifiable Information

FERPA also permits the release of personally identifiable information from education records without the written consent of the parents, legal guardians, and/or an eligible student to:

- Authorized representatives of WCPS.
- Officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for the purposes related to the student's enrollment or tranfer.
- Such authorized individuals or representatives of: The Comptroller General of the United States, The Attorney General of the United States, The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; or state and local educational authorities.
- An organization or agency to determine the eligibility of the student for financial aid, the amount of the financial aid, and the conditions that will be imposed regarding the financial aid; or to enforce the terms or conditions of the financial aid.
- State and local officials or authorities to whom such information is specifically allowed to be recorded or disclosed pursuant to state statute.
- Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of developing, validating, or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, or improving instruction.
- Accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.

- Parents of a dependent student as defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
- A party in order to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, upon condition that the parent or eligible student is notified by WCPS of the order or subpoena in advance of the compliance therewith, unless prohibited from providing such disclosure.
- The court when the school system initiates legal action against a parent or student, if the school system makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student so that the parent or eligible student may seek protective action.
- Appropriate persons in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
- A party who requested information WCPS has designated as directory information.
- The parent of a student who is not an eligible student or to the eligible student.

Reference: COMAR 13A.08.02.19

Student records, which WCPS will make available for inspection and review only to persons who have a right to know, include:

- Personal and family information,
- School enrollment information
- Attendance information,
- Subject performance information,
- Standardized test information,
- Non-subject performance information,
- Physical health information
- Referrals for physical or behavioral reasons,
- Health inventory,
- Special education and individual test information,
- Discipline records.

WCPS will obtain the written consent of the parent, legal guardian, and/or the eligible student before disclosing the above referenced personally identifiable information from the education records of a student, other than for the specific identified reasons listed above.

Parents, legal guardians, and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school system to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Destruction of records will be in accordance with the procedures established by the Washington County Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Military Recruiters

Information including students' name, address and phone number(s) will be released to military recruiters for high school students, upon request, unless a parent, legal guardian, and/or eligible student indicates that this information should not be released. A parent, legal guardian, and/or eligible student who does not want this information released to military recruiters may indicate this by checking the appropriate box on the Student Health/Family Information form.

Rights Of Non-Custodial Parents

If parents of a student are separated, divorced, or living apart, the school must permit both the custodial and non-custodial parent to inspect, review, and obtain copies of the student records, unless the custodial parent provides the school with legal documentation restricting or terminating the parental rights of the other parent. In addition, a non-custodial parent may request to receive school-related information. School-related information consists of documents that are regularly provided to the custodial parent at school meetings, by mail, or by sending home with the student. Examples are:

- Statements on student and parent rights and responsibilities,
- School newsletters,
- School calendars,
- Notices of parent conferences, open houses, and plays.

School-related information also includes those student records that are provided to the custodial parent such as:

- Report cards,
- Disciplinary notices,
- Special education notices.

A reasonable fee to cover the cost of copying and mailing these documents may be charged.

Permission to Release/Student Record Information

A parent or legal guardian who wants to allow someone other than a parent or legal guardian to have access to protected student record information (i.e., report cards, attendance information, teacher feedback, etc.) must complete a *Consent for Release of Student Information Form* and return it to the student's school. This form will be maintained in the student's cumulative folder. A new form must be completed for this purpose each year.

Consent to Permit Access to Student and/or Student Information

If a parent or legal guardian wants to allow someone other than the custodial parent or legal guardian (i.e. relative, service provider) to have access to the student during the school day or to attend school conferences or meetings, the parent or legal guardian must complete and submit the *WCPS Consent to Permit Access to Student and/or Student Information Form*. This consent permits access. It does not grant educational decision-making authority.

Student Dismissal Prior to the Regularly Scheduled Dismissal Time

In order for a school to release a student before the regularly scheduled dismissal time in non-emergency circumstances (e.g., an appointment off school grounds), the biological or adoptive custodial parent, foster parent, or the legal guardian must submit a written notice to the school on the date of the intended release. This is true even if it is the parent or legal guardian who will be picking up the student. (Note: A stepparent is not considered an adoptive custodial parent or a legal guardian of a student unless they have legally adopted the student.) A written notice must be provided for each early dismissal release (e.g. a written note covering multiple dates will not be accepted). The written notice must indicate the full name of the person to whom the student will be released, the time of the release, the signature of the legal guardian, and the reason for the release. The person to whom the school is to release the student must present proper identification at the time of the release.

In limited or emergency circumstances, telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent/legal guardian. In these cases, the school must document the request from the telephone call in the student's attendance file.

Although FERPA permits stepparents to review a student's educational records if they are present day-to-day with the natural parent and student and the student's other parent is absent from that home, those FERPA rights are not dependent on and do not impact the stepparent's legal custody of the child for the purposes of educational decision-making, dismissal, or other parental rights. The rights afforded stepparents under FERPA only apply to educational records. Although stepparents play an important role in a student's life, a stepparent who does not have legal custody cannot authorize their stepchild's release before the regularly scheduled dismissal time to either themselves or others or authorize their stepchild's release to others at the immediate conclusion of the school day.

Please note:
"Emergency Contacts" identified by the parent or legal guardian are adults who may assume temporary care of a child without further consent in the event of an emergency, illness, or accident when contacted by school staff because the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Reference: Policy JEDB

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The PPRA is a federal law that gives parents, legal guardians, and eligible students the right to control certain aspects of student participation in surveys and data collection.

Under the law, WCPS schools must:

- Get parental consent before students take surveys funded by the U.S. Department of Education that ask about sensitive topics (like beliefs, family issues, or health).
  Allow parents and legal guardians to opt their child out of certain surveys, physical exams, or data collection used for marketing.
- Give parents and legal guardians the right to review surveys and materials before they are given to students.

WCPS provides notice of these rights annually and before certain activities.

For more specific information, see Administrative Regulation JOC-R.

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Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Drugs/Alcohol

Students do not have the right to use, sell, distribute, possess, or be under the influence of drugs, including alcohol, on school property or during school-sponsored activities unless the medication has been prescribed by a physician for the individual student. The principal and school nurse must be notified by the parent and/or physician of the student's need to take medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during school hours. **See Student Health: Medication** in this handbook. Students also must be aware that Maryland law (Criminal Law Article, Section 286B) prohibits possession, distribution, etc., of non-controlled substances ("look-alikes") in school.

K-9 Drug Scans

WCPS has partnered with local, county, and state law enforcement agencies to conduct K-9 scans in and around the school.

If the police K-9 scan results in an alert, the police officer will notify a school administrator. The school administrator will attempt to locate the student associated with the vehicle parked on school property and have them respond to the vehicle. Police policies and procedures will determine if the police search the vehicle or take other action. The school administrator can ask the student for permission to search the vehicle. A student's willful refusal to cooperate with a school administrator at any time during a search of the person or property, which is detrimental to the security, discipline, and sound administration of the school, may result in disciplinary action. School administration can contact the student's legal guardian if the student refuses to cooperate in order to obtain parental permission to search the vehicle.

Students who have alcohol or other drug-related problems are urged to discuss the problem with appropriate staff. School staff will respect the student's right to privacy. Students who violate the drug and alcohol policy must be referred to the school's Student Assistance Program (SAP).

Staff, parents, students, and visitors may not use tobacco on school property.

Student Possession/Use—Drugs and Alcohol

1. Use of illicit drugs, including the unlawful use of alcohol and tobacco, is illegal and harmful for students.
2. There shall be no use, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs, tobacco, or alcohol by students on school premises or at any school activity on or off school grounds.
3. Students who knowingly and willingly place themselves in proximity with a person who is illegally in possession or using drugs or alcohol may be deemed to have violated Student Possession/Use Regulations."
4. Students who violate this procedure face disciplinary action, as well as possible legal penalties. (See WCPS Disciplinary Guidelines)
5. Students who use or possess drugs/alcohol in any WCPS schools will be referred to the Student Assistance Program.

Parents—Drugs and Alcohol

All programs, guidelines, services, standards of conduct, and disciplinary sanctions must be made known to parents.

Where to Call for Information

Department of Student Services – 301-766-2960

Firearms

If the superintendent or designated representative finds that a student has brought a firearm onto school property, the student shall be expelled from WCPS for a minimum of one (1) year. The superintendent may specify, on a case-by-case basis, a shorter period of expulsion or an alternative educational setting. *(See WCPS Disciplinary Guidelines on pages 28-29)*

COMAR 13A.08.01.12 Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, Section 7-305
(Firearm: a handgun, rifle, shotgun, bomb, grenade, rocket, .32 caliber gun, missile, .22 semi automatic, 9mm gun. 18 U.S.C. ss 921.)

If a school production contains a scene with a Firearm Prop (a permanently inoperable prop, [80 Op. Atty. Gen. MD 147]), the Drama Coordinator will notify the school administrator and the Office of Chief Legal Counsel. Notification will be made in the program that a prop resembling a firearm will be displayed during the play.

Asbestos Management

In October of 1986 the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings, and implement response actions in a timely manner.

The WCPS program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in the asbestos management plan for each school. The plans currently contain the inspection reports and the appropriate response actions. They also contain plans for periodic re-inspections and post-response activities.

Delivery of asbestos management plans to schools began on May 1, 1989. The receipt of these management plans required an acknowledgment by the principal or assistant principal. On May 9, 1989, the Asbestos Management Plans were delivered to the Governor as required by law.

On December 14, 1987, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) went into effect requiring school districts in the United States to inspect each building used for educational purposes. These inspections are to be conducted using persons who have been trained and annually re-certified by the Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Health.

This law compels the Board of Education to locate and identify all asbestos-containing material (ACM) in the schools. Not all schools in Washington County contain asbestos. Regarding those that do contain asbestos, the inspections identified ACM in floor tile, ceiling tile, sprayed-on surfacing material, thermal system insulation, and miscellaneous materials. The law also requires the Board of Education to assess each area of ACM and determine what plans of action will be taken to ensure that no asbestos fibers are released into the environment, repair any damaged ACM, and remove any material that cannot be controlled using conventional engineering techniques.

WCPS developed an **Asbestos Management Plan** that identifies the locations of all known ACM in the schools and describes the plan of action to be taken to manage the ACM. The plan has been reviewed by the State of Maryland and is available to any concerned individual who wants to examine its contents.

Since May 9, 1989, the Asbestos Management Plans have been available for review during normal business hours at the following locations:

- The main office of each school during normal school hours.
- Facilities Department
  Washington County Public Schools
  10435 Downsville Pike
  Hagerstown, MD 21740
  301-766-2881

For further information, please contact the Facilities Department at the above location.

Integrated Pest Management Program

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program employed by the WCPS is a proactive rather than a reactive approach to insect and rodent control in school facilities. The IPM program includes routine inspections or surveys of all school facilities to identify conditions conducive to pest invasion, to ensure early detection of pest presence, and to monitor infestation levels. As a first step in pest control, the IPM approach employs a number of preventative strategies and alternatives to pesticide application, such as employee education, source reduction, inspection and identification of potential problem areas, and improved sanitation. Each approach is monitored and evaluated, and modifications are made if necessary. Pesticides are used only as a last resort.

Maryland law requires that parents of all elementary school children be notified prior to any pesticide application. Parents of middle school or high school students who wish to be notified prior to interior pesticide applications must request that they be placed on the school system's pesticide notification list. To be added to the notification list, send a written request which includes your name, address, and telephone number as well as your child's name and school to:

Director of Facilities - Robert Rollins
Washington County Public Schools
10435 Downsville Pike
Hagerstown, MD 21740

The following is a list of the pesticides and bait stations, by common name, that may be used on school premises during the school year. The list includes, but is not limited to:

glyphosate	fipronil	allethrin
prometon	hydramethylnon	abamectin
siduron	diuron	trifluralin
PCNB	benefin	atrazine
permethrin	bromadiolone	lambda-cyhalothrin
boric acid	cholecalciferol	diphacinone
imidacloprid	napthalene	sulfur
icambabifenthrin	2-4-D	cyfluthrin
MCPP	propoxur	dichlorprop
piperonyl butoxide	pyridine	dimethyl
orthoboric acid	allethrin	quinclorac
phrethrin	triclopyr	indoxacarb
phenothrin	deltamethrin	
hydroprene	resmethrin	

Copies of material safety data sheets (MSDS) and product labels for each pesticide and bait station used on school property are maintained by the contact person. Persons wishing to review this information or who need additional information should contact the Facilities Department, at 301-766-2881, to arrange an appointment.

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Every WCPS employee receives annual training on the prevention, identification, and reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Maryland law and Policy JLF and Administrative Regulation JLF-R mandates that every educator who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to physical or sexual abuse or neglect, must immediately report the information to the Department of Social Services and the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- The law and policy are quite specific: When there is doubt about reporting a suspected situation, it is to be resolved in favor of protecting the student and the report must be made immediately.

- School personnel are permitted to briefly question a student to determine if there is reason to believe that the child's injuries resulted from physical or sexual abuse.
- Investigation of suspected abuse is the responsibility of the Department of Social Services, assisted by the police.
- School staff may not inform parents/guardians about any report of suspected abuse.
- School personnel may not attempt to conduct an internal investigation and must cooperate with DSS or law enforcement, if an investigation is conducted.
- All records and reports concerning protective service investigations of child abuse and neglect and their out-comes are protected by the Annotated Code of Maryland, Family Law Article, Title 5, Subtitle 7. School personnel only become involved if requested to assist in providing services to the child or family.

Additional information and copies of the complete policies may be secured from the Department of Student Services at 301-766-2960.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT
Anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected should make a report to the Department of Social Services by calling: 1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383)

Washington County Community Agencies
For a list of community support agencies, please see visit:
bit.ly/WCPScommunityresourceguide

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School Attendance Guidelines

The Maryland Compulsory Attendance law requires that every child in Maryland five (5) years old by September 1, and up to the age of eighteen (18) must attend school daily unless the child is lawfully absent or registered and participating in a certified home teaching program. It is the WCPS expectation that students attend school daily. Every school day is important and students who miss even one day miss valuable instruction.

WCPS will follow the requirements in the Maryland Student Records System Manual and district regulations/procedures when determining if a student is counted present for a full-day or half-day. In general, a student must attend the majority of their classes or the school day in order to be counted present for the full day. During distance or blended learning, a student is in attendance for the entire day if they are present for more than 50% of their daily schedule/blended learning sessions.

The following attendance guidelines apply to all WCPS students:

- All school absences are recorded as **excused** or **unexcused. All absences (other than those related to school discipline) require a parent note, which explains the reason for the absence, upon the student's return to school.** Failure to provide a parent note within 30 days may result in the absence being coded as unexcused. When the combined number of excused and unexcused absences reaches twelve (12) days, only official/legal documentation will be accepted in order for absences to be excused (i.e. a doctor note, a note from a licensed/certified health care provider, and/or a legal summons). Parent/legal guardian, medical, or court notes presented by the parent/legal guardian must include the specific date(s) related to the reason(s) for absence.

- **Excused Absences:** Only **excused absences** are considered lawful according to Maryland law. Excused absences include: 1. Illness or behavioral health needs of the student (three or more consecutive days may require medical verification); 2. Death in the immediate family; 3. Court summons specific to the student; 4. Out-of-school suspension; and 5. Other special circumstances. Per Maryland Law, effective July 1, 2022, when school staff receive written documentation that a student's absence was due to a behavioral health need, the school counselor or social worker will provide to the student or the student's parent/legal guardian information about school or community behavioral health resources that are available.

- **Unexcused Absences:** If a student is absent for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those identified as excused, then the absence will be considered unexcused. (This includes absence from school without the knowledge of the parent/legal guardian, shopping, babysitting, providing care for other adults, running errands, etc.) **Unexcused absences may be defined as truancy.** Any time a student between the ages of five and eighteen is absent without lawful cause, the student is considered truant.

- **College Visitation Days:** A college visit for students in grades 11 and 12 who pre-schedule the visitation with the principal's approval shall be considered an extension of the student's program and the student shall be recorded as present. No more than three (3) college visitation days shall be approved per school year. Pre-approved absences related to recruitment or enlistment in the military will be considered in the same manner as approved college visitation.

- **Family Vacation Absences:** Vacations or trips during the school year are strongly discouraged, as the loss of class time may have a negative impact on the student's academic progress and record. It is also recognized that on some occasions, working parents have little control over the time of year when vacations may be taken. Family vacation absences are considered excused **only** if they have **prior** written approval of the principal and do not exceed **three (3) days** per school year. Written requests must be made at least ten (10) school days in advance of the requested vacation absence, and after approval, parents and students are responsible for requesting students' assignments. Teachers need at least four (4) days' notice for preparation of student materials.

- **Home and Hospital Teaching (HHT):** HHT provides short-term instruction for students who are unable to attend their regular school program due to physical or emotional conditions, as documented by an appropriate licensed provider. Instructional services are offered virtually to all eligible students during a period of recovery or treatment. Individual exceptions for the delivery at the student's place of residence will require review and approval by the Director of Student Services. A student will be counted present while actively participating in HHT virtually, in the home, or in a facility. If you have questions about HHT eligibility, contact the HHT Coordinator at 301-766-8035.

  Elementary and middle school students approved for HHT will receive instruction in the four core academic subjects-English, math, science, and social studies. High school students approved for HHT will receive instruction for credited classes, except for courses such as dual credit college courses, Advanced Placement classes, some world languages, laboratory science, math and ELA support, band, and physical education.

  Full-time HHT services provide six (6) hours of instruction per week for a student unable to attend WCPS at all due to a physical or emotional condition documented by an approved licensed provider. HHT services may also be provided on an intermittent basis when a student can attend school but occasionally is unable to attend school due to the physical or emotional condition.

  While receiving full-time HHT services, students are NOT permitted to participate in school based extra-curricular activities such as proms/dances, sports, band, chorus, clubs, etc. Unfortunately, if the student is too ill to attend school, then they are too ill to participate in extracurricular activities.

  While receiving intermittent HHT services, if the student is absent from school the entire day or is unable to finish their school day due to their HHT-related condition, then they are not eligible to participate in any extracurricular activities that day (this includes school clubs, dances, sports, etc.). If the student is late to school because of their HHT-related condition and they are a high school athlete, then the parent must communicate the reason for lateness with the school the same day their child wishes to access athletics in order for them to be eligible to participate in games or practice that day. The WCPS athletic policy requires athletes to be present in school or have an excused tardy/absence in order to participate in games or practice that same day.

- **Pregnant and Parenting Students:** Pregnant and parenting students (the mother, father, or legal guardian of a child) must have access to a range of specific activities and policies that govern activities both in and outside of the classroom. These activities include, but are not limited to, lawfully excused absences for any pregnant and parenting-related condition (labor, delivery, recovery, medical appointments, family law proceedings, etc.), access to make-up work, accommodations for instruction, a private space for lactation, and a designated support staff in the school for the purpose of connecting pregnant and parenting students to services. For more information, reference Policy JEA and Administrative Regulation JEA-R.

- **Religious Absence:** Student and staff absences from school to observe religious holidays are excused. Absences related to travel for the purpose of a religious observation will be considered "family vacation" absences, and must be pre-approved by the school principal. School personnel should be aware of religious holidays and should make every effort to avoid scheduling major examinations and events on those dates. Students will be permitted to complete make-up work, within a reasonable time period.

- **Chronic Absenteeism** refers to a student who is absent 10 percent or more of school days (9 or more days in a semester/18 or more days in a school year) for any reason (excused or unexcused). Chronic Absenteeism will require a conference between school personnel, parents, and students.

- **Habitual truancy** refers to a student whose unexcused absences are in excess of 20 percent of the school days in any semester, or school year (greater than 18 days in a semester, 36 days in a school year).

- **Tardiness:** Individual schools have defined opening times when students are expected to be present. Students arriving after the designated time are marked tardy depending upon the time of arrival. Excessive tardiness will result in missed instruction and may require the school to take disciplinary action.

- **Make-up work requirements:** Make-up work will partially compensate for absences from classes. Teachers are required to assign make-up work for students whose absences are excused, if requested by the parent or student within the designated time lines.

- **Incentive programs:** Schools encourage regular on-time attendance and sponsor a variety of programs to encourage students.

- **WCPS attendance standards:** The Washington County Board of Education has established minimal standards for attendance and absences for students. When absences, **excused or unexcused, accumulate to six (6) days**, parents/students will be notified by mail. By WCPS policy, absences beyond twelve days in a school year are unacceptable. Cases involving excessive absence will be referred to the student support team (SST). Parents may be requested to participate in a conference with school personnel to discuss excessive absence.

- **Possible results when students accumulate excessive absence or habitual truancy:**
  - Request for additional documentation
  - Assignment of additional days of attendance (not included in the regular school year, i.e., Saturday School)
  - Establishment of a probationary attendance period
  - Retention in grades 1 through 8
  - Failure to earn high school credit or credits
  - Referral of the parent to the court for appropriate action

- **Appeal Process:** The following procedures are applicable for students and parents in order to appeal coding of absences and any penalties relative to the Student Attendance Policy.

Step I - The student and/or parent shall contact the school principal to arrange for a conference to discuss the specific concern.

Step II - If after conferencing the problem is not resolved, the parent within ten (10) days may contact the office of the Director of Student Services in writing following the Step I decision.

Step III - If the problem is not brought to resolution after conferencing with the Director of Student Services, the parent, within ten (10) days following the Step II decision, may contact the Executive Director of Elementary or Secondary Education in writing to request a meeting.

Step IV - If the problem is not brought to resolution after conferencing with the appropriate Executive Director, the parent may contact the Superintendent in writing, within ten (10) days after the Step III decision, to discuss the matter. The decision of the Superintendent of Schools shall be final.

- **Information dissemination:** Parents and students will be provided information concerning the student attendance policy/procedures during or before the opening week of each school year.

  NOTE: The WCPS Attendance Policy is not designed nor intended to punish sick children or to encourage ill children to be in school. The procedures are designed to promote the importance of regular, daily school attendance. The law is quite clear – students are to be in school every day school is in session, unless they are ill or absent for another lawful reason.

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School Counseling Services

School counselors provide a safe, trusting environment that respects the privacy, rights and integrity of all students; allowing them the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas about various components of their life.

School counselors work with students who might be experiencing barriers to learning such as poor academic performance, absenteeism, health concerns, bullying, family issues, and peer conflicts. School counselors provide support and direction to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development. Their efforts help students achieve academic success with tools to prepare them to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of our society. School counselors are trained at the graduate level and certified to deliver comprehensive services for students.

School counselors are involved in the implementation of both proactive and responsive services for students in grades K-12.

Elementary and middle school counselors:

- Provide classroom lessons for students in the area of academics, personal/social issues, and career exploration and development
- Meet with students individually to provide academic and emotional support
- Conduct small group counseling
- Coordinate full school initiatives for programs such as PBIS, Character Counts, Second Step, Naviance, and Xello for career exploration, along with other programs to address targeted needs
- Support students in transitioning to and from various levels, and situational changes
- Provide crisis intervention as needed

High school counselors:

- Meet with students individually to provide personal/social, academic, and career exploration and planning
- Conduct small group counseling
- Provide classroom lessons for students in the area of academics, personal/social issues, and career exploration and development
- Provide students with academic, college, and career advisory utilizing Naviance and other resources
- Support students in transitioning to and from various levels and situational changes
- Provide direction for students through four-year planning
- Assist students in course selection process
- Monitor student progress toward meeting graduation requirements,
- Coordinate visits and direction regarding post-secondary educational options
- Provide financial aid, scholarship, and career counseling information.

School counselors also consult with school staff and parents to provide information and community resources in addressing student needs.

Students in Washington County can request to meet with their school counselor at any time throughout the school year. Students can also be referred by teachers, administration, or parents.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact their child's school counselor for information or to discuss any concern. Questions, concerns, and/or comments regarding the school counseling program should be directed to the Supervisor of School Counseling 301-766-2966 or the appropriate school principal.

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Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral health generally refers to mental health and substance use disorders, life stressors and crises, and stress-related physical symptoms. Behavioral health care refers to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of those conditions.

WCPS is dedicated to monitoring the provision of behavioral health services within our schools and throughout the community to support our students. In an effort to sustain this dedication, the Coordinator of Behavioral Health Services position maintains connections for school-employed behavioral health staff and collaborates with community-based behavioral health workers. Additionally, supports are available for WCPS staff to be better prepared to support students with behavioral health needs.

WCPS has partnerships with behavioral health providers throughout the Washington County community through Memorandums of Understanding that allow providers to provide therapeutic services to students during the school day at the student's school. The pro-

viders work collaboratively with families and WCPS staff to ensure all student needs are met, and that ongoing collaboration and communication is available.

Under Maryland law, students 12 years old or older may consent to their own mental health treatment at school by WCPS clinical social workers or outside providers who have a Memorandum of Understanding with the school system. The Annotated Code of Maryland, Health-General Article, §20-104 provides that the age of consent is 12 years of age if the licensed provider determines that the student is mature and capable of giving informed consent. If the student has the capacity to provide consent, the student may consent to consultation, diagnosis, and treatment of a mental or emotional disorder by a health care provider without parental consent. It is within the professional discretion of the clinician to decide if, when, and how to inform parents, unless the provider believes that the disclosure will lead to harm to the minor.

Should families be interested in learning more about accessing behavioral health support for their students, they can reach out to the counselor at their school or connect with the Coordinator of Behavioral Health Services at the Center for Education Services at 301-766-8739.

Telehealth Appointments

Administrative Regulation JHCG-R provides staff, students, and parents/legal guardians with the procedures to be followed for student telehealth appointments that occur during the school day on school premises ensuring that measures are in place to support student safety, privacy, and well-being. This applies only to secondary schools. Telehealth services are not permitted in elementary schools. The availability of telehealth appointments in middle and high schools may vary by school, school calendar, and other factors.

Health care practitioner appointments for students, including telehealth appointments, should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible to maximize student instructional time and learning opportunities and minimize disruptions to student learning.

If a parent/legal guardian would like their middle or high school student to participate in a telehealth appointment at school during the school day, please follow the procedures outlined in Administrative Regulation JHCG-R. The procedures and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- The parent/legal guardian must submit a written request (e.g., email, letter, etc.) to the principal at least 15 calendar days prior to the appointment.
- To ensure equitable access and to preserve student instructional time, the principal may limit or deny the request.
- Telehealth appointments are limited to 30 minutes so students can promptly return to class.
- A parent/legal guardian must be present, in-person, with the student during the entire appointment, is responsible for student supervision during the appointment, and must use a personally owned electronic device for the appointment.

Upon receipt of a written request, the principal will provide the parent/legal guardian with a written response within three (3) school days.

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Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs)

PPWs serve as representatives of the Department of Student Services, and as consultants to the schools. They reach out to families and assist students to succeed in school. Specifically, they encourage school attendance on a regular basis, foster appropriate behavior, and help families access community and support services, as needed. PPWs conduct home visits to promote family involvement; assist schools with enrollment, residency, custody, disciplinary actions; and help plan and carry out alternative services. Each PPW is assigned to several schools and serves as a key member of the student support team for each school.

Questions regarding PPWs or to find out which PPW services your child's school should be directed to the Director of Student Services at 301-766-8776.

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Community Schools

Community Schools are identified by the Maryland State Department of Education based on criteria outlined in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. These schools receive special funding known as Concentration of Poverty Grant funds. The funds are allocated to each designated school to address the unique challenges faced by students and families living in poverty.

Community Schools are awarded a Personnel Grant and are eligible for a Per Pupil grant after completing their first year as a community school. The Per Pupil amount awarded is based on the number of students living in poverty who attend the school.

Washington County Public Schools currently has twenty-four (24) community schools: Bester Elementary, Cascade Elementary, Eastern Elementary, Hancock Elementary, Hickory Elementary, Maugansville Elementary, Salem Avenue Elementary, Pangborn Elementary, Jonathan Hager Elementary, Lincolnshire Elementary, Ruth Ann Monroe Primary, Emma K. Doub Elementary, Williamsport Elementary, Potomac Heights Elementary, Springfield Middle, Northern Middle, E. Russell Hicks Middle, Western Heights Middle, Hancock Middle/Senior High, North Hagerstown High, South Hagerstown High Williamsport High, and Marshall Street School and Job Development Center. Each school must complete a needs assessment and develop an implementation plan based on the results of their needs assessment. In addition, each school must have an advisory committee which is made up of school staff, families, community partners and other stakeholders.

The overarching purpose of a community school is to serve as the hub of the community to bring families, communities, and partners together to address the barriers to student learning. The funding provided to each school must be used at the identified school to support students and their families with both academic and non-academic barriers. In collaboration with community partners, local governments and other stakeholders, community school funding must be used to address these barriers by providing a variety of wraparound services to strengthen a student's ability to be successful.

Examples of wraparound services:

- Extended learning time
- Safe transportation to school
- Vision and dental care services

- Establishing or expanding school-based health center services
- Additional social workers, mentors, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches
- Enhancing physical wellness, including providing healthy food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers
- Enhancing behavioral health services, including access to mental health practitioners, and providing professional development to school staff to provide trauma-informed interventions
- Providing family and community engagement and supports, including informing parents of academic course offerings, language classes, workforce development training, opportunities for children, and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child's learning

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Student Discipline Regulations

Code of Maryland Regulations

Each local school system must adopt a set of regulations designed to maintain an environment of order and discipline necessary for effective learning. These regulations should provide for counseling and establish standards for appropriate disciplinary measures and may permit suspension, alternative placement, or expulsion, if necessary.

Student misconduct definitions and a range of administrator responses to student misconduct across multiple levels are shown on the *WCPS Disciplinary Guidelines* (Board Exhibit JK-E) document immediately following this section. These responses range from those designed to teach appropriate behavior to responses which are exclusionary due to the severity of the behavior or potential implication of future harm.

Restorative Approaches

The primary purpose of any disciplinary measure is rehabilitative, restorative, and educational. Restorative approaches is a relationship-focused student discipline model that (1) is primarily proactive and preventative; (2) emphasizes building strong relationships and setting clear behavioral expectations that contribute to the school community well-being; (3) is in response to behavior that violates clear behavioral expectations, focuses on accountability for any harm done by the problem behavior; and (4) addresses ways to repair the relationships affected by the problem behavior with the voluntary participation of an individual who was harmed.

Restorative approaches used by schools may include conflict resolution, mediation, peer mediation, circle processes, restorative conferences, social emotional learning, trauma-informed care, positive behavioral intervention supports (PBIS), and rehabilitation.

Suspensions and Expulsions

The removal of a student from school because of inappropriate, disruptive or dangerous behavior is a serious matter. However, removal is sometimes necessary when a student's behavior interferes with the efforts of teachers and students to learn or when the safety of the students and teachers is involved.

The length of time the student is out of school depends both upon the seriousness of the incident and upon the student's previous conduct. Through this handbook and guide and other school announcements, students are informed of some of the behaviors that are not acceptable in WCPS.

Students should be aware that the school has the authority to take disciplinary action, even when the misbehavior occurs off school property or when schools are closed, if the behavior affects the good order and discipline of the school. For example, schools may take disciplinary action when students are misbehaving on the way to or from school or misbehaving while participating in school-related activities such as field trips and other school-sponsored activities.

See more information about Student Conduct Ineligibility on page 35.

Extracurricular Activities

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege provided to students who meet the academic and behavior standards detailed in this and other publications. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to sports, clubs, graduation ceremonies, and field trips that occur or extend beyond the regular school day. Students can lose the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities if they fail to meet WCPS' academic and behavior standards, their school's behavior standards, or the behavior standards of the extracurricular program in which they are participating or are requesting to participate. Students will be informed if they are ineligible to participate in all or some extracurricular activities.

In-school Suspension

"In-school suspension" means the exclusion within the school building of a student from the student's regular education program for up to, but not more than, ten (10) school days in a school year for disciplinary reasons by the school principal or designee.

Out-of-School Suspension

"Out-of-School Suspension" means the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period not to exceed ten (10) days by a school principal or designee. A student may be suspended for up to ten (10) days for just cause. A principal or designee may use other disciplinary means to correct student behavior (conferencing, detention, in-school suspension, etc.) at their discretion, in accordance with school policies and procedures.

The principal or designee may place a student on short-term suspension after a conference with the student. During this conference, the student can tell their side of the story. Parents/legal guardians are notified when the student is placed on short-term suspension and a meeting is arranged at the school so that the school administrator, parents/legal guardians, and student can plan together to avoid any repetition of the misbehavior.

Parents/legal guardians have the right to an informal appeal of the school administrator's suspension decision. This process is also utilized for an appeal of a level 1-3 administrator response(s). The informal appeal is a paper review and all requests for appeal must be in writing. The written appeal should include the reason for requesting the appeal and contain any written documents to be considered. During the appeal process, the suspension of the student remains in effect. Through the appeal process, the consequences may be increased or decreased. The following are the steps in the appeal process:

1. Parents/legal guardians may appeal the decision for the suspension directly to the principal. Such appeals must be submitted in writing to the principal within ten (10) days of the suspension decision. The principal will review the parent's request and render a written decision to the parent.
2. In the event the parents/legal guardians are not satisfied with the principal's decision, they may appeal that decision,

in writing, to the Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health within ten (10) days of the principal's ruling of the appeal. The Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health may direct a PPW to make a thorough review of the matter. The Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health will confer with the PPW and will render a written decision to the parent.

3. If parents/legal guardians are not satisfied with the decision of the Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health, the parents/legal guardians may appeal that decision, in writing, within ten (10) days, to the Executive Director of Elementary Education or the Executive Director of Secondary Education. The Executive Director of Elementary or Secondary Education will review the parent's/legal guardian's request and render a written decision to the parent.
4. If the parents/legal guardians wish to appeal the decision of the Executive Director of Elementary Education or the Executive Director of Secondary Education, this may be made in writing within ten (10) days to the Superintendent of Schools, in accordance with Policy BEE and Administrative Regulation BEE-R(1).
5. Further appeal of the decision of the Superintendent may be made in writing within ten (10) days to the Washington County Board of Education. The decision of the Washington County Board of Education is final.

Extended Suspension or Expulsion

"Extended Suspension" refers to the exclusion of a student from a student's regular program for a time period from 11 to 44 school days. An "expulsion" means the exclusion of a student from the student's regular school program for 45 school days or longer. Examples of unacceptable behavior for which a student may be requested for an extended suspension or expulsion can be found on the *WCPS Disciplinary Guidelines* chart on the subsequent page. These regulations apply to all activities that are connected with school. For example, students may be disciplined if they have weapons at school football games, dances, and while traveling to and from school.

Important notes in reference to weapons violations:

- The type of weapon or the reason the weapon is in the student's possession is not relevant. The following will be treated as weapons: an airsoft gun, a taser, a penknife, a large knife, brass knuckles, a chain, a pipe, nunchaku, a BB gun, a pellet gun, a starter pistol, a revolver or automatic pistol–loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable.

- If a student is asked to hold a weapon, the student should refuse. The student may be expelled because the weapon is in his or her possession. The person who brings the weapon to school may also be expelled.

- Violations of Maryland law will result in notification of law enforcement and possible arrest and prosecution.

While the principal can request an extended suspension or expulsion after a conference with the student, the Superintendent's designee is responsible for determining the disposition in each case. The designee is required by law to limit the duration of the exclusion to the shortest period practicable. A decision may be made to reinstate the student in the same school immediately after the ten (10) day long-term suspension; provide an alternative placement or program for the student for up to 45 days; transfer the student to another school; expel the student from school; or require a professional evaluation and/or counseling.

If a principal requests an extended suspension or expulsion, the principal will immediately summarize the situation and request additional consequences, in writing, to the Superintendent.

Upon notification of the receipt of the request, the Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health shall direct a PPW to meet with the student and parent(s), provide an additional opportunity for due process, and thoroughly investigate the disciplinary incident. The Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health, after such review, will determine if a longer suspension, a change in school placement, or expulsion is warranted and notify the parents, in writing, of the decision.

The decision to suspend a student longer than ten (10) days, change a student's school placement or to expel a student may be appealed. All requests for appeals must be in writing and include the reason for the appeal. Throughout the appeal process, the decision of the Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health remains in place. In the appeal hearings, the parents/legal guardians and the student may bring counsel, witnesses, and may present evidence to support their position. Through the appeal process, the consequences may be increased or decreased.

The following are the steps in the appeal process:

1. If the parents/legal guardians wish to appeal the decision of the Director of Student Services, School Counseling, and School Health, they may file an appeal, in writing, within ten (10) days of such a decision with the Executive Director of Elementary or Secondary Education who will serve as the superintendent's designee. The Executive Director of Elementary or Secondary Education will schedule a conference with the parents/legal guardians and the student to hear the appeal and will render a decision, in writing to the parents/legal guardians.
2. If the parents/legal guardians are not satisfied with the decision of the superintendent's designee, the parents/legal guardians may file an appeal, in writing, within ten (10) days of such a decision, with the Board of Education in accordance with Policy BEE and Administrative Regulation BEE-R(1). The Board of Education or its hearing officer shall have forty-five (45) days from the date the appeal was received by the Executive Director of Elementary or Secondary Education to hear the appeal and issue a decision
3. The decision of the Board of Education is final.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may be suspended or expelled according to IDEA regulations, Procedural Safeguards Parental Rights Handbook (provided at least annually to the parent/legal guardian of a student with a disability), the student's individualized educational program, and WCPS procedures.

School Work Missed Due to Suspension

Students will be provided the opportunity to make up class work missed during any out of school suspension, within a reasonable time period. Parents/legal guardians will be provided with the

name and contact information for a designated school liaison who will assist in obtaining and exchanging school work during the period of suspension.

Suspended students are not permitted to be on school property unless permission is granted by the school administrator. Students will be given the number of days equal to the number of days absent to submit completed make-up work.

Restitution

"Restitution" refers to restoring something that has been taken away or making payment for an injury or loss. WCPS is charged with educating the children of Washington County. Part of the educational process is to teach respect for the person and property of others, as well as to teach that all persons are responsible for their own behavior. If, as the result of certain behavior, properties are damaged, destroyed, or stolen, the person or persons responsible must be prepared to pay to repair or replace the property.

Vandalism

School staff tries to prevent vandalism and help students understand the need to respect the rights of others. Efforts are made to increase school pride, involve parents, and create activities and programs that stress pride in school and care of property.

Where minor acts of vandalism are committed, students may be required to perform school service chores as restitution to discourage future acts of this kind. For instance, a student may be asked to remove writing from the walls of a school building or clean a given area that has been dirtied by the student.

In addition, Maryland law describes a procedure for obtaining restitution from a parent and/or a student who has been charged with a crime and prosecuted through Juvenile Court. Maryland law states that if a juvenile is found to be delinquent as the result of an act that has damaged another person or another person's property, the Juvenile Court may require the juvenile or the parent of the juvenile to pay the injured person in repayment for the loss. WCPS will make every effort to obtain restitution for damage to school property through the use of Maryland law and the Juvenile Court.

Hazing

Hazing is any action or activity that inflicts physical or mental harm or anxiety, or which demeans, degrades, or disgraces a person, regardless of location, intent, or consent of individuals. Additional information regarding hazing of persons involved in extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics, can be obtained from each high school athletic director and varsity head coach.

Individuals who are proven to have made false accusations shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action.

Administrators will make every effort to ensure that individuals who make a complaint of harassment or hazing in good faith, and individuals who assist in the investigation of harassment in good faith, will not have their grades or learning environment adversely affected.

The school system takes seriously any allegations of harassment or hazing and will fully and promptly investigate such allegations. However, if it is determined that an individual has intentionally made a false accusation, that person will be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action.

Textbooks

Textbooks are a vital resource for the school system. If any student loses or damages textbooks, the parent/legal guardian will be required to replace the textbook or pay the cost of repairing the damage. The principal may withhold books, supplies, or equipment until restitution or, in extenuating circumstances, an appeal has been made to the Executive Director of Secondary Education or the Executive Director of Elementary Education.

Loaned Instructional Materials

WCPS loans instructional materials in addition to textbooks for students to use in classes and activities. These materials include but are not limited to, the following: calculators, science laboratory equipment, musical instruments, band uniforms, choir robes, athletic uniforms, and equipment. It is the responsibility of the student using and/or possessing loaned instructional materials to care for them properly and to return them in good condition, taking into account normal wear. The student and parent/legal guardian are liable for any vandalism, damage, or theft because of negligence or improper use. Any other negative circumstances regarding these items must be reported to the teacher in charge immediately. Maintenance and repair, other than that which is performed by the system or respective school, is the responsibility of the student or guardian. Cost of replacement is also the responsibility of the student or parent/legal guardian and will be determined according to fair and current market value.

Corporal Punishment

Principals and assistant principals and all other employees of WCPS are not permitted to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure for students. Corporal punishment is bodily punishment such as spanking or striking someone with a hand. Shaking, pinching, or any contact intended to inflict pain may also be considered corporal punishment.

There are circumstances and/or conditions under which WCPS employees are permitted to appropriately use physical contact. Maintaining a safe and orderly school environment, administering first aid, and attending to health needs are circumstances and/or conditions where touching students is permitted. Other examples of these circumstances are as follows:

- intervening in fights,*
- preventing accidental injury,
- protecting oneself,
- providing appropriate care to disabled students,
- moving through a crowd to address an emergency, and
- employing passive restraint with students with emotional disabilities (only if staff have received appropriate training).

* All school staff are encouraged to contact an administrator and/or wait for the assistance of other adults, in order to ensure further injury does not occur to students or staff.

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Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) Disciplinary Guidelines

File JK-E

Disclaimer: This chart serves only as a guide and does not circumvent the authority of principals and assistant principals to administer responses based on the severity of the misconduct, the student's prior disciplinary record, and the age of the student. Any misconduct determined to be criminal in nature will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Responses are progressive in nature as misconduct persists and increases in severity.

STUDENT MISCONDUCT	DEFINITION	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	
Class Cutting	Failing to attend a class or school activity, after arrival at school, without an excused reason.	●	●				
Tardiness	Late to school or class.	●	●				Prek-5 should not receive any punitive or exclusionary consequences, but parents should be notified
Truancy	Unlawfully absent from school or classes for a school day or a portion of the school day.	●	●				Prek-5 should not receive any punitive or exclusionary consequences, but parents should be notified
Disrespect	Making intentional inappropriate and/or harmful gestures, verbal or written comments or symbols to others; being insubordinate or persistently disrespectful and/or in defiance of authority.	●	●	●	●		
Disruption	Behavior that interferes with the learning environment or disrupts the operation of a school.	●	●	●	●	● 3-12 only	Level 5 if chronic and/or extreme disruptions
Dress Code	Failure to follow the dress code guidelines on page 13 of the student handbook.	●	●	●			
Bullying/Harassment	Purposeful conduct or communication, (verbal, physical, written conduct or electronic) that creates a hostile educational environment by interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being.	●	●	●	●	● 6-12 only	Level 5 if bullying is persistent
Sexual Activity	Inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature, including indecent exposure, consensual sex, inappropriate texting of a sexual nature, and other sexual activity not identified as sexual assault or harassment.		●	●	●	● 6-12 only	Refer the student to counseling
Sexual Attack	Engaging in behavior directed towards a school system employee or another student that is physically, sexually aggressive.				●	● 3-12 only	Law Enforcement Notification (LEN); refer the student to counseling; Contact the Title IX Coordinator
Sexual Harassment	Engaging in intentional unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, directed toward others.				●	● 3-12 only	Contact the Title IX Coordinator
Extortion	The process of obtaining property from another, with or without that person's consent, by a wrongful use of force, fear or threat.		●	●	●	● 6-12 only	Conduct threat assessment; Level 5 if engaged in persistent extortion: Level 5 LEN
False Alarm/Bomb Threat	The conveyance of threats or false information concerning the placement of explosive or destructive substances. Initiating a report warning of a fire or other catastrophe without cause in person or by phone. Misuse of 911. Discharging a fire extinguisher.				●	● 3-12 only	Conduct threat assessment; refer student to counseling; Fire Marshall and LEN
Threat to Adult	Threatening or aggressive language or gestures directed toward a staff member or anyone other than a student.	●	●	●	●	● 3-12 only	Level 5 is for engaging in persistent threats
Threat to Student	Threatening, or aggressive language, or gestures directed toward another student.	●	●	●	●	● 3-12 only	Level 5 is for engaging in persistent threats
Academic Dishonesty	Cheating, copying, forging signature of teacher and/or parent/guardian, plagiarizing, or altering records, or assisting another in such actions.	●	●				Follow Academic Integrity Policy
Inappropriate Use of School or Personally-owned Electronic Devices	Inappropriate use of any electronic device by a student.	●	●	●	●		LEN if inappropriate use includes alleged criminal activity
Vandalism and Destruction of Property	Damage, destruction, or defacement of property belonging to the school or others. (includes school devices/equipment)	●	●	●	●	● 6-12 only	LEN
Theft	Taking or obtaining property of another without permission and/or knowledge of the owner.	●	●	●	●		LEN - LE may not pursue
Trespassing	Unauthorized presence on school property, including while on suspension.		●	●	●		LEN
Alcohol	Possession, use, or showing evidence of use, sale, or distribution of any alcoholic substances.				●	● 6-12 only	Refer student to Student Assistance Program (SAP); LEN
Drugs/Controlled Substances	Possession, use, or showing evidence of use, sale, or distribution of controlled dangerous substances including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, look-alike drugs, and substances represented as controlled substances or drug paraphernalia (unless documentation on file that student may self-carry).				●	● 6-12 only	Refer student to SAP; LEN; Up to Level 5 if distributing/under influence
Inhalants	Possession, use, or showing evidence of use, sale, or distribution of any inhalants or other intoxicants.				●	● 6-12 only	Refer student to SAP; LEN
Tobacco	Possession, use, sale, or distribution of tobacco, tobacco products, or e-cigarettes		●	●	●		Refer the student to the local health department
Attack on Adult	Being physically aggressive towards an employee of the school system or other adult, including physical contact with staff member who is intervening in a fight or other disruptive activity. (Not horseplay)		●	●	●	● 3-12 only	Level 5 if large, pre-planned, or with major injuries
Attack on Student	Physically pushing, hitting or otherwise being intentionally physically aggressive toward another student. (Not horseplay)		●	●	●	● 3-12 only	Level 5 if large, pre-planned, or with major injuries
Fighting	A physical confrontation involving two or more students.	●	●	●	●	● 6-12 only	Level 5 if large, pre-planned, or with major injuries
Serious Bodily Injury	Causing serious bodily injury which involves (a) substantial risk of death; (b) extreme physical pain; (c) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (d) protracted loss or impairment of a function of a bodily member, organ or mental faculty. Reference: IDEA at 20 U.S.C. § 1415 (k)(7)(D)" referring to 18 U.S.C. § 1365 (h)(3)				●	●	LEN
Arson/Fire	Attempting to set, aiding in setting, or setting fire to a building or other property.	●	●	●	●	● 6-12 only	LEN; Level 5 if there was intent to harm
Explosives	Possession, sale, distribution, detonation, or threat of detonation of an incendiary or explosive material or device including firecrackers, smoke bombs, flares or any combustible or explosive substance or combination of substances or articles, other than a firearm. See 18 U.S.C. §921.	●	●	●	●	● 6-12 only	LEN
Firearms	Possession of a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. §921. Examples include handguns, rifles, shotguns, and bombs.					●	LEN; Mandatory long-term suspension and request for expulsion
Other Guns	Possession of any type of gun, other than a firearm, loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable. This may include any object that is a look-alike of a gun or firearm. (e.g., B-B guns, pellet guns, water guns)	●	●	●	●	● 6-12 only	LEN; Level 5 if it's loaded/operable
Other Weapons	Possession of any implement that could cause or is intended to cause bodily harm, other than a firearm or other gun.		●	●	●	● 3-12 only	LEN; Level 5 if it's likely to cause serious harm

LEVELS OF RESPONSES

LEVEL 1

EXAMPLES OF CLASSROOM, SUPPORT, AND TEACHER-LED RESPONSES

These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior, so students are respectful, and can learn and contribute to a safe environment. Teachers are encouraged to try a variety of teaching and classroom management strategies. When appropriate, teachers may engage the student's support system to ensure successful learning and consistency of responses, and change the conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses should be used in a graduated fashion.

- Classroom-based Responses (Verbal Correction, Written Reflection/Apology, Reminders/Redirection, Role Play, Daily Progress Sheet)
- Check in with School Counselor/Resource Specialist
- Community Conferencing
- Detention
- Informal and/or Preventative School-Based Mentoring
- Parent Outreach (contact parent via telephone, e-mail or text)
- Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling service
- Referral to health/mental health services
- Restorative Practices (Follow IIRP training)

LEVEL 2

EXAMPLES OF CLASSROOM, SUPPORT, AND REMOVAL RESPONSES

These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior, so students behave respectfully, can learn, and contribute to a safe environment. Many of these responses engage the student's support system, and are designed to alter conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses aim to correct behavior by stressing its severity and acknowledging potential implications for future harm, while still keeping the student in school. These responses should be used in a graduated fashion.

ANY LEVEL 1 RESPONSE *PLUS*

- Behavioral Contract
- Community Service
- Functional Behavior Assessment / Behavioral Intervention Plan
- Referral to Student Support Team for review of 504 Plan
- Loss of Privileges
- Parent/Guardian and Student Conference (with Teacher)
- Peer Mediation
- Referral to Community-Based Organization
- Referral to IEP Team (Student not Currently Eligible for Special Education Services)
- Referral to IEP Team (Student Currently Receiving Special Education Services)
- Referral to Student Support Team
- Removal from Extracurricular Activities
- Restitution
- School-Based or Outside Facilitated Conflict Resolution
- Student Court
- Temporary Removal from Class

LEVEL 3

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT, REMOVAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSES

These responses engage the student's support system to ensure successful learning, and to alter conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses aim to correct behavior by stressing its severity and acknowledging potential implications for future harm, while still keeping the student in school. These responses may involve the short-term removal of a student from the classroom. Such a removal should be limited as much as practicable without undermining its ability to adequately address the behavior. These responses should be used in a graduated fashion.

ANY LEVEL 1 & 2 RESPONSE *PLUS*

- In-School Suspension
- Parent/Guardian and Student Conference (with Administrator)
- Referral to Appropriate Substance Abuse Counseling Services
- Restorative Conference (Follow IIRP training)

LEVEL 4

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT, REMOVAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL EXCLUSIONARY RESPONSES

These responses address serious behavior while keeping the student in school, or when necessary due to the nature of the behavior or potential implications for future harm, remove a student from the school environment. They promote safety of the school community by addressing self-destructive and dangerous behavior, and should be used in a graduated fashion.

ANY LEVEL 1, 2, & 3 RESPONSE *PLUS*

- Formal Mentoring Program
- Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension (1-3 days)

LEVEL 5

EXAMPLES OF LONG-TERM ADMINISTRATIVE, OUT-OF-SCHOOL EXCLUSIONARY, AND REFERRAL RESPONSES

(MAY BE ADMINISTRATOR OR DISTRICT STAFF-LED)

These responses remove a student from the school environment for an extended period of time because of the severity of the behavior and potential implications for future harm. They may involve the placement of the student in a safe environment that provides additional structure and services. These responses promote the safety of the school community by addressing self-destructive and dangerous behavior, and should be used in a graduated fashion.

ANY LEVEL 1, 2, 3, & 4 RESPONSE *PLUS*

- Expulsion (> 45 days)
- Extended-Term Out-of-School Suspension (11-45 days)
- Long-Term Out-of-School Suspension (4-10 days)
- Referral to Alternative Education

Exhibit Adopted: June 6, 2014: Revised: July 24, 2014; Revised: December 14, 2017; Revised: July 18, 2019; Revised: October 14, 2019; Revised: February 16, 2022, Revised: July 7, 2025
Washington County Public Schools

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as other students, and requires that any barriers to the enrollment, attendance, retention, or success of these children are eliminated.

If there is a possibility that a student is experiencing homelessness and, therefore, entitled to McKinney-Vento rights, the parent/guardian/caregiver will be requested to complete a Student in Transition Enrollment form to assist in determining eligibility.

Once the homeless student is identified, in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, WCPS will either continue the student's education in the school of origin (school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool), or immediately enroll the student, even if the student lacks the records required for enrollment, in the school in the attendance area where the student is currently living, depending on the needs and best interest of the student.

- The placement determination will be student-centered and consider the age of the student, the distance of the commute and the impact it may have on the student's education, personal safety issues, a student's need for special instruction, the length of anticipated stay in a temporary location, and the time remaining in the school year.
- A school must educate a homeless student in their school of origin, presuming that this is in the best interest of the child or youth, unless doing so is contrary to the request of the youth's parent, legal guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.
- A homeless student's right to attend the selected school extends for the duration of the homelessness.
- If a homeless student becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the selected school for the remainder of the academic year, if appropriate.
- Transportation will be provided to the school deemed to be in the student's best interest at the request of the parent/legal guardian.
- Students who become homeless between academic years are entitled to attend the selected school for the following academic year, if appropriate.
- If a student is assigned to a school other than the school of origin, or the school requested by the custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s), the district must provide written explanation to the parent/legal guardian, including the right to appeal.
- In the case of an "unaccompanied youth," the student will be assisted with placement/enrollment decisions, which consider the youth's wishes, and notice will be provided to the youth of the right to appeal.
- A decision regarding appropriate school assignment must be made regardless of whether the child or youth resides with the homeless custodial parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.
- Disputes and appeals regarding services to homeless students should be referred to the Director of Student Services.

Students who are homeless have a right to access all school-related services (i.e., pre-school education, Multilingual Learner (ML) services, vocational programs, field trips, athletic programs, before-and after-school programs, magnet schools, school nutrition programs, etc.). Homeless students shall not be separated from the mainstream school environment on the basis of their homeless status. All effort should be made to ensure that homeless students transferring from another school district are awarded credit for all completed coursework. Homeless students immediately qualify for free meals and are not responsible for any school-related fees.

Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth are posted in every public school and in appropriate places in the community. Contact the school guidance office for questions or details.

The WCPS Coordinator of Homeless Education in the Department of Student Services (301-766-2823) is also available to assist parents with any issues regarding enrollment, transportation and other available support and services.

Reference: Policy JFA and Administrative Regulation JFA-R

Foster Care

Students placed in Foster Care have the same rights as McKinney-Vento Homeless students. Foster Care students have the right to stay in their school of origin for the duration of their placement or may elect to attend the school in the attendance area where they are currently residing. A Best Interest Meeting will take place between WCPS and the Department of Social Services (DSS) or the Department of Juvenile Service (DJS) to determine the appropriate school placement. Foster parents are expected to meet with guidance office staff at the student's school in order to provide the placement letter/court order from DSS or DJS, complete WCPS school enrollment documents, as well as WCPS school enrollment documents and the foster care enrollment form.

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Student Health

School Health Services/Program Overview

The School Health Program was adopted in 1991 by the Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations from the State of Maryland (COMAR) which requires that public school systems and health agencies implement a comprehensive health services program that offers a variety of services to students, including the services of a school nurse.

Comprehensive school health services are provided in each of Washington County's public schools American Medical Staffing. Each health room is staffed by at least one health professional that is either a Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), or Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)/Certified Medication Technician (CMT). The RN maintains overall responsibility for each assigned school or cluster of schools. Health services include medication and treatment administration, first aid, illness appraisal, immunization compliance monitoring, health teaching and screenings, and communicable disease surveillance.

Health Office Procedures

Students with illnesses or injuries should obtain a pass from their teacher and report to the health office for evaluation and treatment. Based on the child's signs and symptoms, health staff may determine that he/she should go home. It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to make arrangements for their child to be picked up within a reasonable time frame.

Parents/legal guardians may be asked to pick up their child if any of the following signs and symptoms are observed or reported:

- A fever greater than 100.4° F
- Vomiting more than twice in the preceding 24 hours
- Diarrhea that causes "accidents"
- Skin sores that are draining fluid on an uncovered part of the body and are unable to be covered with a bandage
- Respiratory virus symptoms that are worsening or not improving
- The child's signs and symptoms are interfering with his/her ability to learn

After obtaining permission from the parent/legal guardian, students may be released to the parent/legal guardian, or a friend/relative as indicated on the *Student Health/Family Information form*. Students must sign out with the attendance secretary. If a student does not sign out, it may be counted as an unexcused absence.

Generally after an illness, students can return to school under the following conditions:

- The student has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Vomiting has resolved overnight and the student can hold down food/liquids in the morning
- Diarrhea has improved.
- Respiratory virus symptoms are getting better overall for at least 24 hours.

In order to ensure students' safety, it is important that parents/legal guardians provide the health office with up-to-date health information by completing the Washington County Public Schools Family Health Information Form each school year. Please inform the health office of any significant injury or illness and communicable disease diagnosed by your child's health care provider.

Parents/legal guardians can expect to be contacted by phone if/when their child has been evaluated in the health room for any significant illness or injury, and when emergency care has been provided. Parents/legal guardians that have created a ParentVue account, can access detailed information about all of their child's health office visits. Parent/legal guardian requests for notification by phone each time their child is evaluated in the health office must be approved by the registered nurse based on medical necessity.

Medications/Treatments

If a student is to receive medication or a treatment during school hours, the parent/legal guardian must provide a completed medication or treatment order form. The order form must be signed by both the parent/legal guardian and the healthcare provider. The medication must be transported to the school's health office by an adult. All prescription medication must be in a properly labeled prescription container. Over the counter medications also require a completed medication order form and must be supplied in the original unopened container. Parents/legal guardians are responsible to provide the health office with all supplies and equipment needed to administer the medication(s) and/or medical treatment(s). Medication/treatment forms must be completed annually or when there is any change to the medication, dose, route of administration time. Medications that are discontinued or expired are destroyed after five (5) days if not picked up by an authorized adult. Medications not picked up by the last day of the school year are destroyed in accordance with current WCPS procedures.

Medication/Treatment Administration Guidelines:

- The first dose of a newly prescribed medication should be given at home.
- No medications or treatments can be given without a completed medication/treatment form. Students are expected to report to the health office at the appropriate time to receive the prescribed medication/treatment.
- School Health staff will make every effort to locate students who do not report for their medication or treatment.
- All medication/treatment orders must be reviewed and approved by the school's registered nurse prior to administration. The registered nurse has two (2) school days to sign-off on the medication/treatment.
- Students have the right to refuse the administration of medications and/or treatments.
- Health staff can only administer medications and treatments as prescribed by a licensed health care provider and can not take direction from parents/legal guardians regarding changes to medication dosages or administration times (may not apply to certain diabetic orders).

The licensed nurse may communicate with a licensed health care provider for concerns or clarification of a medical order or to share information relevant to the treatment regimen without the written authorization of the parent/legal guardian. Regardless of the health care setting, scope of practice for nurses requires verification when administering ordered medications and treatments. For all other communications, health staff shall follow all Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

Medication Management for Overnight Field Trips

If a student is attending an **overnight field trip** and requires medication, the parent/legal guardian must have the student's health care provider complete the Medical and Emergency Information section of the field trip permission form. The same medication rules apply as stated in the Medications/Treatments section above.

Emergency and Stocked Medications

Students may be allowed to self-carry and self-administer prescribed emergency medications. The self-carry section of the medication order must be completed by both the parent/guardian and the health care provider. Once the order is received, the registered nurse must assess and approve the student's ability to self-carry and/or self-administer the medication. The registered nurse's decision shall be based on the nursing assessment that may include the student's medical history, review of records, parent/legal guardian interview, the student's competency to self-administer, and a review of the student's environment.

Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (EAI)

Every school is equipped with a stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors to administer to anyone in the building and on school property that is believed to be experiencing symptoms of anaphylaxis in accordance with WCPS regulations and policies and Maryland State law. The stocked supply of epinephrine auto-injectors will not be available during field trips off of school property. To ensure continuous access to this life-saving medication, parents/legal guardians of students diagnosed with life-threatening allergies are encouraged to provide the school with their child's prescribed epinephrine auto-injector and a completed medication order form.

Naloxone
Naloxone is stocked in each school building and may be administered to individuals on school property who are reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid overdose in accordance with WCPS regulations and policies and Maryland State law. This emergency medication restores breathing and consciousness, and helps to prevent fatalities.

Metered Dose Inhalers (MDI) – Bronchodilators
A bronchodilator is a type of medication that relaxes bronchial muscles resulting in the expansion of air passages to provide fast treatment of asthma-related symptoms and symptoms of respiratory distress. Each school is stocked with an albuterol metered dose inhaler to be administered in accordance with WCPS regulations and policies and Maryland State law to students in grades Kindergarten and above, who are perceived to be experiencing asthma-related symptoms or to be in respiratory distress. The stocked supply of bronchodilators will not be available during field trips off of school property. To ensure continuous access to this life-saving medication, parents/legal guardians of students diagnosed with asthma or reactive airway disease are encouraged to provide the school with their child's prescribed inhaler and a completed medication order form.

Note: Maryland law prohibits the administration of a stocked bronchodilator to students in pre-kindergarten UNLESS the student has a completed health care provider authorization form signed by the health care provider and the parent/legal guardian on file in the health office.

Important Notice Regarding Stocked Medications
All stocked emergency medications including naloxone, bronchodilators, and epinephrine auto-injectors will be administered to students in accordance with Maryland laws. Parent/legal guardian permission to administer stock medications to a student is not required. Parents/ legal guardians are encouraged to speak with their child's health care provider and contact the health office if the administration of any of the stocked medications is medically contraindicated for their child.

Major Injuries and Emergencies
Major injuries and emergencies will be referred to the Emergency Management System (911). Every effort will be made to notify the parent or guardian.

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)
An AED is used to treat victims who experience sudden cardiac arrest. The treatment must be delivered within a short time to be effective. Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when the electrical impulses of the human heart malfunction causing ventricular fibrillation, a condition that will result in sudden death unless appropriately treated. AEDs are available at schools. Trained individuals are designated to use the AED on school system premises, however, any lay person is permitted to use it, if necessary.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)
Current head lice management policies are aligned with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Students that are sent to the health office with symptoms of infestation will be screened by school health staff. If evidence of head lice is observed, health staff will contact the parent/legal guardian and recommend that the student is picked up from school to begin treatment. Students may return to school after treatment. Parents/legal guardians can help by routinely inspecting their child's scalp for signs of head lice throughout the school year and instructing him/her not to share hats, combs, brushes and avoid head-to-head contact with other students.

Immunization Requirements
Maryland law requires that parents/legal guardians of students enrolled in **kindergarten through twelfth grade** provide evidence of immunizations or age appropriate immunity against Tetanus, Diphtheria, Poliomyelitis, Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis B, Varicella, and Meningococcal. Children in **preschool**, who are under the age of 5, must also show evidence of immunization with Pneumococcal vaccination (PCV -7).

Parents/legal guardians should contact their healthcare provider to schedule an appointment for the immunizations prior to the start of school. The Washington County Health Department also provides immunizations. To schedule an appointment at the health department, call 240-313-3210. Children who do not have proof of immunizations or age-appropriate immunity may be excluded from school.

Vision and Hearing Screening
Vision and hearing screenings are provided for children in **grades pre-k, kindergarten (if not screened in pre-k), 1, and 8** during the school year by American Medical Staffing personnel.

In accordance with Maryland Schools Health Services Guidelines, parents/legal guardians will receive written notification of the screening results as follows:

- A letter will be sent home with your child if he/she passes the vision screening exam.
- A letter will be mailed to your home address on file if your child fails the vision screening exam.
- A letter will be mailed to your home address on file, if your child fails the hearing screening exam.

Parents/legal guardians should note that these are simple screening tests and are not designed to be diagnostic of specific vision or hearing disorders.

Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP)
Children up to the age of 19 without health insurance may qualify for the Maryland Children's Health Program MCHP or the MCHP Premium Program. The MCHP program provides free health care and the MCHP Premium Program provides low-cost health care to children in families with low to average incomes. For detailed information on MCHP or MCHP Premium, call the Washington County Health Department at 240-313-3330 or visit *washcohealth.org*. MCHP applications also are available from the school health office staff.

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Accident Insurance for Students

Through special school programs, insurance policies are offered to students at the beginning of each school year. Application forms are distributed at school. Three types of coverage are offered. One covers any accident which may occur on the way to or from school and during school. The second, 24-hour coverage, is available at higher rates. A third policy is available for students playing football. Students considering participation in interscholastic sports should consider 24-hour coverage.

Parents/legal guardians may insure children against medical expense and loss of life or dismemberment or from bodily injuries due to school associated accidents. Details and limitations under this plan are outlined in the brochure made available to each child at the beginning of the school year. Information about insurance may also be viewed through the website for Bob McCloskey Insurance at www.bobmccloskey.com/k12voluntary.

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Promotion and Retention

WCPS supports sound educational practices which support the development of each individual student.

Some students, based on individual, professional assessment, may benefit from acceleration or retention. When such acceleration or retention is under consideration, conferences with parents/legal guardians shall be held. Notification to parents/legal guardians shall be made immediately after either option is considered by school personnel. Early notification to parents/legal guardians of high school seniors who may not graduate on time is important. This notification shall be made immediately when the possibility of non-graduation is apparent.

Students in kindergarten through grade 8 must minimally meet content standards to be promoted to the next grade. Students in grades 9 through 12 earn credits for graduation through completion of courses (see *Graduation Requirements* for details).

The decision-making process concerning promotion or retention is a joint responsibility of professional school and county personnel and parents/legal guardians. The final decision relative to promotion or retention is the responsibility of the school district's professional personnel.

See also Policy IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students and Administrative Regulation IKE-R – Promotion, Acceleration, and Retention of Students

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Special Education and Related Services

When a student has a disability that significantly impacts his or her learning, the student may be eligible for special education. Special education is specialized instruction that is designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability.

Child Find is the process used to locate, identify, and evaluate students suspected of having an educational disability. The process is as follows:

1. A student is referred for Child Find. A written referral is preferred.
2. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) (ages 3-21) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team (birth to age 3) meets to review the referral and all relevant information to decide if it is suspected that the student is being impacted by a disability.
3. If the team suspects an educational disability, the team determines what additional information is needed to determine eligibility. The parent/legal guardian must sign consent for the team to conduct assessments.
4. The team meets* to review the assessments and all relevant information to decide if the student has a disability that requires specialized instruction through an IEP. *within 60 days from signed consent and within 90 days from referral.
5. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the team meets* to develop an IEP. The parent/legal guardian must sign consent for the IEP to be initiated. *within 30 days of determination of eligibility special education services are delivered in the least restrictive environment, which means that the student will spend as much time as possible in the general education setting.

The IEP is reviewed and updated at least one time per year. Progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported regularly. Reevaluation is considered at least every three years.

Referral to Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is the name of the process for identifying children (birth to 33 months of age) with developmental delays and disabilities who require specialized instruction. The steps of this process are:

1. The child (birth to 33 months of age) is referred to the Birth to K Program via online referral, email, phone, or fax. A written referral is preferable. (A 45-day timeline begins on the date of referral and must include making contact with the family, conducting an initial contact visit with the family, completing evaluations (upon obtaining consent), determining eligibility for services, and developing an IFSP for those children who are eligible for services.)
2. Within three days of receiving the referral, a Birth to K service coordinator contacts the family to confirm receipt of the referral and schedule an initial contact visit.
3. During the initial contact visit, medical and developmental information is reviewed, and age expected skills are discussed. Evaluations are offered. For families who make the choice to proceed with evaluations, consent is obtained, and evaluations are scheduled. (For families who choose not to proceed with evaluations, the referral is ended, and the family is provided with a Birth to K Program packet that includes program contact information, developmental, and community resources.)
4. Developmental evaluations and assessments are completed and the IFSP team meets to review all relevant information. A child qualifies for specialized instruction based on 1) Having an automatic qualifying diagnosed condition; 2) Demonstrating a 25% delay or greater in any developmental domain (i.e., cognitive, social-emotional, communication, adaptive, gross motor, or fine motor) based on evaluation data; or 3) Demonstrating atypical development in any area of development.
5. If the child is eligible for special education services, the team meets to develop an IFSP. The parent/guardian must sign authorization for the IFSP to be initiated and services are to begin within 30 days of the initial IFSP date.
6. Special education services are delivered in the least restrictive environment, which includes natural and inclusive settings for children birth to 33 months to include home, home of a family member, childcare, and community settings, etc.

The IFSP is reviewed and updated at least every six months. Progress on IFSP goals is monitored and reported regularly.

For Parents, Guardians, Staff, and Students

Commonly asked questions:

How do I refer my child for special education services? You can submit a written referral to the special education case manager at your child's school. Be sure to include a description of your concerns.

What if my child is too young to be enrolled in school? You can make a referral through the WCPS birth through kindergarten team at 301-766-8217.

What if I home school or my child is not enrolled in a public school? You can submit a written referral to the special education case manager at the school that your child would attend if he/she was enrolled in public school. If your child is found eligible through the child find process, an IEP draft will be developed and would be implemented through WCPS if your child was to enroll in a WCPS school.

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Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC)

The primary purpose of SECAC is to enable and facilitate community awareness, knowledge, and support of special education. Invested stakeholders can participate in these processes and work cooperatively with WCPS to ensure the unique and multi-faceted needs of students with disabilities are met.

Exact meeting times and locations for the 2025-2026 school year are subject to change but are currently scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Center for Education Services, 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740. There will be no meetings held in July, August, or December.

September 24, 2025, Auditorium
October 29, 2025, Auditorium
November 19, 2025, Auditorium
January 28, 2026, Auditorium
February 25, 2026, Auditorium
March 25, 2026, Auditorium
April 29, 2026, Disabilities Awareness Fair
May 27, 2026, Auditorium

For additional information on SECAC, please contact: 301-766-8221 or secac@wcps.k12.md.us.

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Family Support Resource Center

The **Family Support Resource Center** is dedicated to helping parents navigate questions about special education and their child's needs. As a resource, referral, and training center, it connects families with the school system and the broader community to ensure strong support networks. The center serves children and young adults with special needs from birth through age 21, offering a full range of services designed to empower families and strengthen partnerships in education.

The center is sponsored by WCPS, in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education to provide the following supports:

- Meet with families to help them understand the special education process, which includes but is not limited to: explaining IEPs in detail, assisting families with meetings, and explaining the laws that govern special education.
- Provide support for transitions from the Birth to Kindergarten program to Special Education Preschool services, and from school to work, or transitional youth programs where services will be funded through different public agencies.
- Offer trainings to agencies that support families of children with special needs.
- Provide disability awareness trainings to WCPS staff, churches, community groups, childcare centers, etc.

Do You Want Answers?

- How do I know if my child needs special education or related services? How do I have my child evaluated?
- What are IEP, LRE and due process?
- What do all the special education terms really mean?
- What are my legal rights in relation to my child?
- How do I get the school to understand my child's needs?
- How can I become an advocate for my child at school?
- How can I encourage and motivate my child at home?
- What programs and services are available to help my child when schooling is complete?
- Are there discussion groups where I can meet other parents of children with special needs?

Our staff works to provide answers to your questions about special education and your child.

Workshops

- Building Things at Home for an Exceptional Child
- Moments with Michael: Anecdotes from a Father of a Special Needs Child
- ADHD Symptoms, and Mitigation Techniques
- Regulating Students with Arts Activities
- Autism Waiver: What is It? What Can it do for You?

Resources

- **Phone Support:** The Family Support Resource Center staff is available if you need someone to talk to or answer your questions at 301-766-8221.
- **Reference Materials:** Lending Library Publications and videos on a variety of topics are available for loan.
- **Website:** Resources and workshops available to residents of Washington County: *https://sites.google.com/wcps.k12.md.us/special-education-parent-port2/family-support-resource-center?authuser=0*
- **Newsletter:** A free newsletter for parents and educators.
- **Services:** A listing of community agencies/organizations serving individuals with special needs is available.
- **School/Community Needs:** The Family Support Resource Center staff will travel to schools or community/civic groups to provide information, insight or workshops for people interested in learning more about children with special needs.

Contact Us

Phone: 301-766-8221
Email: maginmic@wcps.k12.md.us
Michael Maginnis
Family Support Coordinator

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Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures an equal opportunity for qualified students with disabilities. Under Section 504, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who (1) has a

physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Referrals for Section 504 plans can be made to school counselors (school Section 504 coordinators). An evaluation meeting will be held with the school Section 504 team to determine eligibility. If the student is determined to be eligible, a Section 504 plan will be developed to include reasonable accommodations and supports for the student.

If you have questions related to your student's Section 504 plan or meeting, please contact your school counselor through phone or email to discuss. If you have further questions regarding Section 504 plans, please reach out to the 504 Plan Program Coordinator at 301-766-8227.

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State and Federal Testing Requirements

Federal law requires that all students be assessed and receive an individual score in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and a high school grade. Maryland measures academic progress each year by administering the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP), Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA), and the Alternate Maryland School Assessments for students with disabilities. Scores from state assessments are posted on *reportcard.msde.maryland.gov*. This site contains test results, school progress, demographic information, and other facts and figures for every school and school system in Maryland.

Instructional information and parent resources at *www.marylandpublicschools.org*, including information on the MISA and MCAP Assessments.

Elementary and Middle School Assessments

Students in grades 3 through 8 participate in the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics MCAP assessments. The MCAP assessment is a test of reading and math achievement that meets the testing requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This test is given during April and May. The MCAP assessments are designed to be administered online, containing multiple-choice questions and questions requiring written responses. The MCAP ELA/math assessment scores show how well students have learned the reading and mathematics skills in the Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS). In March, the MISA assesses science achievement for students in grades 5 and 8. These scores reflect the science skills learned during the current and preceding two years. In 8th grade, students take the MCAP Social Studies 8 Assessment, which measures student knowledge of United States history. Sample questions for all MCAP assessments can be found at support.mdassessments.com.

High School Assessments

Students in high school will take a combination of assessments to demonstrate their academic proficiency and meet graduation requirements. High school students will take MCAP ELA, math, government, and life science assessments aligned with the courses in which they are enrolled to measure school and individual student progress toward Maryland's High School Core Learning Goals. Students take each test after they complete the content-related course. This includes middle school students taking high school level courses.

The website, *www.marylandpublicschools.org*, provides answers to commonly asked questions about the high school assessments and links to numerous resources, including the Core Learning Goals, publicly released test forms with answer keys and scoring rubrics, and a testing calendar. Resources for students taking the MCAP ELA/math assessment can be found at *support.mdassessments.com*.

College and Career Readiness

In 2021, Maryland passed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The intent of this legislation is to ensure that Maryland students graduate from high school prepared for college and career pathways. School districts are required to determine whether students are prepared to take credit-bearing college courses in math and English Language Arts by assessing them no later than 10th grade. To comply with the assessment requirements of the Act, WCPS will review students' assessment scores to determine if the student meets the requirement. If students have not yet demonstrated readiness for college-level work, they will complete supplemental coursework.

Alternate Maryland School Assessment

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 also requires that states provide an "alternate assessment" when implementing statewide accountability systems. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the MCAP and MISA assessments, even with accommodations, participate in the alternative assessments. These assess students' attainment of their instructional level reading, mathematics, and science mastery objectives that are aligned with grade-level Maryland Content Standards.

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Athletics—Interscholastic Standards

Information about student participation in and the administration of the high school interscholastic athletic program is in the **Washington County Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Handbook** (revised annually). Additional information can be found in the **Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) Handbook** (revised annually). These handbooks are available for review on-line at *www.wcpsmd.com*. Information about the MPSSAA can be obtained on the website: *www.mpssaa.org*. High School Athletic schedules are online at *www.washingtoncountycmc.org*.

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Extracurricular Activities Eligibility

Student Conduct Ineligibility

Students attending dances, concerts, athletic contests, field trips, etc., are expected to follow school rules. Students may be declared ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities for a given period of time at the discretion of the school administration. Violations of rules of conduct for field trips, band trips, athletic trips, disruption of assemblies, and other school activity agreements, may result in ineligibility.

Student Activities – Eligibility (High Schools) (Policy IGDL)

I. Purpose

Policy IGDL provides the requirements a student must meet in order to participate in Washington County Public Schools' (WCPS) extracurricular activities.

II. Background

Student extracurricular activities are opportunities for students to explore areas of interest beyond the WCPS program of studies. Extracurricular activities often require as much careful planning and supervision as student experiences in the academic subject areas. These activities do not take precedence over academic areas and remain as supplemental activities to the basic courses of study.

While it is desirable that a student participate in such activities to the extent that they further their educational development, it is of paramount importance that such participation shall not jeopardize a student's academic achievement or their ability to meet or satisfy their graduation requirements.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

A. Dual Credit Course: A designated course for which upon successful completion of, students will be awarded both high school and college credit and for which the grade will be calculated in the high school grade point average using the Quality Point Values (see Policy IKA) unless otherwise indicated.

B. Extracurricular activities: Activities which ordinarily occur outside the school day, including athletics, clubs, or performing arts.

IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

A. Ninth graders are exempt from this policy for the first nine (9) - week marking period.

B. In order for a student to fully participate in extracurricular activities, including high school athletics, they must attain specific academic standards. A student will be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities unless the student:

1. Is enrolled in five (5) or more courses per semester and receives a failing grade in two (2) or more courses, in a marking period; or
2. Is enrolled in four (4) or fewer courses per semester and receives a failing grade in one or more course in a marking period.

C. Eligibility shall be determined by the previous marking period grades except for the first marking period. Eligibility for the first marking period is determined by the final grades of the preceding school year. Should a student not be eligible as determined by the final grades, that student may attempt to improve their grade by attending summer school. If, as a result Page 1 of 2 of attending summer school, the student meets necessary requirements as outlined in paragraph B above, they are considered eligible and may participate in extracurricular activities in the fall.

If the specific make-up course needed by the student is not available in summer school, a comparable course may be substituted with written permission from the guidance counselor and the principal.

The marking period grade, reported every nine (9) weeks, determines eligibility for the next marking period unless a final grade was awarded. Final grades always determine eligibility over marking period grades. (Refer to Grading Policy IKA.) WCPS will factor into eligibility dual credit courses by either the marking period grade, if applicable, or the semester grade.

D. Normally, an "incomplete" must be made up within ten (10) school days. However, in unusual circumstances, this period may be extended with permission from the principal. "Incompletes" become effective on the day report cards are posted to the student information system and are not counted in determining eligibility. A student may participate in extracurricular activities during the periods of time an "incomplete" is in effect.

E. A student will be declared ineligible or eligible effective the day marking period report cards are posted to the student information system. A student does not become ineligible based on failing grades on interim reports; however, a student who was ineligible due to their most recent marking period grades becomes eligible on the day interim reports are posted to the student information system for full participation if their interim report indicates they are passing all classes.

F. Ineligibility means that a student is unable to participate in an extracurricular activity with the following exceptions:

1. In cases such as band, chorus, orchestra, or theater, a student who is declared ineligible will continue to participate in any regularly scheduled classes, but is not permitted to perform in concert, marching, or related activities and performances occurring outside the school day. A student's non-participation in such activities because of ineligibility will not affect their regular class grade. During the period of ineligibility, a student is permitted to participate in practices after regular school hours.
2. In cases of athletics, a student who is ineligible may participate in practices, but cannot participate in a game or competition, dress in a game uniform, or travel with the team to games or competitions played away from their home school; these stipulations apply to students who are ineligible at the start of an athletic season or become ineligible during an athletic season.

G. The Superintendent is authorized to promulgate an administrative regulation to implement this policy.

See also: Policy IGDK - "Participation on Athletic Teams and Extracurricular Activities"
Policy IKA - "Grading System for Secondary Schools"

Early Dismissal and After School Practices

On early dismissal days established for teacher professional development or for grading at the end of a marking period, practices will not be held immediately after dismissal. School staff members are not available for supervision after dismissal. Students must leave school property and then return for practice at the scheduled time.

Guidelines for School-Sponsored Activities
(Dances, Social Events, and Related Activities)

School policies and procedures, including expectations for appropriate dress and behavior, are still in effect during all school-sponsored activities, whether on or off school property, that are not related to either curricular or athletic goals, such as dances, social events, and other related activities. In general, students who violate policies or engage in unacceptable behaviors will be removed immediately and may be suspended from school sponsored social or extracurricular events.

Expectations for Attendance at High School Dances

- High school dances are primarily for students who attend high school.
- Current high school students who invite non-students to school dances should receive approval from the principal's office for the guests prior to the event.
  - Students who have dropped out during the current school year are considered conduct ineligible and, therefore, cannot attend school dances or functions without the expressed permission of the principal.
  - All dances are restricted to individuals under the age of 21.
  - High school students may not invite students enrolled in grades 6-8 to attend high school dances or bring children.
- Students who leave the dance may not re-enter.
- Dancing inappropriately or engaging in improper interpersonal conduct may result in disciplinary action. If inappropriate behavior continues after a warning, the student and/or guest may be directed to leave the premises.

Instruction and School Activities Information

Title I Programs

Program Overview

Title I is a federal assistance program for designated schools. "Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965" was reauthorized by the "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015."

Federal Title I funds flow through the various state departments of education to local school districts. The amount of funds sent to each school district is based on the number of low-income families, according to federal census data on poverty. The local school district identifies eligible schools and provides Title I resources to those schools.

WCPS currently provides Title I funds to eight (8) elementary schools: Bester, Eastern, Hickory, Lincolnshire, Salem Avenue, Pangborn, Jonathan Hager, and Ruth Ann Monroe Primary. Each of these schools has a schoolwide Title I program. Schoolwide programs are used in schools that have a high percentage of students who receive free or reduced meals. Each Title I school must develop methods to serve the academic needs of all students in the school. Schoolwide programs combine Title I funds with federal, state, and local funds to improve school programs. Title I schools that are new to Title I typically start as a Targeted Assistance program for the first two (2) years. In this type of program, Title I funds may only be used to provide services to children who are identified as having the greatest need for educational assistance. However, upon written request, the Maryland State Department of Education can give a new Title I school permission to implement a schoolwide program if the school system can effectively demonstrate that they will successfully meet Title I requirements.

Title I schools:

- Identify students most in need of educational help. (Students do not have to be from low income families to receive this help).
- Set goals for improvement.
- Measure student progress, using academic student achievement standards.
- Develop programs that add to regular classroom instruction.
- Involve parents in all aspects of the program.

Title I school programs generally offer:

- Smaller classes.
- Additional administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.
- Additional professional development for school staff.
- Extra time for instruction, before or after school.
- A variety of teaching methods and materials.
- Counseling and mentoring.

"Every Student Succeeds Act" Notification Requirements

Parents/legal guardians of a student in a Title I school have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teacher(s) who instructs their child. Federal law allows parents/legal guardians to ask for certain information about their child's classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s) and requires WCPS to provide this information in a timely manner, if it is requested.

Parents and families of students in Title I schools have the right to ask for the following information about each of their child's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals:

- Whether the MSDE has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the MSDE has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- Whether the student has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject or degrees.
- Whether any teachers' aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to the child, and if they do, their qualifications.

In addition, parents/legal guardians may request information on the level of achievement and academic growth, for the school, child, or school system, if applicable, on each of the State academic assessments.

Parents/legal guardians who would like to receive the above information are asked to make the request, in writing, to the school's principal. The principal will then provide the information to the parents/legal guardians within 30 business days.

Process To Be Followed With Respect To Complaints Concerning State And Federal Statutes Or Regulations Relating To Programs Supported By Federal Funds
(Administrative Regulation KAB-R)

A. Complaint to be Submitted to the Superintendent
Complaints alleging that Washington County Public Schools has violated a state or federal statute or regulation relating to programs supported by federal funds should be directed to the Superintendent or her/his designee.

B. Procedures

1. Definitions
   Complaint - A written statement alleging that Washington County Public Schools violated a state or federal statute or regulation that applies to programs supported by federal funds. A complaint includes a request for review of a decision of the school system, but does not include a request for a hearing.

   Resolution - The final decision as to whether or not the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred and any actions deemed necessary to remedy a violation will rest with Washington County Public Schools.

2. Filing a Complaint
   a. An organization or an individual may file a complaint with the Superintendent or his/her designee.

   b. The complaint shall be in writing, addressed to the Superintendent, signed by the individual complainant or by an official of the complaining organization, and delivered to the Superintendent and the Office of the Washington County Public Schools' Ombudsman.

   c. Each complaint shall contain:

      i. A statement that Washington County Public Schools has violated a requirement of a federal or state statute or regulation applicable to a program; and

      ii. The facts upon which the statement is based.

      iii. Complainants whose allegations fail to meet the requirements are to be notified that they must comply with the requirements in order for the complaint to receive full investigation.

3. Receipt of Complaint by Washington County Public Schools
   a. Complaints against Washington County Public Schools shall be filed with the Superintendent and the Washington County Public Schools' Ombudsman, who may assign the complaint to the supervisor of a department not named in the complaint for investigation.

   b. Initial processing by the investigating supervisor:

      i. All complaints shall be logged in writing with the Superintendent or his/her designee, with information:
         - Identifying the complaint;
         - Supplying the date upon which the complaint was filed; and

      ii. The complainant will be notified by the investigating supervisor or designee that the complaint is being investigated. Notification will include:
         - The date of receipt of the complaint;
         - The name of staff assigned to the complaint; and
         - Washington County Public Schools' intent to fully investigate the complaint, and to respond, if possible, within thirty (30) business days of receipt.

      iii. Each Washington County Public Schools' department named in a complaint shall receive a copy of this acknowledgement letter as well as a copy of the complaint.

4. Investigation of Complaint
   a. The investigating supervisor shall review and investigate the complaint, where necessary, an independent on-site investigation may be conducted.

   b. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigating supervisor shall report the findings, along with recommended resolutions (when necessary) to the Superintendent for final determination.

5. Resolution of Complaint
   a. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall inform the parties in writing, if possible, within thirty (30) business days of receiving the complaint of Washington County Public Schools' resolution of the complaint and include:

      i. Washington County Public Schools' final decision as to the action that will be taken, if any, in response to the complaint.

      ii. Notice of the right of either party to request that the Board review the final decision.

      iii. Procedures for filing an appeal of the decision to the appropriate officials at the Maryland State Department of Education and federal agency.

   b. After the resolution letter is sent, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall note on the complaint log the date of the letter and whether or not any further action is required.

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Gifted and Talented Education and Magnet Programs

WCPS provides students and families with a variety of educational options to address the diverse aptitudes, talents, and interests of gifted and talented students. The Annotated Code of Maryland (Section 8-201) defines a "gifted and talented student" as one who has outstanding talent and performs, or shows the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment. Accomplishment or potential may be demonstrated in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas. Advanced learners may also demonstrate unusual leadership capacity or excel in specific academic fields. All of WCPS' gifted and talented programs are aligned with COMAR Chapter 12A.04.07 Gifted and Talented Education.

Universal screening for Gifted and Talented Program (GATE) identification is completed for all students in grades 1 and 4 via the administration of the CogAT Online Full Battery as well as a review of available performance data.

All WCPS elementary schools offer Early Talent Development (ETD) Pre-K-2 as part of their regular education programs. ETD is a science-based thinking skills development curriculum, which consists of one or two units of instruction per year. ETD tasks are also a part of a student's screening for all elementary WCPS gifted education programs.

Currently, WCPS offers two options for advanced-level learners at the elementary level: Elementary School-Based Gifted and Talented Program (GATE) and WCPS Magnet Programs for Highly Gifted Students. Placement into either program involves a comprehensive review of multiple data sources through a screening process of all students, including Multilingual Learners (ML) and students who may be twice-exceptional. The WCPS Elementary GATE program extends and/or enriches county curricula in math, reading, science, and social studies through interdisciplinary instruction for identified gifted students in grades 1 through 5.

WCPS Elementary Magnet Programs for Highly Gifted Students, located at four elementary schools, offer highly challenging and fast-paced curricula on a full-time basis for advanced learners in Grades 2-5. Each magnet program features a specialized theme which offers opportunities for in-depth study, projects, and enriching activities that can benefit all students at the school. Magnet programs have been strategically located to serve families and children throughout Washington County. WCPS elementary schools that offer magnet classes include:

- Boonsboro Elementary Magnet School for Global Citizenship
- Emma K. Doub School for Integrated Arts and Technology
- Fountaindale School for the Arts and Academic Excellence
- Williamsport Elementary Magnet School for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

At the middle schools, advanced learners are challenged in merit classes for math, language arts, social studies, and/or science. Placement in these classes is based on a comprehensive review of multiple sources of information. The review process is also inclusive of Multilingual Learners (ML) and students who may be twice-exceptional. Students may also participate in co-curricular/extracurricular activities such as Destination Imagination, Math 24 Game, and Math Counts.

Five (5) WCPS Middle School Magnet Programs for Highly Gifted Students with specialized themes are also offered. Magnet students take up to two (2) magnet level classes in which the instruction is infused with the school's particular theme. A magnet student may also have other merits on his/her daily schedule. The middle school magnet programs are strategically positioned to serve sixth, seventh, and eighth graders from across the county and build on the highly successful elementary magnet themes. They include:

- Boonsboro Middle School Magnet Program for Global Citizenship
- E. Russell Hicks Middle School Magnet Program for the Humanities
- Northern Middle School International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
- Springfield Middle School Magnet Program for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)
- Western Heights Middle School Program for Supporting Creative Academic Performance and Excellence (Arts: SCAPE) Avenue A.

Additionally, Arts: SCAPE at Western Heights Middle School offers a second magnet program for creatively gifted students: Avenue B. Avenue B applicants complete either an audition or a portfolio, depending upon the program of concentration. Avenue B options include band, chorus, creative writing, dance, graphic design, orchestra, theater, and visual arts.

Since the elementary magnet program begins at grade two, and the middle school magnet program begins at grade six, all first and fifth-grade students in the regular education program are screened for their potential to apply to a magnet program. Eligible students are then invited to apply. Please visit our website, *https://www.wcpsmd.com/departments/advanced-programs* for more information regarding the magnet application process.

At the high school level, WCPS offers a variety of advanced, early college, magnet, specialized, and Career-technology education programs (CTE) to meet the needs of highly-able and identified gifted and talented students. See the WCPS High School Program of Studies to learn more.

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Title III-Multilingual Learners (ML)

The Law

Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) focuses on Multilingual Learner (ML) success. It requires programs to ensure all Multilingual Learners (ML), the new term for English Learners (ELs), including immigrants, achieve both English proficiency and academic success. This means MLs can meet the same challenging academic standards expected of all students. This emphasis on achievement aligns with the legal responsibility established in Lau v. Nichols and Castañeda v. Pickard, where courts ruled schools must provide meaningful support to ensure equal opportunities for ML students.

According to the ruling in *Plyler v. Doe*, undocumented students have the right to attend public schools and participate in all school activities. Moreover, school officials are not allowed to require students or their parents/legal guardians to prove that they are in this country legally, through evidence such as green cards, citizenship papers, or Social Security numbers.

Translation and Interpretation Language Resources

WCPS is committed to inclusivity and offers free resources to support and facilitate communication in multiple languages for families, legal guardians, and staff. These resources include telephonic interpretation services, prearranged on-site interpreters for meetings, and translation tools for online newsletters, texting, electronic communication, and apps. WCPS also provides translated versions of vital district-wide documents like health and enrollment forms, transportation and meal applications, permission slips, and more. This commitment ensures that all families, regardless of their language, feel valued and included in our school community. Interpretation and translation services can be requested through your child's school or by contacting the International Welcome Center at 301-766-8288. Please make requests in advance whenever possible to ensure interpreter availability.

International Welcome Center (IWC)

The WCPS International Welcome Center (IWC) provides support in multiple languages to guide families and legal guardians through enrollment, language assessments for ML eligibility, and developing

a learning plan for your student. Beyond enrollment, the IWC offers workshops and training sessions to empower you as a parent/legal guardian, helping you navigate the school system, understand the curriculum, and participate actively in your student's education.

The WCPS International Welcome Center (IWC) is located at Pangborn Elementary School at 195 Pangborn Blvd, Hagerstown, MD 21740. The phone number is 301-766-8288 and the email address is *iwc@wcps.k12.md.us*.

The WCPS IWC supports all languages. Families are encouraged to make appointments at the IWC and start the enrollment process for students who meet the above criteria or for families who need language assistance. Final enrollments will occur at the student's home school after the pre-enrollment process has been completed at the IWC.

During the pre-enrollment process, the IWC will administer an English language placement test to determine a student's level of English proficiency and eligibility for ML instruction and services.

When pre-enrolling a student, the WCPS IWC can help complete all paperwork needed at school for enrollment:

- Enrollment form
- Proof of Birth
- Proof of Residency
- Immunization Record
- Home Language Survey
- Permission for Placement
- School records, grade reports and transcript history translation
- All ML instruction, assessment, and records as listed below

Identification and Eligibility of Multilingual Learners (ML)
Students are identified as needing services based upon parent/guardian responses to Maryland's Home Language Survey and a test of English proficiency. If a language other than English is indicated on two or more of the three questions below, the student will be assessed for English language support services. Additional criteria for testing may be considered. Information collected will only be used for determining whether a student needs English language support services and will NOT be used for immigration matters or reported to immigration authorities.

- What language(s) did the student first learn to speak?
- What language does the student use most often to communicate?
- What language(s) are spoken in your home?

Parent Notification
A parent/legal guardian permission and notification letter must be sent to parents/legal guardians annually for new and continuing ML who participate in English language development programs, including ML for whom services have been refused. Parents/legal guardians of an ML identified for participation in the English language development program are informed:

- No later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year for students who enter at the start of the school year.
- Within the first two (2) weeks of a student being placed in the **ML program** if the student was not identified as an ML prior to the beginning of the school year.

Instructional Programs
The WCPS English language development program adjusts instruction to students' strengths and needs. Instructional strategies, practices, and methods to help each student learn English and meet age appropriate academic standards are based upon scientific research. The expectations for ML are to transition fully into mainstream classes, meet appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion, and graduate from high school at the same rate as all students. WCPS uses one or more of the instructional models:

- Middle School and High School ML Courses: These ML classes offer intensive English instruction in listening, reading, writing, and speaking.
- ML-specific English instruction, where English language skills and content are the focus of instruction in the ML only class.
- Mixed classes with English support, where English language skills and content are the focus of instruction in the MLs' and non-MLs' class.
- Pull-out support: A program outside of the regular classroom designed to teach ML academic English language skills, which may include listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural proficiency.
- Push-in support or collaborative co-teaching: The ML teacher accompanies and instructs ML in the general education classroom.
- Tutoring support before, during, or after the school day
- Summer school

Description of Program Placement Options and Goals
All programs include English language development and teaching strategies differentiated for each student's level of English language proficiency. These strategies help each student reach English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing to succeed academically in all subjects. The expectations for ML are that students fully transition into mainstream classes, meet appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion, and graduate from high school at the same rate as mainstream students.

Multilingual Learners With Special Needs
The English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program will support the instructional objectives of the individualized education plan (IEP).

Exit Criteria
MLs will no longer be eligible for ESOL services when they meet the state exit criteria on the annual English language proficiency assessment.

Parental/Legal Guardian Rights
Parents/legal guardians have the right to request placement in a different method of instruction if available. Parents/legal guardians have the right at any time to refuse ESOL services by contacting your child's ESOL teacher or school. Students will still take the annual English Language Proficiency Assessment. This process must be completed annually.

Reclassified Multilingual Learners (ML)
MLs who no longer require ML services or who are exited from ESOL services are monitored for two (2) years to ensure that these students continue to make progress in meeting challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards.

English Language Proficiency Assessment
All MLs, including those who refuse services, are required to take an annual English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) called ACCESS. ACCESS™ is administered to MLs in grades K through 12 upon their entry into the school system and annually during a testing window in the second semester. The assessment measures a stu-

dent's English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and literacy. ACCESS™ results are reported in six (6) proficiency levels: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching. ACCESS test results are typically available by late spring. Families will receive score reports along with an explanation of what the scores mean for your child's progress and placement. Please note: Even if parents refuse ESOL services, students **are still required** by law to participate in the annual English Language Proficiency Assessment (ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS), as this determines continued eligibility and language development.

The Alternate ACCESS™ is designed for MLs with significant cognitive disabilities. In order to receive the most descriptive information from the test, it is very important that only students who meet all three criteria below and who cannot participate in the ACCESS™—even with the provision of accommodations—shall be considered for the Alternate ACCESS™.

Alternate ACCESS™ participation criteria include:

1. The student has been classified as an ML.
2. The student has a significant cognitive disability and is eligible for special education services under IDEA.
3. The student is in an alternate curriculum aligned with his or her state's academic standards, and is participating in the state's alternate accountability assessment.

The Alternate ACCESS™ is available for the 1–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12 grade clusters.

English Language Development Standards
Maryland is a member of the WIDA Consortium and has adopted WIDA's English Language Development (ELD) Standards. As a multi-state coalition of state departments of education, WIDA acts in collaboration to advance academic language development and academic achievement for ML through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators. WIDA's grade-level ELD Standards directly correspond to grade-level Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and utilize proficiency levels to measure the progression of a student's English language development.

Exemption of Recently Arrived Multilingual Learners (ML)
Maryland exempts "recently-arrived" MLs from one administration of its reading assessment during the first year of enrollment in U.S. schools, per federal law.

Accommodations for Multilingual Learners (ML)
Both federal and state laws require the inclusion of all students, including MLs, in large scale assessments and equal access to grade-level content standards. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level content standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. Providing accommodations during instruction and assessments may also promote equal access to grade-level content.

Parent and Community Outreach Services
WCPS provides community participation programs, family literacy services, parent outreach and training activities to ML students and their families. The WCPS ML department also provides interpretation and translation services upon request. Information/Información For more information on the ML program, please refer to the ML Handbook of Guidelines and Procedures or call 301-766-8288. Esta información es importante. Si no puede leerla, pídale a alguien que se la explique en un idioma que pueda comprender, o llame al 301-766-8288.

Contact Information for School-Based ESOL/ML Points of Contact
Each school has an assigned ML teacher or case manager. Families may contact the school office or the WCPS International Welcome Center to be connected with their school's ML point of contact.

Admission for Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade
Children are eligible for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade based on their birth dates and ages:

- Children must be four years old on or before September 1, for pre-kindergarten.
- Children must be five years old on or before September 1, for kindergarten.
- Children must be six years old on or before September 1, for first grade.

Based on research that focuses on school readiness and best practices, the Maryland State Board of Education aligned Maryland's entry guidelines with other states to ensure that children enter school ready to learn.

Pre-kindergarten Eligibility Guidelines
WCPS pre-kindergarten program is a State and Federally funded program for four-year-old children who demonstrate school readiness needs. The primary focus of pre-kindergarten is designed to provide high-quality learning experiences, which establish a routine of lifelong learning, so that the students may be fully ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. These learning opportunities focus on the seven domains of early learning. Throughout the day, integrated instruction will include social foundational skills, language and literacy, scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, social studies, fine arts, and physical development and well-being. Students will engage in literacy instruction, developmentally appropriate mathematics instruction, and purposeful play opportunities in an effort to fully prepare them for kindergarten readiness.

To be eligible for Washington County's public pre-kindergarten, a child must be four years of age on, or before, September 1 of the current school year. Families must live in Washington County and provide proof of income for state monitoring purposes. We offer universal pre-kindergarten and all incomes are accepted with a priority given to Tier 1 and Tier 2 families. Tier 3 families will be notified of a later placement. Public pre-kindergarten may not be used as an alternative to kindergarten.

Early Admission Process for Kindergarten
To be eligible for consideration for early admission to kindergarten, the child must be five years of age by October 15. To begin the early admission assessment process, parents/guardians must complete the application. The application must be returned to the Office of Early Learning by June 15. Early admission assessments will be scheduled with parents/guardians and will be completed during the spring/summer.

Pre-Kindergarten Regional Sites
All K-5 elementary schools offer opportunities for Pre-K participation. In addition, pre-kindergarten programs can also be found at North High and Boyd J. Michael, III Technical High School. These pre-kindergartens are a collaboration with the Teacher Academy of Maryland programs.

To access a curriculum overview by elementary, middle, and high school levels, visit wcpsmd.com/curriculum.

ENGLISH:
You may request language assistance services about your child's education or Washington County Public Schools by contacting your child's school or the WCPS International Welcome Center at 301-766-8288 or iwc@wcps.k12.md.us Education-related language support services are available free of charge.

SPANISH:
Puede solicitar servicios de asistencia con el idioma respecto a la educación de su hijo/a o las Escuelas Públicas del Condado de Washington al comunicarse con la escuela de su hijo/a o con el Centro de Bienvenida Internacional de las WCPS al 301-766-8288 o iwc@wcps.k12.md.us. Los servicios de asistencia con el idioma relacionados a la educación están disponibles de manera gratuita.

ARABIC:
يمكنك طلب خدمات المساعدة اللغوية بخصوص تعليم طفلك أو المدارس العامة بمقاطعة واشنطن من خلال التواصل مع مدرسة طفلك أو مركز الترحيب الدولي التابع للمدارس العامة بمقاطعة واشنطن على الرقم 301-766-8288 أو البريد
الإلكتروني iwc@wcps.k12.md.us، علماً بأن خدمات الدعم اللغوي المتعلقة بالتعليم تتوفر مجانا.

FARSI: EL تگ
شما میتوانید از طریق شماره *301-766-8288* با مرکز بین المللی خوش آمدید *WCPS* به تماس شده و در مورد آموزش طفل تان یا در مورد مکاتب عامه ایالت واشنگتن درخواست کمک خدمات زبان نمایید و یا به iwc@wcps.k12.md.us خدمات حمایوی زبان مربوط به آموزش مراجعه نمایید که بطور رایگان قابل دسترس میباشند.

FRENCH:
Vous pouvez demander des services d'assistance linguistique concernant l'éducation de votre enfant ou les Écoles Publiques du Comté de Washington en contactant l'école de votre enfant ou le WCPS Centre d'Accueil International (International Welcome Center) au 301-766-8288 ou iwc@wcps.k12.md.us Des services d'assistance linguistique liés à l'éducation sont disponibles gratuitement.

HAITIAN CREOLE:
Ou ka mande sèvis asistans lang konsènan edikasyon pitit ou a oswa Lekòl Leta Washington County lè w kontakte lekòl pitit ou a oswa Sant Akèy Entènasyonal WCPS nan 301-766-8288 oswa iwc@wcps.k12.md.us Sèvis sipò lang ki gen rapò ak edikasyon yo disponib gratis.

PORTUGUESE:
Você pode solicitar serviços de assistência linguística sobre a educação de seu filho(a) ou sobre as Escolas Públicas do Condado de Washington entrando em contato com a escola ou com o Centro Internacional de Boas-vindas WCPS no telefone 301-766-8288 ou iwc@wcps.k12.md.us Os serviços de apoio linguístico relacionados à educação estão disponíveis gratuitamente.

RUSSIAN:
Вы можете обратиться за услугами языковой поддержки по вопросам образования вашего ребёнка, а также по вопросам, касающимся государственных школ округа Вашингтон, обратившись в школу вашего ребёнка или в Международный центр гостеприимства WCPS по телефону 301-766-8288 или по электронной почте iwc@wcps.k12.md.us Услуги языковой поддержки по вопросам образования предоставляются бесплатно.

TURKISH:
Çocuğunuzun eğitimine ya da Washington County Devlet Okulları'na (WCPS) ilişkin dil yardım hizmetini, çocuğunuzun okuluna ya da WCPS Uluslararası Karşılama Merkezi'ne 301-766-8288 numaralı telefondan ya da iwc@wcps.k12.md.us adresinden ulaşarak talep edebilirsiniz. Eğitim ile ilgili dil destek hizmetleri ücrete tabi değildir.

VIETNAMESE:
Bạn có thể yêu cầu các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ cho việc học của con bạn hoặc các Trường Công lập Quận Washington bằng cách liên hệ với trường học của con bạn hoặc Trung tâm Chào mừng Quốc tế WCPS theo số 301-766-8288 hoặc iwc@wcps.k12.md.us Các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ liên quan đến giáo dục có sẵn miễn phí.

CHINESE:
您可以致电301-766-8288或发送电子邮件至 iwc@wcps.k12.md.us，联系您孩子的学校或WCPS国际欢迎中心，请求获得语言支持服务，以了解关于您孩子的教育或华盛顿县公立学校的相关资讯。

WCPS

Washington County
Public Schools

10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740
301-766-2800 • 301-766-2857 (fax) • wcpsmd.com

Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline • 800-422-0009

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