

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-27

Houston County School District

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome back to a new school year! On behalf of our entire district, I am excited to welcome our students, parents and staff as we begin another year of learning and opportunity.

The start of a new school year is always filled with excitement and anticipation. It is time for new beginnings, new goals, and new opportunities to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. We are committed to providing every student with a safe and supportive learning environment where they can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

As we begin this school year, let us support one another, celebrate achievements, and focus on helping every student achieve their fullest potential.

Wishing you a successful and rewarding 26-27 school year.

Sincerely,

Scott Moore
Director of Schools

Houston County School District

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Houston County School District

INTRODUCTION

DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN AND GOALS

Mission Statement
Our school system will provide a quality, progressive education in a positive learning environment.

Vision Statement
Our school system envisions a learning community that inspires and supports all students to:

- Excel, discover and create
- Contribute responsibly to a civil society
- Enjoy learning throughout their lives

Goals
Accountability Houston County School District will demonstrate accountability by using all available information to improve student learning.

Facilities Houston County School District will provide facilities which are well-maintained, structurally sound and fully operational.

Funding Houston County School District will acquire and maximize all available resources.

Health and Safety Houston County School District will provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and employees.

Instruction Houston County School District will provide academic and support programs to meet the needs of all students.

Staff Development Houston County School District will maintain a staff development program which will focus on instruction and school leadership through continuous education.

Technology Houston County School District will maximize the use of technology to support student learning.

FUTURE CHANGES

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a regular basis, the Houston County School District reserves the right to change this handbook and any content within, without notice, except as may be required by state and federal law. As a result, **the online version of the handbook shall be the official version**. A digital copy of the handbook and all board policies may be found on the district website at houston.k12.tn.us.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Each student has the right to:

1. Have the opportunity for a free education in the most appropriate learning environment;
2. Be secure in his/her person, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizure;
3. Be educated in a safe and secure environment;
4. Have appropriate resources and opportunities for learning;

5. Not be discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or disabilities; and
6. Be fully informed of school rules and regulations.

Each student has the responsibility to:

1. Know and adhere to reasonable rules and regulations established by the Board and school officials;
2. Respect the human dignity and worth of every other individual;
3. Refrain from libel, slanderous remarks, and obscenity in verbal and written expression;
4. Study and maintain the best possible level of academic achievement;
5. Be punctual and present in the regular school program;
6. Dress and groom in a manner that meets reasonable standards of health, cleanliness, modesty, and safety;
7. Maintain and/or improve the school environment, preserve school and private property, and exercise care while using school facilities;
8. Refrain from behavior which would lead to physical or emotional harm or disrupts the educational process;
9. Respect the authority of school administrators, teachers, and other authorized personnel in maintaining discipline in the school and at school-sponsored activities;
10. Obey the law and school rules as to the possession or the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and other unauthorized substances or materials; and
11. Possess on school grounds only those materials which are acceptable under the law and accept the consequences for articles stored in one's locker.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/guardians have the right to:

1. Be actively involved in their student's education;
2. Be treated courteously, fairly, and respectfully by school staff; and
3. Receive all relevant information and communication related to their student's education.

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to:

1. Make sure their student attends school regularly and on time, and when a student is absent, send in written excuse notes;
2. Support the District by being a role model for their student, talking with their student about school and expected behavior, and communicating the value of education through words and action;
3. Be respectful and courteous to staff, other parents/guardians, and students while on school premises and during school activities;
4. Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities that promote social and emotional growth in the areas of creative arts, music, and athletics; and
5. Work with principals and school staff to address any academic or behavioral concerns or complaints students may experience.

ANNUAL NOTICES

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLANS

Prior to July 1989, the Houston County Board of Education submitted a Management Plan to the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration. The Management Plan details all areas where asbestos containing materials are present in Houston County School District and the manner in which the materials will be handled.

The Management Plan will be available for public review at Houston County Board of Education. Viewing time will be from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. (Local time) Monday through Friday. The Plan will be updated every six months beginning July 1, 1989 with progress reports updated annually.

Houston County School District

CARDIAC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (CERP)

Houston County School District provides a minimum of at least one Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in each of our schools to provide additional safeguards against loss of life from sudden cardiac incidents. The location of the AED(s) in each building is in an area that is clearly marked, unlocked, and accessible during times that students, parents, or school employees are present at school or school events. All staff members are notified of the location of the AED and shown how to access the equipment in an emergency. AED locations in the buildings are communicated to local Emergency Medical Services. The district's Board approved Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) is accessible on the district website; school-specific plans are also posted in each building. Each school also maintains a Cardiac Emergency Response Team (CERT) that is trained and conducts annual drills.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

General
Breakfast and lunch are available **FREE** for all students for the 2026-27school year.

Modified Meals
The School Nutrition Program shall make reasonable modifications to accommodate children with special needs. These modifications will be made on a case-by-case basis and ***must*** be supported by a written statement from a licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write prescriptions under state law.

Houston County Child Nutrition Meal Charge Administrative Procedures
Charge limits: The amount of charges allowed for students and staff is $25. Once the student or staff member reaches the $25 limit, the school principal, or their designee, must give written permission to allow the student or staff member to be able to continue to charge meals.

Alternate meals: Houston County School District does not offer alternate meals to students and staff who have exceeded the charge limit.

Household Notification
Low balance notification: Payer Balance Notices will be sent via email on a weekly basis for students and staff whose account balance is less than $5.

Negative balance notification: The SFA will notify households weekly of **negative** balances by sending printed notifications home with the students and/or email notifications. Payments are expected within a week of notice. If there is no payment or response, cafeteria staff will follow up with a notification mailed to the home address or will contact the parent/guardian by phone.

Delinquent Debt
Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, with efforts being made to collect them. The debt may remain on the accounting documents until it is either collected or determined to be uncollectible.

The household's debt will be delinquent until the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from Houston County School District. The cafeteria staff will continue to attempt to collect a debt throughout the school year. If debt is not paid within 30 days of initial notification, school administration will be notified and they will attempt to collect the debt owed. If payment is not received by the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school, Houston County School District reserves the right to hold records and report cards until that debt is paid in full.

Bad Debt
Bad debt is determined to be uncollectible, with further collection efforts for delinquent debt deemed useless or too costly. Bad debts arising from uncollectible accounts and other claims are unallowable. Related collection costs and legal costs arising from such debts after they have been determined to be uncollectible are also unallowable (section 200.426 of subpart E).

Bad debt must be written off as operating losses; the nonprofit school food service account resources may not be used to cover the costs related to the bad debt (such as legal and collection costs). These funds may come from the school district's general fund, school or community organizations, or any other non-federal source. Once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges must be maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

Repayment plans
Each household may request a repayment plan that will include payment levels and due dates appropriate to a household's particular circumstances. Please contact the Child Nutrition Program Supervisor at (931) 289-4148 for establishing a repayment plan.

Child Nutrition Program Non-Discrimination
In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

For more information, contact:
Rachel Shelton
Child Nutrition Director
rshelton@houstonk12tn.net
931-289-4148

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the District may disclose appropriately designated directory information without written consent, unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student (a student who is 18 years or older) has opted out of the disclosure of directory information.

In addition, federal law requires the District to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of students unless parents/guardians have opted out in writing.

The District has designated the following information as directory information:

"Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

Student directory information for 11th and 12th graders shall be made available upon request to persons or groups which make students aware of occupational and educational options; including official recruiting representatives of the military forces of the State and the United States.

If the parent/guardian wishes to opt-out of the above, he/she shall indicate his/her preference on the "Opt-Out Notifications" form on the last page of the *Student Handbook*.

EDUCATION RECORDS

Education records of students in public education shall be treated as confidential. Information in such records relating to academic performance and attendance shall not be made available to unauthorized personnel without written consent of the parent/guardian of a minor student (TCA 10-7-504). For detailed information about student education records, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policies 6.600, 6.601***, and ***6.602***.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parent(s)/guardian(s) and eligible students certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within forty-five (45) days after the day the District receives a request for access.

    a. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible students who wish to inspect education records shall submit to the principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect.

    b. Arrangements for access will be made, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student will be notified of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

    a. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible students who wish to amend a record they believe is inaccurate shall submit to the principal a written request that clearly identifies the part of the record they wish to change and specify why they believe it is inaccurate or misleading.

    b. If the District does not agree to amend the record as requested, the District will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided when notified of the denial.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

    a. Education records may be disclosed without prior written consent if a school official has a legitimate educational interest.

    b. A school official is a person employed by the District as: an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks.

    c. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

   Family Policy Compliance Office
   U.S. Department of Education
   400 Maryland Avenue, SW
   Washington, DC 20202

JUVENILE OFFENDER ACT

Pursuant to TCA 55-10-701, the juvenile court judge may issue an order of denial of driving privileges for any offense or prohibited conduct described in TCA 55-10-801(a). This section applies to any criminal offense, status offense, violation, infraction or other prohibited conduct involving the possession, use, sale or consumption of any alcoholic beverage or any controlled substance, as defined in TCA 39-17-4, or involving the possession or carrying of a weapon on school property, as defined in TCA 38-17-1309(b) or (c).

On first offenses, the judge may exercise discretion and sign a withdrawal to reinstate driving privileges after three months. Beyond this limited circumstance, the denial or suspension of driving privileges are outlined in TCA 55-10-702.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Houston County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Further, is also policy of the Houston County School District not to discriminate on the basis of creed, religion, or marital status in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies.

The District utilizes curriculum materials that reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, and disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a pluralistic society.
The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination and harassment policies:

Name: Kelly Brown
Address: 6420 Highway 13 PO Box 209, Erin TN 37061
Telephone No. (931) 289-4148
Email: civilrightscomplaints@houstonk12tn.net

Name: Josh Rutherford
Address: 6420 Highway 13 PO Box 209, Erin TN 37061
Telephone No. (931) 289-4148
Email: civilrightscomplaints@houstonk12tn.net

STUDENT DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT/BULLYING/INTIMIDATION

In order to maintain a safe, civil, and supportive environment in school for students to learn and achieve high academic standards, acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, hazing, or any other victimization of students, based on any actual or perceived traits or characteristics, are prohibited.[1]

Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.304 addresses employees, employees' behaviors, students, and students' behaviors while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop. If the act takes place off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, this policy is in effect if the conduct is directed specifically at a student and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

The principal/designee is responsible for educating and training respective staff and students as to the definition and recognition of discrimination/harassment.

The Director of Schools shall develop forms and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this policy and state law.

DEFINITIONS

"Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment" is an act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and the act has the effect of:

1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
2. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
3. Causing emotional distress to a student; or
4. Creating a hostile educational environment.

Bullying, intimidation, or harassment may also be unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, nationality, origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment.

"Cyber-bullying" is a form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, text messaging, emails, social networking sites, instant messaging, videos, web sites, or fake profiles.

"Hazing" is an intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health or safety. In accordance with ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.301,*** coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate hazing activities.

Hazing does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Any individual who has knowledge of behaviors that may constitute a violation of this policy shall promptly report such information to the principal/designee.

While reports may be made anonymously, an individual's need for confidentiality shall be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary actions to resolve a complaint. The identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

The principal/designee at each school shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints. Once a report is received, the principal/designee shall initiate an investigation within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the report. If an investigation is not initiated within forty-eight (48) hours, the principal/designee shall provide the Director of Schools with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframe. The principal/designee shall immediately notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) when a student is involved in an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. The principal/designee shall provide information on district counseling and support services. Students involved in an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying shall be referred to the appropriate school counselor by the principal/designee when deemed necessary.

The principal/designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy, and such act shall be held to violate this policy when it meets one of the following conditions:

1. It places the student in reasonable fear or harm for the student's person or property;
2. It has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;

3. It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
4. It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Upon the determination of a violation, the principal/designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. All investigations shall be completed and appropriate intervention taken within twenty (20) calendar days from the receipt of the initial report.[7] If the investigation is not complete or intervention has not taken place within twenty (20) calendar days, the principal/designee shall provide the Director of Schools with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation has not been completed or the appropriate intervention has not taken place. Within the parameters of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a written report on the investigation will be delivered to all involved parties and the Director of Schools.

RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

The principal/designee shall consider the nature and circumstances of the incident, the age of the individual, the degree of harm, previous incidences or patterns of behavior, or any other factors, as appropriate, to properly respond to each situation.

A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The employee may appeal this decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator.

A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including suspension. The student may appeal this decision in accordance with disciplinary policies and procedures.

REPORTS

When a complaint is filed alleging a violation of this policy where there is physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a student or a student's property, the principal/designee of each middle school, junior high school, or high school shall report the findings and any disciplinary actions taken to the Director of Schools and the Chair of the Board.

Each year, the Director of Schools/Designee shall prepare a report of all of the bullying cases brought to the attention of school officials during the prior academic year. The report shall also indicate how the cases were resolved and/or the reasons they are still pending. This report shall be submitted to the state department of education by August 1st and information therein shared with the Board.

RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Retaliation against any person who reports or assists in any investigation of an act alleged in this policy is prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in retaliation shall be determined by the principal/designee after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

False accusations accusing another person of having committed an act prohibited under this policy are prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including expulsion.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND AWARENESS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

- stopbullying.gov
- violencepreventionworks.org
- pacerkidsagainstbullying.org
- operationrespect.org

SURVEYS, ANALYSES, AND EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS

Surveys, analyses, and evaluations for research purposes shall be allowed by the Board when the project is viewed as contributory to a greater understanding of the teaching-learning process, the project does not violate the goals of the Board, and the disruption of the regular school program is minimal. The Director of Schools shall develop administrative procedures

for approving requests for conducting surveys, analyses, or evaluations by agencies, organizations, or individuals. The requests shall outline what is to be done, who is to be involved, and how the results will be used and distributed.

Prior to the dissemination of a survey, analysis, or evaluation to students, parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the opportunity to review the materials. Such notification shall include information indicating the purpose of the survey, analysis, or evaluation as well as who will have access to the results. The survey, analysis, or evaluation shall only be administered to students under the age of eighteen (18) whose parent(s)/guardian(s) provide written, informed, and voluntarily signed consent. A student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older may participate after he/she provides written, informed, and voluntarily signed consent. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures for granting such parental requests.

Consent must be obtained prior to any student, as part of any program, submitting to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility;

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.4001*** or the USDOE Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) at studentprivacy.ed.gov**.**

TITLE IX AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In order to maintain a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment, all forms of sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex are prohibited. Complaints regarding sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex may be reported to: Kelly Brown or Josh Rutherford at the Board of Education Office, 6420 Highway 13, PO Box 209, Erin, TN 37061, 931-289-4148 or via email at civilrightscomplaints@houstonk12tn.net. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.3041.***

UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE

Students who attend an elementary school within the District identified by the State of Tennessee as persistently dangerous or students who are victims of a violent crime while in or on school grounds shall be given the opportunity to attend a safe school within the District.

VACCINATIONS

Per state law, the District is required to provide information to parent(s)/guardian(s) as to the following diseases.

Meningococcal meningitis is inflammation of the tissues and fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by bacteria or viruses. Symptoms can include fever, sudden severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, and vomiting.

The bacteria that causes meningococcal meningitis is very common. Most people will carry these bacteria in the back of their nose and throat at some point in their lives without ever getting sick. In a few people, the bacteria overcome the body's immune system and passes through the lining of the nose and throat into the bloodstream where it can cause meningitis.

Meningitis is spread through exchange of respiratory droplets or saliva with an infected person. Only a small percentage of people who are exposed to the bacteria will develop meningitis. The bacteria that causes meningitis is not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been.

There is a vaccine that will decrease the risk of some types of meningococcal meningitis, but it does not totally eliminate risk of the disease.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

Flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets made when someone with the flu coughs, sneezes, or talks. A person can also get the flu by touching something that has the flu virus on it and then touching his/her mouth, eyes, or nose.

There is a vaccine that can be received in the form of a flu shot or by nasal spray that can protect against the flu.

As always, speak with your child's health care provider about recommendations for all childhood immunizations. To receive additional information regarding these diseases, including locations to receive the vaccinations, you may contact your child's school nurse, the local Health Department (931-289-3463), or the State Department of Health in Nashville, Tennessee (**https://www.tn.gov/health/health-contact-information.html**).

ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

In accordance with ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.307***, students shall not consume, possess, use, sell, distribute, or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages in school buildings, on school grounds, in school vehicles or buses, or at any school-sponsored activity, function, or event, whether on or off school grounds.

Disciplinary sanctions shall be imposed on students who violate this standard of conduct. Such sanctions shall be consistent with local, state, and federal laws up to and including suspension/expulsion as well as referral for prosecution. Completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program may also be recommended.

A student may be subject to testing for the presence of drugs in the student's body in accordance with TCA 49-6-4313 and the policy of the Houston County School District if there are reasonable indications to the principal that such student may have used or be under the influence of drugs. For detailed information on drug testing, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.3071***. Students will be given an opportunity to decline the test; however, if the test is not taken, the disciplinary action taken shall be consistent with the same procedures/consequences as those for a positive drug test.

Information about drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation programs shall be made available through the school office.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the Director of Schools will notify the public media and request that an announcement be made.

If school is not in session or is dismissed early due to snow or inclement weather, the Director of Schools in consultation with the principal(s) of the impacted school(s) shall determine if all scheduled activities in which students are involved shall be postponed or cancelled. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.8011***.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

School-sponsored student organizations are an extension of the academic curriculum and are intended to complement the basic instructional program. Extracurricular activities must be initially approved by the Board and must adhere to set guidelines. For more information on student clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.300.***

Student-initiated, student-led clubs or groups may be permitted in accordance with Houston County Board Policy 4.802 although no student may be required to attend or participate in such a group. If an event is authorized at which a student is to speak, a limited public forum shall be established as referenced in Houston County Board Policy 4.802.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families and community members shall be engaged in the education of students based on the following standards:

- Families are welcomed into the school community;
- 2. Families and school staff should engage in regular and meaningful communication about student learning;
- Families and school staff should work together to support student learning and development;
- Families are informed and encouraged to be advocates for students;
- Families are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families; and
- Community, civic, and business resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

For more information, refer to *Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.502.*

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

Mission Statement - The goal of the Houston County School Child Nutrition Department is to provide students nutritious and satisfying meals. Our kind and caring staff hopes to brighten our students' day while serving them with a smile.

Welcome to Houston County School Cafeterias

- ❀ We encourage your children to eat at school by offering a variety of choices daily.
- ❀ Menus are available on the school website, http://www.houston.k12.tn.us, to allow you to assist your child in making healthy choices.
- ❀ Look for updates and menu changes on the Facebook Page – Houston County School Food Services.
- ❀ Feel free to contact your school's cafeteria manager with any questions regarding the child nutrition program.

Meal Pricing for students- Houston County School District will participate in the Community Eligibility Provision; there is no charge for student meals for the 26/27 school year.

- Breakfast FREE FOR ALL STUDENTS AT ALL SCHOOLS
- Lunch (PK-12) FREE FOR ALL STUDENTS AT ALL SCHOOLS

*Extras including a la carte items and second lunch will be available for purchase.

Student Monies

- Please send cash or check in an envelope with your child's name.
- Please write separate checks for lunch payments.
- Please do not include book money or field trip money, etc. with lunch money.
- Please keep informed regarding your child's account balance.

Cafeteria Phone Numbers & Account Balances

- You may view student purchases, payments, and up-to-date balance on Skyward.
- If you are unable to check Skyward, please contact your child's principal for log-in information.
- We encourage you to call to check your student account balances.

EES (931) 289-3348 HCHS (931) 289-4449 TRES (931) 721-3751 HCMS (931) 289-3271

Meal Pattern: Offer Vs. Serve

- **Breakfast:** Milk
  Fruit and/or fruit juice
  1 Grain & 1 Meat OR 2 Grains OR 2 Meats

  Offer Vs. Serve – all 4 items are offered; students can elect to choose 3 or more items, but must choose a fruit. Less than 3 items will result in a la carte pricing.

- **Lunch:** Meat/Meat Alternative
  Vegetable
  Fruit
  Grain/Grain Alternative
  Milk

  Offer Vs. Serve – all 5 items are offered; students can elect to choose 3,4 or 5 items but must choose a fruit or vegetable. Less than 3 items will result in a la carte pricing.

Meal Modifications

Houston County School District must make meal modifications, including substitutions in breakfast and lunches, for children whose disability restricts their diet. The modification requested must be related to the disability or limitations caused by the disability and must be offered at no additional cost to the child or household. "*Requests for Modifications*" forms and additional information is available at each school cafeteria and at Houston County Central Office.

STUDENT OPEN ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFERS

Each year, the Director of Schools/Designee shall review the number of spaces available in each elementary school by grade, class, and program levels. This information shall be posted on the district's website along with the dates of the district's open enrollment period. The open enrollment period shall last for thirty (30) days and information about the number of seats available shall be posted for at least fourteen (14) days prior. The Director of Schools/Designee shall reserve a reasonable number of enrollment spaces at each school to account for the enrollment of zoned students, siblings of students, and students who have a parent/guardian employed at the school.

During the district's open enrollment period each year, a parent/guardian may request that his/her child attend an elementary school within the district other than the one to which the child is zoned. The Director of Schools/Designee shall review such requests, and if adequate space is available, grant such transfers. If the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces, the Director of Schools/Designee shall implement a lottery to fill the available spaces.

A parent/guardian of a student who is registering for kindergarten may submit a request to attend a school within the district other than the one to which the child is zoned only *after* registration in the school of zone is completed. The deadline for submitting kindergarten requests will be the date designated for new student registration each year.

The open enrollment process shall be completed before other nonresident transfers are approved.

STUDENT FEES AND FINES

Each principal shall be responsible for providing to all students and their parents or guardians written notice of the required student fees and the process for fee waiver for students who receive free or reduced-price lunches. The parent or guardian of an eligible student must sign the appropriate application for free or reduced-price lunches and the waiver of school fees, but may pay for all or a portion of the school fees.

Students who destroy, damage, or lose school property, including but not limited to buildings, school buses, books, equipment, and records, will be responsible for the actual cost of replacing or repairing such materials or equipment. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.709***.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

Parents/guardians shall provide written notice by completing a *Student Withdrawal Form* and submitting to the school principal/office staff when it is known that their child will be withdrawing from school. Included in this notice is the reason for withdrawal and the name and address of the subsequent school. Parents/guardians are responsible for any outstanding debt at the time of the withdrawal. All debts must be cleared before academic transcripts will be released to the enrolling school.

A student is not officially withdrawn until a request for educational records is received from the enrolling school.

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS

All uses of tobacco, tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco), electronic/battery operated devices, vapor products, and all other associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the District's buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased, or operated by the District.

Smoking and vaping shall be prohibited in any public seating areas including, but not limited to, bleachers used for sporting events or public restrooms. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.803***.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The Houston County School District is committed to providing safe and efficient transportation for our students. We value information regarding any situation you feel poses a safety risk to our students or others. If you observe a safety hazard with our school buses or driver(s), you may contact Transportation Director Rick Chadwick at 931-289-4293 or you may submit a complaint form (available on the district's website at https://www.houston.k12.tn.us/departments/transportation) in writing to the following address or fax number:

Houston County School District
Transportation Department
6460 Highway 13
PO Box 209
Erin, TN 37061
Fax: 931-289-4843

VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

Except on occasions such as school programs, athletic events, open house, and similar public events, *all* visitors will report to the school office when entering the school and will sign-in. Authorization to visit elsewhere in the building or on the school campus will be determined by the principal/designee. Guest passes shall be issued for all persons other than students and employees of the school.

Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.501 establishes the following Visitor Code of Conduct:

Persons who come onto school property shall be under the jurisdiction of the site administrator/designee.
Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school or district business are expected to behave accordingly. Specifically, actions that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:

1. Cursing and use of obscenities;
2. Disrupting or threatening to disrupt school or office operations;
3. Acting in an unsafe manner that could threaten the health or safety of others;
4. Verbal or written statements or gestures indicating intent to harm an individual or property; and
5. Physical attacks intended to harm an individual or substantially damage property.

The principal or his/her designee has the authority to exclude from the school premises any persons disrupting the educational programs in the classroom or in the school, disturbing the teachers or students on the premises, or on the premises for the purpose of committing an illegal act.

The principal shall engage law enforcement officials when he/she believes the situation warrants such measures.

Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.501 also establishes the following procedures for parentally-requested outside service providers, defined as non-school employed therapists or practitioners, to observe and/or provide services to students:

1. A signed agency agreement, along with verification of the required background check(s), must be on file with the Board of Education.
2. Written parental and service provider requests, liability statements, and confidentiality statements must be on file in the school prior to the provider accessing the school building.
3. The observations/services must be educationally based or medically necessary and cannot result in a disruption to the educational process.
4. Any provider requesting access to a building/student must make the request at least five (5) days prior to the planned observation and follow the above requirements.

Each principal is responsible for setting guidelines for building access, check-in procedures, and school rules for outside service providers. A service provider may be denied access to a school at any time at principal discretion if any rules or procedures are not followed.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

ATTENDANCE

Recognizing that absenteeism hinders the efficient education of students and that punctuality and regular attendance affect the progress of a student at school, the Houston County Board of Education has adopted the following attendance policy. The legal parent/guardian or other person having charge and control of a child is held responsible for the child's regular school attendance. Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing school for any reason (excused, suspended/expelled) for ≥10% of the school year or eighteen (18) days. This is different than unexcused or truant absences, which may result in legal intervention.

TENNESSEE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW

Every parent, guardian, or legal custodian residing within the state of Tennessee having control or charge of any child or children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17), both inclusive, shall cause such child or children to attend public or non-public school and in event of failure to do so, shall be subject to the penalties hereinafter provided.

The meaning of the word "inclusive" is that the child must attend school from seven (7) until eighteen (18) years old.

ATTENDANCE REPORTS REQUIRED BY LAW

It shall be the duty of the principal or teacher of every public and non-public school to report promptly to the Director of Schools, or his/her designated representative, the names of all children who have withdrawn from school, or who have been absent five (5) days (*this means a total of five (5) days during the school year and not necessarily five (5) consecutive days*) without adequate excuse. Each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences by a student shall also be reported.

Such Director shall thereupon serve, or cause to be served, upon the parent, guardian, or other person in Tennessee in parental relation to such children unlawfully absent from school, written notice that attendance of such children at school is required. A new notice shall be sent after each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences.

If it appears that within three (3) days after receipt of the notice, any child, parent, guardian, or other person in parental relation has failed to comply with the provisions of this part, the Director of Schools, in the name of the local school system, shall report the facts of such unlawful attendance to the sheriff, constable, city policeman, district attorney general, or the foreman of the grand jury, who shall proceed against the parent, guardian, or other person in parental relation in accordance with the provisions of this part, unless the parent, guardian, or person having charge and control of the child shall at once place the child in some day school as aforementioned.

The Director of any local school system, after written notice to the parent/guardian of a child, shall report any child who habitually and unlawfully absents himself/herself from school to the appropriate judge having juvenile jurisdiction in that county, the child to be dealt with in such manner as the judge may determine to be for the best interest of the child.

PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS

The judge may assess a fine of up to fifty dollars ($50.00) or five (5) hours of community service, at the discretion of the judge, against the parents or legal guardians of K-6 children if the child is absent more than five (5) days during any school year guardians present adequate excuse. **TCA 49-6-3007**

Any parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control of any child who shall violate the provisions of this part, **TCA 49-6-3009**, shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

Each day's unlawful absence shall constitute a separate offense.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement; therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The Director of Schools/Designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program, which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school-age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for a new or reinstatement of a driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent(s)/guardian(s).

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee. Principals may accept three (3) parent notes per semester for the purpose of excusing an absence. Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness/injury;
2. Illness of an immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances;
6. College visits;
7. Pregnancy;
8. School-sponsored or school-endorsed activities;
9. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
10. Circumstances which, in the judgment of the principal, create emergencies over which the student has no control.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign-in/sign-out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness; and
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

TRUANCY

Progressive Truancy Plan

Tier I

Tier I of the progressive truancy intervention plan shall apply to all students within the district and include schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to, all students and parents receiving information regarding truancy prevention. This information will be provided through the district website, social media, automated calls/texts/emails, the Student Handbook, and enrollment packets

Tier II

Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences, but before referral to juvenile court, and includes the following:

1. Mailed letter to parent/guardian
2. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
3. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Attendance Supervisor/Designee. The contract shall include:
    a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
    b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
    c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court.
4. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress; and
5. An individualized assessment conducted by a school employee, detailing the reasons a student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

Tier III

Tier III shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful, as is evidenced by the student accumulating ten (10) unexcused absences. Tier III may consist of the following interventions:

1. Mailed letter to parent/guardian
2. Required attendance meeting with district truancy supervisor and family
3. Review/revision of attendance contract
4. Referral for appropriate supports (i.e. Truancy Intervention Class, Parenting Strategies Class, individual school program, etc.) The interventions shall address students' needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/Designee.
5. Non-compliance truancy petition with the juvenile court

NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY

A principal/designee may excuse a student to participate in non-school-sponsored extracurricular activities. The principal shall document the approval in writing and shall excuse no more than ten (10) absences each school year. No later than seven (7) business days before the student's absence, the student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation, along with a written request for the excused absence from the student's parent/guardian. The request shall include the following:

1. Student's name and personal identification number;
2. Student's grade;
3. The dates of the student's absence;

4. The reason for the student's absence; and
5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.

RELEASED TIME COURSE
A principal/designee may excuse a student to attend a course in religious moral instruction for up to one (1) class period per school day. Students shall not be excused during any class that requires an examination for state or federal accountability purposes.

The student shall submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian prior to participation in the released time course. The principal/designee shall document the approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal/designee as proof of the student's participation in the released time course.

The district shall not be responsible for transporting students to and from the place of instruction.

Upon submission of the student's transcript from the entity that provided the released time course, the student may be awarded one (1) unit of elective credit. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures with secular criteria for determining whether credit shall be awarded.

MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN
School principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence before the deployment of and a one-day excused absence upon the return of a parent or guardian serving active military service. Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during these absences.

MAKE-UP WORK
Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during the excused absences. However, the student is excused for the day or days of absences, not the material covered in his/her classes. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility, not the teacher's, to confirm assignments in all subject matter covered during his/her absence. The time limit for make-up work is at the discretion of the teacher. The student shall arrange for make-up work within three (3) working days, provided teachers are available.

STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT
Students who are absent the day of the scheduled EOC exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students will be allowed to take a make-up exam during the testing window.

CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL
Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion. If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be advised if the student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.
2. Procedures in due process will be made available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION
More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license or to obtain such if of age.

ATTENDANCE HEARING
Students with excessive (more than five [5]) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist to excuse an absence(s) or to determine if the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send

written notification to the Director of Schools/Designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of Schools/Designee.

The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.

Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/Designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/Designee. The action of the Board shall be final.

GRADING SYSTEM

Houston County School District uses the uniform grading system established by the State Board of Education. Using the uniform grading system, students' grades shall be reported for the purposes of application for post-secondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation.

Subject-area grades shall be expressed by the following letters with their corresponding percentage range:

- A (90-100)
- B (80-89)
- C (70-79)
- D (60-69)
- F (0-59)

Grading floors with a minimum above zero are not permitted. This grading system shall be uniform throughout the school district for each grade.

Advanced coursework grades shall be weighted with additional percentage points to calculate the semester average. Depending on the course taken, the following percentage points shall be assigned:

- Honors Courses – three (3) percentage points;
- Local and Statewide Dual Credit, Capstone Industry Certification Aligned– four (4) percentage points; and
- Advanced Placement, Cambridge International, College Level Exam Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate Courses, and Dual Enrollment Courses – five (5) percentage points.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Before high school graduation, every student shall:

1. Achieve the state specified twenty-two (22) units of credit;
2. Take the required end-of-course exams;
3. Have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct;
4. Take the ACT or SAT prior to graduation;
5. Pass a United States civics test; and
6. In addition to the state-mandated units of credit, students attending Houston County High School must complete at least six (6) additional electives (for a total of 28 credits) to meet local graduation requirements.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Special education students who earn the prescribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum may be awarded a regular high school diploma. Special education students who have received a Special Education, Occupational, or Alternate Academic diploma may continue to make progress towards a regular high school diploma until the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old.

For more information about graduation requirements and diploma types, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.605.***

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

The Director of Schools/Designee shall promote students to the next grade level based on the successful completion of required academic work or demonstration of satisfactory progress in each of the relevant academic areas. Students who have difficulty in achieving the requirements for promotion may be considered for retention. Factors used to identify students for retention shall include:

1. Ability to perform at the current grade level;
2. Results of local assessments, screening, or monitoring tools;
3. State assessments, as applicable;
4. Overall academic achievement of the student;
5. Likelihood of success with more difficult material if promoted to the next grade;
6. Attendance record; and
7. Social and emotional maturity.

A student may be retained when such retention is in the best interest of the student. However, a student shall not be retained more than once in any grade. Retention decisions affecting a student receiving special education services shall be made in consultation with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team and in accordance with the provisions of the IEP. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.603***.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Student report cards shall be provided every nine (9) weeks during the school year. The reporting procedure shall be in writing and shall be uniform for all reporting periods during each school year. Each report shall be signed by the parents and returned promptly to the school. Student report cards shall indicate the students' attendance, academic progress and other information necessary to communicate effectively with the parents.

At least two (2) times during the school year, conferences shall be scheduled in which parents and teachers may discuss any pertinent problems or other matters of concern regarding the development and education of each student. Conferences shall be physically accessible to all students, parents and/or guardians.

STUDENT WELFARE

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In accordance with ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.403***, no student shall be denied an education solely because of a communicable disease, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the disease.

Parents or guardians of infected students shall inform appropriate school officials of the infection so that proper precautions for the protection of other students, employees, and the infected student shall be taken.

No student with a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals shall enter or remain in the regular school setting. If a school principal has reason to believe a student has a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals in the regular school setting, the principal shall:

1. Assign the student to a setting which will protect other students, employees and the student; or
2. Exclude the student from school until written certification is obtained from a physician or the County Health Department by either the parent or principal stating that the disease is no longer communicable.

If the principal has reason to believe that the student has a long-term communicable disease, the principal must require written confirmation from a physician or the county Health Department as to the student's condition. If the student is confirmed to have a long-term communicable disease the principal shall refer the student for special education services.

The principal may request that further examinations be conducted by a physician or county Health Department and may request periodic re-examinations after the student has been readmitted to the school. Expenses incurred from examinations required by school officials shall be paid by the Board.

The names of all students excluded from school under this policy shall be forwarded to the office of the Director of Schools.

DIABETES

Type 1 Diabetes
An autoimmune disease in which the body stops making insulin or makes very little insulin. Type 1 diabetes can't be prevented and must be treated with insulin every day. Family history is an important risk factor.

Stages of Type 1 Diabetes
Type 1 diabetes develops in three stages:

- Stage 1: No symptoms are present, blood sugar is normal
- Stage 2: No symptoms are present, blood sugar is changing, and is difficult to regulate
- Stage 3: Symptoms appear, blood sugar is high, insulin dependence begins

Warning Signs of Type 1 Diabetes
Frequent urination, increased thirst and dry mouth, increased appetite (feeling very hungry), sudden vision changes, drowsiness/tiredness, fruity odor on breath, unexplained weight loss can all be warning signs of type 1 diabetes. The onset of symptoms can be sudden, especially in young children.

Screening for Type 1 Diabetes
Screening for type 1 diabetes means getting tested before symptoms are present and might include a blood test that checks for markers called autoantibodies or a blood test that measures the level of sugar in the blood. Screening for autoantibodies can identify type 1 diabetes early (before insulin is required), and may be able to delay the onset of symptoms by starting care sooner.

Type 2 Diabetes
Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which the body produces insulin, but either doesn't produce enough or can't use it effectively. This type is more common in adults, but more children and teens are developing diabetes than in the past. It's often linked to risk factors like being an unhealthy weight or being inactive, but certain ethnic backgrounds and family history may also increase risk.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes
What can you do to help prevent type 2 diabetes? Eat healthy, be active, and control your weight.

What is Prediabetes?
Before people develop Type 2 diabetes, they almost always have prediabetes, where their blood glucose is higher than normal but not as high as if they had diabetes. Prediabetes can lead t type 2 diabetes. Your primary care provider can recommend steps that can often stop of slow down the progression of prediabetes.
Darkened skin patches (acanthosis nigricans) can be an early visible sign of prediabetes or type 2 diabetes, and recognizing it early could help delay r prevent progression of the disease.

Warning Signs of Type Diabetes
Frequent urination, increased thirst, increased appetite (feeling very hungry), exhaustion (very tired), blurry vision, cuts/bruises that are slow to heal, tingling/pain/numbness in the hands/feet are all possible warning signs of type 2 diabetes.

Screening for Type 2 Diabetes
Type 2 diabetes screening often includes a blood test that measures the level of sugar in the blood. The same test can be sued to check for prediabetes. Screening can detect prediabetes or diabetes earlier, before warning signs develop, and may reduce the risk of life-threatening complications and hospitalization.

What if my Child shows warning signs or test positive?
Visit your child's primary care provider right away if your child displays warning signs. Ask if additional tests or screenings are appropriate based on warning signs or risk factors. If your child is diagnosed with diabetes, work with your child's primary care provider to develop a treatment plan. Early care can help prevent serious illness. Share this care plan with your child's school nurse. For more information check out diabetes.org or breakthought1d.org. This information was provided by the Tennessee Department of Health and the Tennessee Department of Education.

IMMUNIZATIONS

No students entering school, including those entering kindergarten or first grade, those from out-of-state, and those from nonpublic schools, will be permitted to enroll without proof of immunization. The following immunizations are required:

Children enrolling in Pre-K:
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV)
- Hemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) - age younger than 5 years only
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) - age younger than 5 years only
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - 1 dose of each, normally given together as MMR
- Varicella - 1 dose or credible history of disease
- Hepatitis A - 1 dose, required by 18 months of age or older

Children enrolling in Kindergarten:
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV) - final dose on or after the 4th birthday
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - 2 doses of each, usually given together as MMR
- Varicella - 2 doses or credible history of disease
- Hepatitis A - total of 2 doses, spaced at least 6 - 18 months apart

All children entering 7th grade (including currently enrolled students):
- Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis booster (Tdap) - evidence of one Tdap dose given any time before 7th grade entry is required regardless of Td history
- Varicella - 2 doses *or* credible history of disease

Children who are *new* enrollees in a TN school in grades *other* than Kindergarten
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV - final dose on or after the 4th birthday
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - 2 doses of each, normally given together as MMR
- Varicella - 2 doses or credible history of disease
- New students entering grades other than 7th grade are not required to have Tdap

Exceptions, in the absence of an epidemic or immediate threat thereof, will be granted to any child whose parent or guardian shall file with school authorities a signed, written statement that such measures conflict with his/her religious tenets and practices; or due to medical reasons if such child has a written statement from his/her doctor excusing him from such immunization.

MEDICINES

No school official or teacher will routinely dispense medication to students except in unique situations in which a child's health is dependent upon medical aid. If under exceptional circumstances a child is required to take non-prescription or prescription medication during school hours and the parent/guardian cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal/designee will assist in self-administration of the medication if the student is competent to self-administer medicine with assistance in compliance with the following regulations.[1]

Written instructions ***signed by the parent/guardian*** will be required and will include:

1. Child's name;
2. Name of medication;
3. Name of physician;
4. Time to be self-administered;
5. Dosage and directions for self-administration (non-prescription medicines must have label direction);
6. Possible side effects, if known; and
7. Termination date for self-administration of the medication.

The medication must be delivered to the principal's office in person by the parent/guardian of the student unless the medication must be retained by the student for immediate self-administration (i.e. students with asthma). **Discipline consequences may result for students transporting medication without prior authorization.**

For additional information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.405***.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS/HEALTH SCREENINGS

The principal shall ensure that there is a complete physical examination of each student prior to:

1. Entering school for the first time. This applies to PreK, kindergarten, first grade and other students for whom there is no health record; [1] and
2. Participation as a member of any athletic team or in any other strenuous physical activity program.

Cost of the examination shall be borne by the parent or guardian of the student. These records shall be on file in the principal's office.

Health screening tests will be conducted annually for specific grade levels and may address areas such as vision, hearing, dental needs, mental health needs, BMI, blood pressure, scoliosis etc. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to "opt out" of any grade level health screenings they do not want their students to participate in. Parents/guardians will receive written notice of any screening result that indicates a condition that might interfere with their student's educational progress as well as recommendations for follow-up.

School Nurses and other trained staff may render appropriate, non-emergency first aid to sick or injured students. Such non-emergency first aid could include, but is not limited to, dressing minor wounds, applying topical agents, providing fluids or ice, and performing checks to identify minor illnesses.

In general, the school district will not conduct physical examinations of a student without parental consent to do so or by court order, unless the health or safety of the student or others is in question.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The board is committed to protecting the health and well-being of all students and understands that physical, behavioral, and emotional health are integral components of student achievement. Students are strongly encouraged to report to a trusted adult if they or a friend are feeling suicidal or in need of help. Students will also be provided information regarding the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) and/or 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. For additional information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education 6.415.***

STUDENT DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR

The Houston County Board of Education believes that every individual should be accepted into the educational program. The goal of the Houston County School District stresses the development of students to become self-directed and self-disciplined citizens of the school and community. It is the responsibility of the school system, student body, and the community to provide for a safe environment conducive to learning, to protect the right of the student to learn, and to protect the right of the teacher to teach.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate clearly to all concerned the rules of conduct and behavior for the students enrolled in the Houston County School District and to stipulate due process procedures that may be used by students and/or parent or guardian to appeal administrative decisions or express grievances. These rules apply to any Houston County student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or place (i.e. off-campus, social media, etc.) has a direct and immediate effect on the learning environment or maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

The staff is authorized to take reasonable measures to establish appropriate school behavior. Any professional employee shall have the authority to control any student's conduct while under the supervision of the school district. This authority to control student conduct shall extend to all activities of the school, including games and public performances of athletic teams and other school groups, trips, excursions, and all other activities under school sponsorship and direction. Such measures may include the use of reasonable force to restrain or correct students and maintain order.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS

Alternative School is defined as a short-term intervention program designed to develop academic and behavioral skills for students who have been suspended or expelled from the regular school program. Placement of a student results in termination of all school privileges, including attending or participating in school-sponsored events and extracurricular activities. During the alternative school term, students are not allowed to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities at any of the four schools in the Houston County School District. This also applies to any out-of-county school-sponsored activities. Houston County Alternative School operates on the same calendar and schedule as all other schools in the district.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT ~~TEAM~~

Each school will utilize a team-based approach to collaborate and recommend evidence-based interventions that support students' behavioral and social-emotional needs in an effort to reduce the need for more restrictive punitive placements. These teams may be involved in the development of behavior plans, the assigning of appropriate discipline, and/or the referral of the student for additional supports and services as warranted.

BUS CONDUCT

The school bus is an extension of school activity; therefore, students shall conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for safety and classroom behavior. Families will be provided a copy of *Houston County School Bus Rules and Regulations*, outlining district expectations for riding school buses and potential consequences for infractions. Students in violation of bus conduct rules shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with established board policy governing student conduct and discipline. In most instances of ***minor*** infractions, the following will occur:

Warnings:
Verbal - Driver will warn a student of misconduct and give the student an opportunity to correct the behavior.

Written - Driver will issue a written warning on misconduct. Copies of warning will be given to parent/guardian, student's principal, and a copy retained by driver.

After a bus driver has issued both a verbal and written ***warning*** to a student for behavior infractions, the bus driver shall report any subsequent offenses, in writing, to the principal. The student guilty of said misconduct will be called in to the office and such disciplinary action as deemed necessary shall be taken, and future acceptable conduct required. A report to the student's parent/ guardian or a conference with parent/guardian is the recommended procedure in all cases.

NOTE: Profanity, smoking/vaping, fighting, sexual misconduct, threatening driver or fellow students, alcohol, controlled substance, damaging property, or other major infractions will be reported to the student's principal without any prior warning from the driver.

1st Offense: A 1st Offense will warrant one (1) to three (3) days suspension of bus privileges or ISS, depending upon the seriousness of the offense.

2nd Offense: A 2nd Offense will warrant a three (3) to ten (10) day suspension of bus privileges, depending upon the seriousness of the offense.

3rd Offense: A 3rd Offense will warrant a long-term suspension from bus privileges. (*Long-term shall be defined as 15 days up to a semester*.) A parent conference is urged, if at all possible.

4th Offense: A 4th Offense will warrant suspension from bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. A parent conference is urged, if at all possible.

Students shall become ineligible for transportation when their behavior is such as to cause dissension on a school bus or when they disobey state or local rules and regulations pertaining to pupil transportation.

NOTE: Offenses may warrant more than one disciplinary action. The Special Education Supervisor will be notified when transportation privileges are suspended for special education students. The building administrator and the Director of Transportation may assign alternative consequences when necessary and appropriate.

VANDALISM OF SCHOOL BUSES/VEHICLES

Care of a school bus/vehicle and prevention of needless abuse shall be the responsibility of the driver. Unnecessary and wanton abuse of a school bus/vehicle by a student shall result in that student being made ineligible for transportation in addition to any other disciplinary measures. Said student shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damage and assurance given that the abuse will not reoccur.

The following procedures shall be followed when damage is done to a bus by a student:

1st Offense: Any student caught damaging a school bus/vehicle in any manner will be suspended from riding any bus in the Houston County School System until restitution is made, either by the student or parent/guardian.

2nd Offense: Any student caught damaging a school bus/vehicle the 2nd time must make restitution and will be suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year. If the offense occurs during the second semester of the school year, the student shall also be suspended for the 1st semester of the following year.

3rd Offense: Any student caught damaging a school bus/vehicle the 3rd time must make restitution and will be suspended from riding a school bus for the remainder of his/her school career.

Cameras or video cameras are used to monitor student behavior on school buses transporting students to and from school or extracurricular activities. Photographs and video footage shall be used only to promote the order, safety, and security of students, staff, and property.

These materials shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) days. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may submit requests to view photographs and video footage to the Director of School/designee, and a time shall be arranged for viewing. The Director of Schools/Designee shall be present when parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided the opportunity to review photographs and video footage.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.308***.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students shall help maintain the school environment, preserve school property, and exercise care while using school facilities. The principal/designee shall make a full and complete investigation of any instance of damage or loss of school property. The investigation shall be carried out in cooperation with law enforcement officials when appropriate. When the person causing damage or loss has been identified and the costs of repair or replacement have been determined, the Director

of Schools/Designee shall take steps to recover these costs. This may include recommending the filing of a civil complaint in court to recover damages. If the responsible person is a minor, recovery will be sought from the minor's parent/guardian.

CONTRABAND

It is a violation of school policy to possess a weapon on any school property or during any school-sponsored events.

In addition, school officials who find any other contraband materials upon the school premises will immediately report it to appropriate law enforcement authorities. Persons who bring such material upon school premises, whether students or not, will be prosecuted in accordance with State Law.

As used herein, "contraband" is all substances or materials the presence of which is prohibited by school policy or State Law including, but not limited to, controlled substances, drugs, alcohol or alcoholic beverages, abusable glue or aerosol paint, guns, knives, weapons, incendiary devices, and stolen property.

The school system retains authority to conduct routine patrols of parking lots and inspection of interiors of automobiles on school property. Searches of such automobiles may be conducted in accordance with State Law as long as there is probable cause. Dogs, metal detectors, and/or other devices may be used in conducting such searches.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure in any Houston County public school.

DETENTION

A student may be detained before or after school for disciplinary reasons provided the parent/guardian of such students has been given advance notice. Parent/guardian shall be responsible for arranging the student's transportation to comply with the detention schedule.

While in detention, the student will be required to engage in some constructive activity related to the school. Such activity shall comply with school and state rules and regulations relative to the student's safety and welfare. Supervised study of class assignments or additional assignments for discipline may be used. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.315.***

DRESS CODE

The Board of Education believes that proper etiquette, social customs, and good grooming are part of the educational process. While parents should exercise the primary authority in determining what appropriate dress is and grooming for their children in accordance with their age and grade, it is the responsibility of the school system to work with parents in encouraging students to assume this responsibility and to execute it sensibly as they mature.

The Dress Code is designed to ensure the health and safety of students and to avoid distractions to the educational process, while preserving the basic rights of individuals. Each school will establish written guidelines to be followed.

Additionally, existing laws and/or school regulations require the wearing of protective clothing, eye shields, or other dress for the health and safety of students participating in certain activities. Each school will notify students of these rules. Individual schools will assume responsibility for determining compliance with the dress code and for ruling on specific terms of clothing and general appearance for safety and health, or for the order, well-being, and general appearance of students. Students failing to comply with the Dress Code shall be required to make immediate arrangements for appropriate clothing. Refusal to make such arrangements shall result in disciplinary action. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.310*** or school-specific guidelines.

DISCIPLINARY HEARING AUTHORITY

A Disciplinary Hearing Authority (DHA) shall conduct appeals for students who have been suspended for more than ten (10) school days. Such appeals shall be made in writing to the Director of Schools within five (5) days from the date the alternative placement, suspension, or expulsion began. Upon receiving notification of the request to appeal the suspension decision, the DHA shall provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student, the student, and any other appropriate person of the time, place, and date of the hearing. The hearing must be held no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the suspension. Within five (5) days of the DHA rendering a decision, the student, principal, principal-teacher, or assistant principal may request a review by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.317***.

INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES

A. INTERROGATIONS

1. Questioning by School Personnel:
Students may be questioned by teachers or school administrators/designees about any matter pertaining to the operation of a school and/or the enforcement of its rules. Any student answering falsely, evasively, or refusing to answer questions, may be subject to disciplinary action.

If a student is suspected or accused of misconduct or infraction of the student code of conduct, a school administrator/designee may question the student, without the presence of parent(s)/guardian(s).

2. Interrogations by Police: *(at administrator's request)*
If the principal has requested assistance by law enforcement to investigate a crime involving his/her school, the police may interrogate a student suspect in school during school hours. The principal shall first attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student unless circumstances require otherwise. However, the interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s), but the principal/designee shall be present during the interrogation.

3. Police-Initiated Interrogations:
If the police deem circumstances of sufficient urgency to interrogate students at school for unrelated crimes committed outside of school hours, the police department should first contact the principal regarding the planned interrogation and inform him/her of the probable cause to investigate. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the interrogation unless circumstances require otherwise. The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s), but the principal/designee shall be present during the interrogation.

B. SEARCHES

Searches by School Personnel:
An appropriately trained school principal or his/her designee, having reasonable suspicion, may search any student, place or thing (including cell phones/communication devices) on school property or in the actual or constructive possession of any student during any organized school activity off campus, including buses, vehicles of students or visitors, and containers or packages in accordance with state law. The following conditions shall apply to principal initiated searches:

a. A particular student has violated school policy;
b. The search will yield evidence of the violation of school policy or will lead to finding dangerous weapons, drugs, or drug paraphernalia; The search is in pursuit of legitimate interests of the school in maintaining order, discipline, safety, supervision, and education;
c. The search is not conducted for the sole purpose of discovering evidence to be used in criminal prosecution; and
d. The search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive considering the age and sex of the student as well as the nature of the alleged infraction;[4]

At the discretion of the principal, any items seized may be returned to the parent/guardian of the student or if it has no significant value, the item may be destroyed, but only with the expressed written permission of the Director of Schools. If a search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition. Any dangerous weapon or drug as defined in TCA 49-6-4202 shall be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement official after completion of an administrative proceeding at which its presence is reasonably required.

Searches by Police:
If public health or safety is involved, upon request of the principal who shall be present, police officers may make a general search of students' lockers and desks, or students' or nonstudents' automobiles for drugs, weapons or items of an illegal or prohibited nature. The involvement of law enforcement officials is encouraged when there is reasonable cause to suspect that criminal evidence is about to be uncovered.

If the principal has received reliable information which he/she believes to be true that evidence of a crime or of stolen goods, not involving school property of members of the school staff or student body is located on school property and that any search for such evidence or goods would be unrelated to school discipline or to the health and safety of the student body, he/she shall request police assistance and procedures to obtain and execute a search warrant shall thereafter be followed.

Automobile Searches:
Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege not of right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspection of the exteriors of students' automobiles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal, unauthorized or contraband without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The school system retains authority to conduct routine patrols of parking lots and inspection of interiors of automobiles on school property. Searches of such automobiles may be conducted in accordance with State Law. Dogs, metal detectors, and/or other devices may be used in conducting such searches.

Use of Dogs, Metal Detectors, or Other Devices:
Dogs, metal detectors, or other devices may be used in conducting searches. Dogs shall not be used to search students unless school officials have established *independently* that there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a particular student possesses illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials on his/her person. In such cases, every precaution shall be taken to ensure the safety of students and school personnel when such searches are being conducted. An indication by the dog, metal detector, or other device that illegal, unauthorized, or contraband material is present shall be reasonable cause for a further search by school officials.

Video Surveillance:
Houston County Schools currently utilizes video surveillance (i.e. security cameras) in their school buildings and on school transportation, maintaining compliance with Fourth Amendment privacy expectations.

Arrest:
Custody and/or arrest may be affected by a police officer after her/she has shown proper identification and credentials.

C. Alcohol and Drug Testing:
Students shall be subject to testing for alcohol and/or drugs during the school year when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student has violated policy, a search has produced evidence of the presence of alcohol/drugs, or observation/reliable information indicate that the student is under the influence of alcohol/drugs on school property or school-sanctioned events. The Board shall pay costs of any testing required pursuant to this policy. Students will be given an opportunity to decline the test; however, if the test is not taken, the disciplinary action taken shall be consistent with the same procedures/consequences as those for a positive drug test. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.3071***.

OFFENSES AND DISCIPLINE

In grades pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) through 2nd, all disciplinary action for offenses is at the discretion of the school principal. Code of conduct for students in Pre-K and kindergarten shall utilize alternative discipline practices such as

modeling, redirection, positive behavioral supports, individual behavior plans, and/or time-out. In these grades, exclusionary discipline (suspension and expulsion) shall only be used as a measure of last resort. For Level IV offenses, the principal has disciplinary discretion for students in grades 3-5.

All reference to days suspended shall mean "school days" rather than "calendar days". Suspension may be in- or out-of-school.

Staff members shall ensure that disciplinary measures are implemented in a manner that:

1. Balances accountability with an understanding of traumatic behavior;
2. Teaches school and classroom rules while reinforcing that violent or abusive behavior is not allowed at school;
3. Minimizes disruptions to education with an emphasis on positive behavioral supports and behavioral intervention plans;
4. Creates consistent rules and consequences; and
5. Models respectful, non-violent relationships.

The principal/designee shall consider the nature and circumstances of the incident, the age of the individual, the degree of harm, previous incidences or patterns of behavior, or any other factors, as appropriate, to properly respond to each situation.

In order to ensure that these goals are accomplished, the school district shall utilize the following trauma-informed discipline practices: school-wide positive behavior supports, "Access for All", preventative strategies for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), individual behavior plans, and/or school Behavioral Support Teams.

Per state statute, a teacher, principal, school employee, or school bus driver, in exercising the person's lawful authority, may use reasonable force when necessary under the circumstances to correct or restrain a student to prevent bodily harm or death to another person.

Principals have discretion to refer any offense to the school Behavioral Support Team.

Students assigned to In-School Suspension, Suspension, or Alternative School are ***not*** permitted to participate in or attend any school-sponsored activities both during and after school. For more information on suspensions, refer to ***Houston County School Board Policy 6.316***.

MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL I

This level includes minor misbehavior on the part of the student which *impedes orderly classroom guidelines or interferes with the orderly operation of the school but which can usually be handled by an individual staff member.*

Examples

- Classroom disturbances
- Classroom tardiness
- Cheating and lying
- Abusive/inappropriate language
- Failure to do assignments or carry out directions
- Wearing, while on the grounds of a public school during the regular school day, clothing that exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent manner that disrupts the learning environment[6]

Disciplinary Procedures

- The staff member intervenes immediately.
- The staff member determines what offense was committed and its severity.
- The staff member determines who committed the offense and if the student understands the nature of the offense.
- The staff member employs appropriate disciplinary options.
- The record of the offense and disciplinary action shall be maintained by the staff member.

Disciplinary Options

- Verbal reprimand

- Special assignment
- Restricting activities
- Counseling
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Behavior plan
- Office referral

MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL II

This level includes misbehavior whose frequency or seriousness tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school. These misbehaviors *do not represent a direct threat to the health and safety of others but have educational consequences serious enough to require corrective action on the part of administrative personnel.*

Examples

- Continuation of unmodified Level I misbehaviors
- Using forged notes or excuses
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Victimization of any student (harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious), bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing)

Disciplinary Procedures

- The student is referred to the principal for appropriate disciplinary action.
- The principal meets with the student and the staff member.
- The principal hears the accusation made by the staff member and allows the student the opportunity to explain his/her conduct.
- The principal takes appropriate disciplinary action and notifies the staff member of the action.
- The record of offense and disciplinary action shall be maintained by the principal.

Disciplinary Options

- Teacher/schedule change
- Peer counseling
- Referral to outside agency
- In-school suspension
- Detention
- Suspension from school-sponsored activities or from riding school bus
- Out-of-school suspension
- Individual behavior plan

MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL III

This level includes acts *directly against persons or property but whose consequences do not seriously endanger the health or safety of others in the school*.

Examples

- Continuation of unmodified Level I and II misbehaviors
- Fighting
- Vandalism (minor)
- Use, possession, sale, distribution, and/or being under the influence of tobacco or alcohol
- Use, possession, sale, or distribution of drug paraphernalia
- Use, sale, distribution, and/or being under the influence of drugs
- Stealing
- Threats to others
- Victimization of any student (harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious), bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing)

Disciplinary Procedures

- The student is referred to the principal for appropriate disciplinary action.
- The principal meets with the student and the staff member.
- The principal hears the accusation and allows the student the opportunity to explain his/her conduct.

- The principal takes appropriate disciplinary action and notifies the staff member of the action.
- The principal may refer the incident to the Director of Schools and make recommendations for consequences.
- The record of offense and disciplinary action shall be maintained by the principal.

Disciplinary Options

- In-school suspension
- Detention
- Restitution from loss, damage, or stolen property
- Out-of-school suspension
- Social adjustment classes
- Behavior assessment
- Behavior intervention plan
- Remandment to Alternative School

MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL IV

This level of misbehavior includes acts which *result in violence to another's person or property or which pose a threat to the safety of others in the school*. These acts are so serious that they usually require administrative actions which result in the immediate removal of the student from the school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities, and/or action by the Board.

If a student's action poses a threat to the safety of others in the school, a teacher, principal, school employee, or school bus driver may use reasonable force when necessary to prevent bodily harm or death to another person.[7]

Examples[8]

- Continuation of unmodified Level I, II, and III misbehaviors
- Death threat
- Valid threats of mass violence on school property or at a school-related activity as determined by a threat assessment team*
- Extortion
- Possession, use, and/or transfer of dangerous weapons
- Bringing to school or being in unauthorized possession of a firearm on school property*
- Assault
- Assault that results in bodily injury upon any teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of the school, or a school resource officer*
- Aggravated assault*
- Vandalism
- Theft, possession, and/or sale of stolen property
- Arson
- Unlawful possession of any drug, including any controlled substance, controlled substance analogue, or legend drug) on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event*
- Use or transfer of unauthorized substances
- Victimization of any student (harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious), bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing)
- Electronic threat to cause bodily injury or death to another student or school employee

Disciplinary Procedures

- Law enforcement officials and the Director of Schools are immediately contacted, if applicable.[9]
- The principal confers with appropriate staff members and with the student.
- The principal hears the accusations and allows the student the opportunity to explain his/her conduct.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified.
- Recommendations are made to the Director of Schools.
- The principal notifies the staff members of the resolution.
- If the student's placement is to be changed, adequate notice of the charges shall be given to the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) and his/her right to appear at a hearing.

Disciplinary Options

- Referral to behavioral support team

- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Remandment to Alternative School
- Other hearing authority or Board action which results in appropriate placement

* Designates zero tolerance offense.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Houston County Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment that encourages the academic, emotional, and social development of all students. The Board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property (including school vehicles) and at school-sanctioned events.

All students, when on school property (including school buses/vehicles) or attending school functions, will

- follow all school rules.
- respect fellow students and all school personnel.
- exhibit academic integrity.
- use appropriate language, avoiding profanity, racial and ethnic slurs, or any other denigration of others in communications.
- assist to eliminate the ~~use of violence, bullying, and intimidation of others.~~
- demonstrate respect for school campuses and property.
- support their school's activities and organizations.
- display good sportsmanship and school spirit.
- work to improve their school.

The principal of each school shall be responsible for implementation and administration in his/her school and shall apply the Code uniformly and fairly to each student at the school without partiality and discrimination. During an investigation, an infraction witnessed by, or statement of, a staff member may be considered proof barring compelling evidence to the contrary.

If a student who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) violates school rules or district policies outlined in this handbook, he or she will be disciplined in accordance with district policy and state and federal laws that govern Special Education, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If a student is suspended for an accumulated 10 days, the student's Individualized Educational Program team (IEP-team) will convene to determine if the behavior displayed is a manifestation of the student's disability. For more information contact your student's casemanager at their attending school or the Director of Special Programs at 931-289-4148.

SUSPENSIONS

A principal may suspend a student from attendance in a specific class or school related activity without suspending the student from attendance at school. Based on the severity of the offense, a principal may also suspend a student from attendance at school and all school activities. Except in an emergency, a principal shall not suspend any student until that student has been advised of the nature of his/her misconduct, questioned about it, and allowed to give an explanation.

If, as a result of an investigation, a principal/designee finds that a student acted in self-defense under a reasonable belief that the student, or another to whom the student was coming to the defense of, may have been facing the threat of imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury, then the student may not face any disciplinary action.

When a student is suspended, the principal shall notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Director of Schools/designee of the following:

1. Student's suspension;
2. Cause for the suspension; and
3. Any conditions for readmission which may include a meeting of the parent(s)/guardian(s), student, and the principal.

If a student is suspended during the last ten (10) days of any term or semester, he/she shall be permitted to take such final examinations or submit such required work as necessary to complete the course of instruction for that semester, subject to conditions prescribed by the principal.

If a student assaults an employee, he/she shall be suspended from school-sponsored events for one (1) calendar year unless modified by the Director of Schools. A school-sponsored event is an activity that is not directly related to a student's grade in a course of instruction. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.316.***

ZERO TOLERANCE

In order to ensure a safe and secure learning environment, the following offenses shall be a violation of ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.309*** and shall not be tolerated:

1. Bringing to school or being in unauthorized possession of a firearm on school property;

2. Unlawful possession of any drug, including any controlled substance, controlled substance analogue, or legend drug on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event;

3. Aggravated assault;

4. Assault (physical aggression toward another that is one sided) that results in bodily injury upon any student, teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of the school, or school resource officer; or

5. Valid threats of mass violence on school property or at a school-related activity as determined by a Threat Assessment Team.

When it is determined that a student has violated this policy, the principal shall notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system as required by law. Committing any of these offenses shall result in a student being expelled from the regular school program for at least one (1) calendar year unless modified by the Director of Schools. Modification of the length of time shall be granted on a case-by-case basis. Students who commit Zero Tolerance offenses may be assigned to an alternative school or program at the discretion of the Director of Schools.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

ENGLISH LEARNERS

If the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes a student from effective participation in the educational programs offered by the District, the District shall take reasonable actions to provide the student equal access to its programs. Students who are English learners (EL) shall be identified, assessed, and provided appropriate

services. No student shall be admitted to or excluded from any program or extracurricular activity based on the student's surname or EL status.

The Director of Schools shall evaluate the effectiveness of the District's language assistance programs to ensure EL students will acquire English proficiency and the ability to participate in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time.

Parents of EL students shall be given notice of, and information regarding, the instructional program within the first thirty (30) days of the school year or within the first two (2) weeks of a student being placed in a language instruction educational program. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.207.***

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The homebound instruction program is for students who, due to a medical condition or an IEP team decision, are unable to attend the regular instructional program. The homebound instruction program shall consist of a minimum of three (3) hours of instruction per week while school is in session for a period of time determined, on a case-by-case basis, by the District.

To qualify for this program, a student shall have a medical condition that will require the student to be absent for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive instructional days (or an aggregate of at least ten (10) instructional days for a student who has a chronic medical condition) or educational needs such that an IEP team has determined the home setting to be the child's least restrictive environment (LRE). The student shall be certified by his/her treating physician as having a medical condition that prevents him/her from attending regular classes or have a signed IEP document reflecting the homebound placement as the student's LRE. The services provided to the homebound student shall reflect the student's capabilities and be determined by the homebound instructor, after consultation with appropriate professional staff of the student's assigned school. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.206.***

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students shall be immediately enrolled, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (i.e. academic records, immunization records, health records, proof of residency) or missed the District's application or enrollment deadlines. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to submit contact information to the District's homeless coordinator. The Director of Schools shall ensure that each homeless student is provided services comparable to those offered to other students within the District, including transportation, special education services, programs in career and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students, and school nutrition. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.503.***

MIGRANT STUDENTS

The District shall:

1. Identify migratory students and assess the educational and related health and social needs of each student;
2. Provide a full range of services to qualifying migrant students including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs, elective classes, fine arts classes, etc.;
3. Provide migratory students with the opportunity to meet the same statewide assessment standards that all students are expected to meet;
4. To the extent feasible, provide advocacy and outreach programs to migratory students and their families and professional development for district staff; and
5. Provide parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to participate in the program.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.504.***

SECTION 504 AND ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The District is committed to maintaining equitable employment and educational practices, services, programs, and activities that are accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. To discuss concerns or seek resolutions related to Section 504 of the ADA, contact the 504 Coordinator at the Board of Education office. The coordinator shall respond to all complaints within twenty (20) days with a written response as well as information on further grievance procedures that may be followed if the complaining party is not satisfied with the coordinator's proposed resolution. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 1.802***.

504 Due Process

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides parents with the right to an impartial due process hearing to contest any action of the LEA with regard to a student's identification, evaluation or placement. 34 CFR §104.36. The parent has the right to personally participate and to be represented by an attorney, at their expense, at the hearing.

Request for Due Process

A parent who wishes to challenge the LEA's action or omission with regard to the identification, evaluation or placement of a student who has or is believed to have a disability, shall make an oral or written request for a due process hearing to the LEA's Section 504 coordinator If a request is received orally, it should be reduced to writing or the parent/guardian should be provided a form for such purpose. The written request must clearly state that the parent is seeking a Section 504 due process hearing. The LEA cannot refuse a parent's due process hearing request. The LEA cannot unilaterally determine whether a due process hearing is warranted, as such decisions are reserved to the impartial hearing officer.

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Students in foster care, including those awaiting foster care placement, shall be immediately enrolled, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (i.e. academic records, immunization records, health records, proof of residency) or missed the District's application or enrollment deadlines.

The District and the child welfare agency shall determine whether placement in a particular school is in a student's best interest. Other parties, including the student, foster parents, and biological parents (if appropriate), shall be consulted. If the child has an IEP or a Section 504 plan, then the relevant school staff members shall participate in the best interest decision process. This determination shall be made as quickly as possible to prevent educational disruption.

The District shall collaborate with the local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear and written procedures governing how transportation to a student's school of origin shall be provided, arranged, and funded. This transportation will be provided for the duration of the student's time in foster care.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.505.***

STUDENTS FROM MILITARY FAMILIES

A student who does not currently reside within the District shall be allowed to enroll if he/she is a dependent child of a service member who is being relocated to Tennessee on military orders. To be eligible for enrollment, the student will need to provide documentation that he/she will be a resident of the District on relocation. Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student shall provide proof of residency within the District.

Students with parent(s)/guardian(s) in the military may also be eligible for excused absences related to his/her deployment.

For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 6.506.***

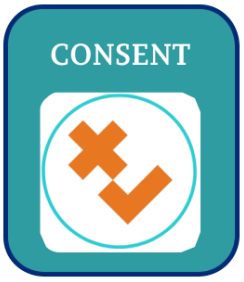
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Houston County School District provides special education and/or related services for all students with disabilities eligible under IDEA, Part B and state law. Areas of eligibility include: Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Functional Delay, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Giftedness, Language Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury and Visual Impairment. If you know of a child who may be eligible for special education services between the ages of 3 and 21 or have any questions about your child's special education services, please contact the Director of Special Programs at 931-289-4148.

QUICK GUIDE TO PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



You have the right to ask your school to evaluate your child to see if your child has a disability and needs special education services. Your school district has up to 60 calendar days to initially evaluate and up to an additional 30 calendar days to develop an **Individualized Education Program** (IEP) if your child is determined to be eligible for services. The timeline starts when the school district receives signed parental consent. Your child must be assessed using tests and procedures that are sensitive to your child's disability or cultural background. For example, a test in English should not be conducted for the child whose primary language is Spanish.



Your **consent** (written permission) is required for the school district to evaluate your child for the first time, unless a special education hearing officer has ordered an evaluation. Even if the evaluation team decides that your child is eligible for special education services, you do not have to accept the services for your child. For your child's first IEP, no services can be provided until you give written consent for your child to receive special education services.

If you accept services, **you can revoke your consent** to services at any time. You must submit this request in writing to your child's school. A revocation would forfeit *all of your child's* special education services, related services, and any other supports included in your child's IEP. If you decline or revoke consent for services, you can request services at a later time. Depending on the time that has passed, the school district may need to re-evaluate your child.



You have the right to **participate in developing an IEP for your child**. You are an important part of the team that makes decisions about your child's education. You have the right to share information and express your opinion at any team meeting or anytime you feel it would help your child's education. The team decides the kind and amount of services your child needs and where the services will be provided. The team must include your child's teachers and school administrators, parents, and other individuals as needed. If you have ideas or concerns about your child's program, you should first talk to your child's teachers or other people who work with your child. Talking with members of the team early on can often prevent problems later. Open, mutual communication between you and the other members of your child's team is encouraged in order to provide an appropriate program for your child.

QUICK GUIDE TO PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (cont'd)



One important part of IDEA requires public schools to provide a **free, appropriate public education** (FAPE). **Free** means that special education services are provided at no cost to the parents. **Appropriate** means that your child's program must provide the *right kind of services* based on your child's needs, and *enough services* for your child to receive educational benefit. This benefit comes through access to and progress in the general education curriculum used for all children. Your child has a right to make progress toward their individual goals through access to the same activities, classrooms, and settings as children who do not have disabilities.



Your child should receive their education in the **least restrictive environment** (LRE). This means that children with disabilities, including preschoolers, will be educated in a regular education environment along with their nondisabled peers to the extent appropriate. The school they would attend if they didn't have a disability should be considered first. Children are only removed from being educated with typical peers if it is determined, based on data, that they cannot be appropriately served in the regular education environment, even with the use of supports and services. A regular early childhood education classroom must include at least 50 percent of children who do not have disabilities.



You have a right to know about why the school district is either proposing or refusing specific actions, supports, or services. This explanation is called **Prior Written Notice** (PWN). This notice must be given to you, in a language you understand, in a reasonable amount of time before the school district takes action or refuses to take action about:

whether your child is eligible for services,

the type of disability your child has,

what services your child will receive, and/or

where your child will receive services.

Once an IEP is developed or revised and any PWN with proposed changes is received, the IEP should be implemented as soon as possible. If needed, you have up to 14 calendar days to review and consider the information on the IEP. The IEP will go into effect on the 15th calendar day unless you notify the team that you disagree and take steps to resolve any concerns.



The school district must give you a copy of the full **Notice of Procedural Safeguards** when your child is referred for evaluation and at least once each school year that your child is receiving special education services. Parents can also obtain a copy from their child's school at any time or from the Tennessee Department of Education.

You have a right to see all of **your child's records**. You can prevent the school from sending your child's records to someone else without your written permission. The school must give you a free copy of the evaluation report and a free copy of your child's IEP.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SERVICES

GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION AND ADDITIONAL SERVICES

The Houston County School District (HCSD) provides every student with a secure Google Workspace for Education account, which includes learning tools such as Google Classroom, Docs, Slides, Gmail, and Drive (see https://workspace.google.com/terms/user_features.html for details). These core apps are already covered by our district's privacy agreement with Google and do not require extra permission.

Google also offers a group of "Additional Services" that can enrich lessons, such as *YouTube (restricted mode for schools), Google Maps & Google Earth, Google Photos, Arts & Culture & Books, Blogger, and Google News*. If we do not have your permission on file, your child will still have full access to Classroom and other core tools, but Additional Services will be disabled for their account. All apps and services are still unable to access inappropriate material that is blocked by our filtering service.

If you want to learn more about how Google collects, uses, and discloses personal information to provide services to us, please review the Google Workspace for Education Privacy Center (at https://www.google.com/edu/trust/), the Google Workspace for Education Privacy Notice (at https://workspace.google.com/terms/education_privacy.html), the Google Privacy Policy (at https://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/privacy/), and the Google Cloud Privacy Notice (at https://cloud.google.com/terms/cloud-privacy-notice). The Core Google Workspace for Education services are provided to us under Google Workspace for Education Agreement.

TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Textbooks are property of the Board and shall be returned at the end of the school year, upon completion of the course or upon withdrawal from a course or school. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are to sign an agreement stating they shall be responsible for the textbooks received and used by their children. Textbooks and/or instructional materials shall be available for inspection by parents/guardians upon request. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policies 4.400.***

USE OF THE INTERNET

Houston School District supports the right of students to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes that it is incumbent upon students to use this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner. Students will be given appropriate instruction in internet safety as a part of any instruction utilizing computer resources. A written parental consent shall be required prior to the student being granted access to electronic media involving district technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of online behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, shall be signed by the parent/guardian of minor students and also by the student. For more information, refer to ***Houston County Board of Education Policy 4.406***.

USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Students may possess personal communication devices, such as cell phones, while on school property. However, the personal communication device must be in the off mode and must be kept in a backpack, purse or similar personal carry-all and may not be used during school hours. The principal or his/her designee may grant a student permission to use a personal communication device at his/her discretion. A device used outside these parameters shall result in confiscation of the device until such time as it may be released at the principal's discretion to the student's parent or guardian. Use of cameras on personal communication devices is strictly prohibited on school property or at school functions. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

ACCEPTABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Section 1: Parental Consent and Acknowledgement

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Students are granted access to district technology, networks, and internet resources only after a student and their parent or guardian have signed the AUP. This form outlines appropriate use, privileges, responsibilities, and disciplinary consequences for violations. Students without a signed AUP will not be permitted to use digital technology, district networks, or the internet while on Houston County School District (HCSD) campuses.

Purpose

The HCSD wants to ensure that students and employees benefit from technological resources while adhering to safe, legal, and responsible use guidelines. Accordingly, the HCSD establishes this AUP and Technology Guidelines to govern the use of school district technological resources by students. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school district property. It applies to all school district resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections, devices, apps, programs, tools, and learning environments made available by or on the networks, as well as all devices that connect to those networks, whether authorized or not.

Education Program, Privacy Statement, and Parents' Rights

Students will receive instruction in internet safety as part of their educational program. HCSD staff are responsible for teaching students the network and internet use policies and for supervising their access to these resources.

School district administrators or individuals designated by the superintendent may review files, monitor all communication, and intercept e-mail messages to maintain system integrity and to ensure compliance with board policy and applicable laws and regulations.

Parents have the right to request alternative activities that do not require access to networked resources. Failure to return the signed form does not relieve the student from complying with these policies. Parents/guardians may also opt out of:

- Releasing a student's name, image, or work to the public (e.g., honor rolls, awards, websites)
- Releasing directory information to the Armed Forces
- Receiving automated phone notifications

Section 2: Acceptable Use of School Devices, Network, and Internet

Students are expected to use the privilege of accessing school technology in an ethical, legal, and responsible manner. The following unauthorized uses apply to all uses of any devices, the school network, and the internet (collectively known as "school resources"):

- Intentional misuse of school resources
- Using school resources for commercial profit, entertainment, games, or political purposes during school hours without permission from and under the supervision of an authorized HCSD employee
- Physical, digital, or electronic vandalism

- Creating, editing, recording, or manipulating any still-frame, video, or audio recordings on school property or at school-sponsored events without prior approval from the principal or designee
- Using school resources to access or share confidential information about yourself or another person or persons, or to bully, intimidate, insult, or harass another person or persons, or to disrupt any person's experience in the educational process in any way
- Trespassing in another's accounts, folders, work, or files
- Using or sharing obscene or offensive language, messages, or pictures

2-A. Devices and Equipment

School-issued devices must be used solely for educational purposes, school-related activities, and uses approved by an authorized HCSD employee. Unauthorized uses include, but are not limited to:

- Changing any device settings (e.g., screen savers, backgrounds, volume, fonts, or colors) without permission from an authorized HCSD employee
- Installing, altering, or deleting apps, programs, or software without approval from an authorized HCSD employee
- Installing, altering, deleting, or damaging device software, hardware, or accessories
- Logging in to or using an account other than your school account
- Any unauthorized use of school devices or equipment

2-B. Network and Internet

Student access to the internet is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, students must use the internet ethically, legally, and responsibly. File-sharing apps and programs are illegal under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. These apps and programs consume school bandwidth, significantly degrading network performance. Student access to the internet, websites, and apps not accessed from a school-approved app or site must be approved in advance by a teacher. Unauthorized uses include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism, including deceptive use of artificial intelligence, or copyright violations
- Downloading or sharing files without approval from an authorized HCSD employee
- Accessing or attempting to access unauthorized systems (e.g., hacking, impersonation, phishing)
- Circumventing content filters (e.g., using VPNs, proxy servers, anonymous browsers)
- Logging into or accessing personal email, social media accounts, chat programs, or unapproved sites or apps
- Accessing or revealing personal information about yourself, peers, friends, family, or other adults

All users are required to:

- Follow Board Policy 4.406 and its procedures
- Notify a system administrator immediately if a security issue is found, and not demonstrate it to others

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Section 3. Personal Communication Devices

The principal or their designee may grant a student permission for the specific use of a personal device. Phones, watches, tablets, and similar internet-connected devices must remain powered off and stored in backpacks, purses, or similar carry-all during school hours unless explicitly permitted. Unauthorized recording (still-image, video, or audio) on school property or at school events is strictly prohibited. The dissemination of material recorded on school property is also prohibited without the principal's or their

designee's consent. Violations shall result in the confiscation of the device and may warrant disciplinary action, which may be released at the principal's discretion to the student's parent or guardian.

Section 4. Device Care and Security

4-A. Handling and Use

- Use only your assigned district device and your assigned school account
- Avoid exposing devices to liquids or foreign substances (e.g., glue, paint, lotion, food, cosmetics)
- Do not alter, remove, or make unreadable labels/tags
- Connect accessories (e.g., headphones, styluses, USB drives) only with staff permission
- Use cleaning supplies only under staff supervision
- Do not hold, lift, or carry a device by its screen
- Do not allow others to use your assigned device
- Log into the school network daily for updates
- Do not insert objects into ports or connectors not designed for them

4-B. Storage and Transport

- Power off devices when not in use
- Store devices in designated classroom locations or carts
- Care of devices:
    - Carry physical devices in the closed position
    - Avoid setting devices near desk/table edges
    - Never place devices on the floor or a chair
    - Never stack items on top of devices
    - Never leave devices unattended unless in a safe area/position
    - Relocate to a secure area if leaving the room

4-C. Damage, Loss, and Repair

- Report damage/theft/loss within one school day
- Failure to report may result in financial liability
- Supervisors and administrators may exercise their discretion when charging individuals where malicious intent and/or apparent neglect are present
- Replacement cost for accessories or devices is based on the value of the item(s)
- Costs may apply based on a fee schedule:

Item	1st Incident	2nd Incident	3rd/Neglect
Broken Screen	$55	$65	$75
Charger	$50	$60	$75
Minor Key Damage	$5/key	$7/key	$10/key
Major Key Damage	$50	$55	$65

Top Plastic Case	$40	$50	$60
Bottom Plastic Case	$40	$50	$60
Battery	$55	$65	$75

Section 5. Account Access and File Storage

The HCSD is an official Google Apps for Education district. Students are issued secure HCSD-managed accounts ending in @houstonk12tn.net. These accounts access selected Google services (Drive, Mail, Calendar, Sites) but cannot receive external emails. Files should be stored in Google Drive. Data stored locally may be lost during repairs or updates. Flash drives and external storage may only be used with permission from and under the supervision of an HCSD teacher or administrator.

Section 6. Content Filtering and Privacy

The district complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Filtering software (e.g., Linewize, FamilyZone, Crowdstrike) is used and updated regularly. Filters apply on and off campus while logged into the school network or school devices. All internet use may be monitored, recorded, and disclosed to law enforcement or in legal proceedings when required.
The HCSD does not:

- Guarantee the accuracy or quality of online content
- Ensure availability of internet service at all times
- Guarantee the privacy of transmitted information
- Assume liability for data loss or damage

Section 7. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

All use of artificial intelligence is subject to the approval of and conditions of use set forth by the teacher. A teacher may instruct students not to use AI in any phase or in specific phases of their work, regardless of permitted uses described in this policy. Students who use artificial intelligence without approval or outside the scope of the teacher's conditions may be required to redo the work or complete a different assignment, or may receive a lowered grade, including a grade of zero.

7-1. Permitted Uses

- Generating ideas and creating outlines
- Conducting research and gaining knowledge
- Practicing or developing skills

7-2. Attribution

- Students must clearly label ***all academic content*** AI-generated content with the date and name of the AI platform (e.g., "Generated by ChatGPT, August 9, 2026").

7-3. Prohibited Uses

- Submitting AI-generated content as original student work.
- Revising part or all of AI-generated content with the student's own words and submitting it without describing to the teacher how AI was used.

- Disclosing private or identifiable information about yourself or others (e.g., peers, school staff, family members).
- Using AI for any assignment or assessment without ***teacher prior approval*** and outside the conditions set forth by the teacher.

Section 8. Enforcement and Discipline

Violations may result in:

- Suspension or revocation of access to district technology, networks, or devices
- Disciplinary action per the student code of conduct
- Financial responsibility for damaged or lost equipment

Section 9. Disclaimer and Legal Notice

HCSD provides no warranties, expressed or implied, for services it provides. It is not liable for data loss, service interruptions, or the quality of internet-based content. Use is at the user's own risk. This policy reflects *Houston County Board Policy 4.406*.

9-1. Legal References

- U.S. Constitution, Amendment I
- Children's Internet Protection Act (47 U.S.C. §254)
- Electronic Communications Privacy Act (18 U.S.C. §2510–2522)
- FERPA (20 U.S.C. §1232g)
- DMCA (17 U.S.C. §101 et seq.)
- G.S. 115C-325(e)

For current policies, visit www.houston.k12.tn.us

TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Houston County School District will participate in the following assessments for the 2026-27 school year. *(Tests and dates are subject to change pending Tennessee Department of Education mandates.)* All schools are required to meet Annual Measurement Objectives (AMO) in achievement, as measured by these assessments.

Assessment Name	Administration Date/Window	Subject(s)	Grade(s)	Purpose
Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) End of Course (EOC) Assessments	Fall 2026 Block *November 30 - December 17, 2026* Spring 2027 Block *April 19 - May 6, 2027*	ENG I & II, ALG I, & II, Geometry, Biology, & U.S. History	9-12 Enrolled in Course	State-mandated achievement test to measure student skills and academic performance.
TCAP Achievement	Spring 2027 *April 7 - 14, 2027* Spring 2027 *April 19 - May 6, 2027*	ELA Writing English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, & Social Studies	3-8	State-mandated achievement test to measure student skills and academic performance.
Grade 2 Achievement	Spring 2027 *April 7 - 14, 2027* Spring 2027 *April 19 - May 6, 2027*	Writing ELA & Math	2	Optional state achievement test to measure student proficiency.
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)	Fall 2026 *September 14 - December 18, 2026* Spring 2027 *February 1 - May 21, 2027*	ELA & Math	2-8; 11	Alternative achievement measure for students with most severe cognitive disabilities.
TCAP-Alternative	Spring 2027 *March 15 - April 30, 2027*	Science & Social Studies	2-8; 10	Alternative achievement measure for students with most severe cognitive disabilities.
ACT	March 9-12 and 15 - 19, 2027	English, Math, Reading, Science	11	Diagnostic assessment that measures a student's readiness for college.
ACT Senior Retake	September 29-30, October 1-2, 2026	English, Math, Reading, Science	12	Diagnostic assessment that measures a student's readiness for college.
ELPA 21 for English Learners	February 1 - March 26, 2027	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	K - 12	English Learners (EL) will take the ELPA21 for ELLs to determine language proficiency. ELPA21 assesses students in the four-language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Parents will receive an individual score report for each test their child takes. Reports will be provided once scores are finalized and sent by the appropriate agency (i.e. ACT, TDOE, Pearson, etc.). For the most up-to-date testing information, please check the school district website at: https://www.houston.k12.tn.us/parents-students/assessment-information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Answers to many questions and helpful information may be obtained from the Tennessee State Department of Education by calling (615) 741-5158 or visiting **www.tn.gov/education**.

Local School Board Polices are available on the school district's website at **www.houston.k12.tn.us**. Board policies may be created or modified throughout the school year. Online versions are considered official and will supersede any printed forms.

Erin Elementary School	931-289-3127
Tennessee Ridge Elementary School	931-721-3780
Houston County Middle School	931-289-5591
Houston County High School	931-289-4447
Houston County Adult High School/Alternative School	931-289-5525
Houston County Board of Education	931-289-4148
Houston County School District Transportation Department	931-289-4293
Coordinated School Health/Family Resource Center	931-289-4159

RESOURCES

Parents are encouraged to contact any of these organizations for assistance in understanding and navigating the special education system.

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder	**Disability Rights Tennessee**	**Support Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)**	**Tennessee Voices for Children**	**The Arc Tennessee**
800.640.4636 (Multilingual) www.familypathfinder.org tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.org	800.342.1660 www.disabilityrights.org GetHelp@disabilityrightstn.org	800.280.7837 (English) 800.975.2919 (Spanish) www.tnstep.org information@tnstep.org	800.670.9882 www.tnvoices.org info@tnvoices.org	800.835.7077 www.thearc.org info@thearctn.org

Tennessee Department of Human Services: Disability Services:
https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/section/disability-services

Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
https://www.tn.gov/didd/

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STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THESE PAGES (FRONT AND BACK) TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

Houston County School District Acceptable Use Agreement

The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) should read and discuss the HCSD Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) before signing this agreement. By signing this agreement, my student and I acknowledge we have received and discussed the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), and have received answers to any questions we have about our rights, responsibilities, and/or liabilities.

My student and I:

- understand that "digital or networked school resources" collectively but not exhaustively refers to the technological accessories and devices, digital networks and platforms, and internet access and access points, as well as information, apps/bots, and other digital or physical content, that can be accessed by such devices;
- know student use of digital or networked school resources on and off campus, is a privilege contingent on ethical, legal, and responsible use of those resources;
- accept that all activity on district networks and devices is not private, will be monitored, and may become part of public record in certain legal instances;
- agree to abide by all rules and understand that violations may result in appropriate action as outlined in the student code of conduct, which may include academic or disciplinary consequences, suspension of access to digital or networked school resources, and/or financial responsibility for damaged equipment and/or restitution;
- affirm our understanding that we may request alternative activities that do not require access to technology;
- acknowledge that this agreement is valid for the 2026-27 school year;
- have been advised in this document that our signatures indicating that we have received and agreed to the guidelines are necessary before access to digital or networked school resources will be allowed.

The Houston County School District supports and respects each family's decision whether or not to apply for, terminate, or suspend student access to digital or networked school resources. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to request alternative activities which do not require access to digital or networked school resources. If such a request for alternative activities is made, my student and I understand that my student will receive and experience appropriate, equivalent educational content, though the format and available interactive tools may naturally differ. Access, if issued, shall remain in effect through the remainder of this school year, unless suspended or terminated by the student, the school, or the parent(s)/guardian(s).

I have received and discussed the *Acceptable Use Policy* (AUP) and the *Acceptable Use Agreement* with my child. My child will use technology in an appropriate and responsible manner as noted in the AUP and agreement.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_____ _____

Student Signature Date

PLEASE ALSO READ AND SIGN BACK OF PAGE FOR EACH STUDENT

STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM (page 2)

(required for <u>each</u> student)

☐ I have received the *Houston County School District Student Handbook,* which includes required annual notifications, health/immunization information, attendance requirements, discipline procedures, Visitor Code of Conduct, federal programs and other relevant information for students and families. I will review the information therein with my child.

Please read carefully and check <u>only those that apply</u>:

☐ **Please <u>do not</u> include my child's name, image (including photos and/or video), voice recording, and/or student work in information that may be released to the public without my consent. This includes, but *is not limited to*:**

- Newsletters
- Newspapers
- District Website
- School Website
- Honor Roll
- Awards
- Promotions

☐ **Please <u>do not</u> release my child's Directory Information to the Armed Forces.**

☐ **I <u>do not</u> give consent for my child to receive non-emergency first aid.**

☐ **I would like to <u>opt out</u> of the Houston County School District automated phone call notification system.**

☐ **I <u>do not</u> give permission for my child to access Google's *Additional Services* while using their HCSD account.** Please disable all Additional Services for my child's account. Note: This may prevent your student from accessing some content in the same way or the same extent as other students, and may require that your student complete assignments or tasks differently.

Name of Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Name of Student (Print): _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____ /_____ /_____

Failure to sign and return the form does not relieve the student from the responsibility of complying with the rules and policies referenced in the Student Handbook