LEE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Student Handbook and Code of Conduct

Grades 6-8

Learning • Empowering • Excelling

Lee County School System

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Board of Education

Claire Lang, Chairperson
Donna Ford, Vice Chair
Dr. Trey Newell
Jamie McDowell
Fran Walls

Dr. Kathleen Truitt, Superintendent

Mission

The Lee County School System fosters relationships through diverse and challenging educational experiences that cultivate successful citizens.

Beliefs

We believe in…

- investing in our students through strong trusting partnerships between home, school, and community.
- providing each student an equitable and challenging education through engaging learning opportunities.
- ensuring everyone an environment in which they feel safe, valued, and nurtured.
- offering opportunities for all students to be successful through highly effective teachers and targeted resources.
- preparing all students with the academic, social and work skills necessary to be productive citizens in school and life.

Vision

Learning

Empowering

Excelling

The Lee County School System is an Equal Opportunity Employer that does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or any other characteristics protected by applicable federal, state or local laws and ordinances.

Dear Lee Families:

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that I extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each of you as we prepare to begin the 2026-2027 school year. At Lee County Schools, we are united by our shared commitment of learning, empowering, and excelling.

I am immensely grateful to serve as your Superintendent, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for choosing to partner with Lee County Schools. As a community, we are devoted to fostering a learning environment where all students can flourish. The school system's success rests on the collaborative efforts of each community member. The collective dedication I witness each day is an inspiration.

As we step into this new school year, I invite you to join me in my efforts to be intentionally invested in our students' success. We have accomplished a lot to advance opportunities and access for our students, but we are not done yet! I invite you to join hands and hearts to create an educational environment where every student finds the tools they need to thrive.

Wishing you a truly extraordinary school year, filled with growth, achievement, and unforgettable experiences. With your partnership and support, we will continue to be intentional in our focus on academics, intentional in shaping well-rounded, capable learners, and intentional in our commitment to student success.

Sincerely,
Kathleen E.K. Truitt, EdD

Lee County School System School Calendar 2026-2027

JULY 2026

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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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AUGUST 2026

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SEPTEMBER 2026

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OCTOBER 2026

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NOVEMBER 2026

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DECEMBER 2026

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GRADING PERIODS

1st Nine Weeks: **Aug. 5 -Oct. 7**
2nd Nine Weeks: **Oct. 13-Dec. 18**
3rd Nine Weeks: **Jan. 6-March 12**
4th Nine Weeks: **March 16-May 26**

IMPORTANT DATES

Aug. 5: First Day of School
Sept. 7: Labor Day
Oct. 7: Flexible Learning Day
Oct. 8-12: Staff PL & Fall Break
Nov. 23-27: Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 21-Jan. 5: Christmas Break
Jan. 6: First Day Second Semester
Jan. 18: MLK Jr. Holiday
Feb. 11: Flexible Learning Day
Feb. 12-16: Staff PL / Student Break
March 15: Staff PL / Student Holiday
April 5-9: Spring Break
May 26: Last Day of School

LEGEND

Staff PL (Student Holidays)
Flexible Learning Days/PL Days
Student/Staff Holidays
Early Dismissal
First Day of School
New Teacher Orientation

*** 180 Student Days & 10 Staff Days*

JANUARY 2027

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FEBRUARY 2027

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MARCH 2027

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APRIL 2027

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MAY 2027

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30	*31	*Memorial Day				

JUNE 2027

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Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement of Receipt

Please read and review the *2026-27 LCSS Code of Student Conduct* with your child and emphasize your child's role in helping maintain a safe and orderly school learning environment. This handbook also includes important information related to student records, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and other rights and responsibilities. If receiving a paper copy, please sign below to acknowledge that you and your child received this handbook, then detach and return this page to your child's school as soon as possible. If using an online copy, you will use the online verification procedure to verify. Thank you for your support.

For print copies:

It is mandatory that this acknowledgement form be returned, as it will become part of the student's permanent record for the 2026-27 school year.

Student_____Grade _____

My Parent/Guardian(s) and I hereby acknowledge by our signatures that we have received and understand this Code of Student Conduct.

We have also read and do understand the penalties and consequences pertaining to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A 20-2-690.1) on page 4 of the handbook. I understand that the Social Services Coordinator, if needed, will file proceedings in court to enforce this law.

_____ _____

(Student Signature) (Date)

_____ _____

(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

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Note: Check website for updates to Code of Student Conduct - www.lee.k12.ga.us

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT - INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of the Lee County Board of Education to operate each program and school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students attending schools within the district. The intent of this handbook, as well as the enforcement of its rules, is to ensure the presence of a safe, friendly and engaging atmosphere in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward mutually recognized and accepted goals. The Lee County Board of Education has established a comprehensive Code of Conduct that focuses on creating a supportive, safe, secure, and equitable learning environment while promoting the academic, social, and emotional development of students. Lee County Schools' approach to student conduct reflects our commitment to understand and address the causes of student behavior and teach students appropriate behavior while providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students. The Lee County Board of Education's Code of Conduct was designed and created to comply with the progressive discipline processes set forth in O.C.G.A. §20-2-735, which states that discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline, that the previous discipline history of the student during the current school year and other relevant factors will be taken into account, and that all due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed. Furthermore, acting in the best interest of this community, the policy of the Lee County Board of Education is to require the principals, staff members, students, parents and guardians to adhere to and to comply with this Code of Student Conduct.

As students progress in public schools, it is reasonable to assume that an increase in age and maturity will result in the students' assumption of greater responsibility for their actions. Although it is true that differences in age and maturity require different types of disciplinary action, the expectation of student behavior identified in this handbook will apply to all students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12.

The Lee County School System utilizes the Georgia Multi-Tiered System of Supports (GaMTSS) framework, which focuses on prevention and early intervention to set students up for success in academics, behavior, and well-being. Clear behavioral expectations for students and staff are taught, recognized, and reinforced to create and maintain a positive school climate.

ACCREDITATION

All Lee County Schools are accredited by Cognia and Georgia Accrediting Commission.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Board shall provide educational opportunities for students on a nondiscriminatory basis. No person shall be denied benefits of any education program or activity on the basis of race, color, disability, religion, national origin, or gender. Students cannot be denied enrollment due to immigrant status or English-speaking ability.
Programs offered by schools within the school district shall be open to all students in compliance with statutory and judicial requirements.

DUE PROCESS

The policy of the Lee County Board of Education is to adhere to and observe the essential elements of due process when carrying out the procedures contained within the Code of Student Conduct handbook. A responsibility of the principals will be to familiarize their faculty and staff with due process procedures and provide each staff member with a copy of this handbook.

This handbook has been published with the following concepts in mind:

- School rules must be clearly stated and related to the educational purposes of the school.
- School rules must be fair and specific enough for students to know what they may or may not do.
- Students, parents and guardians must be informed of the rules concerning behavior and discipline.
- When serious disciplinary action is involved, school personnel and students must comply with required procedures.

The consensus of the Board of Education is that the regulations in this handbook deal with a matter of legitimate

interest with the intent of protecting the health, safety and welfare of students and ensuring the efficient operation of the schools.

EXPECTATIONS

Each student may expect that Lee County Schools will:

1. Provide a free quality public education.
2. Provide a safe learning environment.
3. Ensure that all students are treated courteously, fairly, and respectfully.
4. Address all complaints and concerns brought to the attention of school personnel and school staff.
5. Inform students of the Code of Conduct and of disciplinary procedures related to disciplinary actions and/or appeals.

Each student is expected to:

1. Read and become familiar with this Code of Conduct.
2. Behave in a responsible manner at school, on school buses, at school bus stops, and at all school related functions on or off campus.
3. Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others.
4. Attend all classes regularly and on time.
5. Prepare for each class, take appropriate materials to class, and complete assignments.
6. Follow all District rules and cooperate with school staff and volunteers in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
7. Communicate with his or her parent/guardian about school academic progress.

Lee County Schools will:

1. Ensure that parents or guardians are treated respectfully by school principals, teachers, and other staff.
2. Provide access to information regarding their student and Lee County School District's policies and procedures.
3. Promote and encourage active participation in their student's education.
4. Promptly notify parents or guardians if a student is disciplined and inform parents of procedures related to disciplinary actions and/or appeals.
5. Inform parents or guardians about their student's academic and behavioral progress.
6. Provide access to information about Lee County School District's policies and procedures.

Each parent/guardian is expected to:

1. Read and become familiar with this Code of Conduct.
2. Make sure their student attends school regularly, on time, and notify the school before the school day if their student is going to be absent.
3. Give the school accurate and current contact information and inform/update the contact information when and if it changes.
4. Inform school leaders of any concerns in a respectful and timely manner.
5. Work with the school principal, teachers, and other staff to address any academic or behavioral concerns regarding their student.
6. Communicate with their student about the behavior that is expected at school.
7. Support their student's learning and school activities.
8. Be respectful and courteous to staff, other parents, guardians, and students.
9. Respect the privacy rights of other students.
10. Give school any and all information to assist with the welfare and education of the student and the safety of operations.

ADDITIONAL BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

The District may enforce campus, classroom, or club/organization rules as well as those recorded in the student handbook. Additional rules may be listed in the student and campus handbooks, be posted, or distributed in classrooms, or be published in extracurricular handbooks, state or national organization bylaws, and/or constitutions. Sponsors and coaches of extracurricular and or co-curricular activities may require and enforce additional standards of conduct for student participation in extracurricular/co-curricular activities. Expectations of behavior applied for an extracurricular or co-curricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these expectations for behavior that are also infractions of the Student Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary actions being applied to the student, including but not limited to, the student being removed from participation in extracurricular/co-curricular activities, exclusion from school honors, suspension, and expulsion for violation of the Student Code of Conduct. These additional expectations will be communicated by the schools through phone, internet and/or physical distribution of guidelines.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The Code of Conduct governs students' behavior on school property and off school property at a school or district event. The Code of Conduct also governs student behavior off school grounds at a non-school activity, but where the misconduct constitutes a potential danger to school, students, and/or staff, or causes a disruption of school operations. Finally, the Code of Conduct also governs any student conduct that constitutes a violation of the Student Code of Conduct en route to and from schools, en route to or from any school or district event, while on the bus, and/or while at the bus stop.

Disciplinary action will be progressive, will be grounded in the professional judgment of teachers and administrators, and may, depending on the circumstances, include a range of alternative resolutions, including positive corrective techniques. Disciplinary action will consider, without limits, the severity of the infraction, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of the student's misconduct in total, the student's attitude, the student's actions through the lens of possible self-defense, the impact of the conduct on the school environment, intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and necessities of law (including, without limitation, IDEA and Section 504). Because of these factors, discipline for a particular violation (unless otherwise specified by law) may bring into consideration a wide range of resolutions. Principals or designees will have the authority to assign disciplinary consequences based on conduct related to specific occurrences.

When a violation of the Code of Conduct is conveyed or suspected, the principal or designee will determine whether an investigation is warranted and, if so, will instruct appropriate personnel to implement an investigation. The investigation, where possible, should include interviews with alleged perpetrator(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s), staff members, and others who could have pertinent information. When possible, written statements may be requested from all individuals who are interviewed. Video surveillance, if available and relevant, may be reviewed and secured. Principals and Assistant Principals have the responsibility and authority to question students for the purpose of maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. Parental consent and notification are not required prior to questioning and/or obtaining written statements from students.

At an appropriate time during the investigation, the parent or guardian will be notified. If the incident involves injury or a need for immediate medical care arises, appropriate medical attention will be provided, and the parent or guardian notified as soon as is practicable. The principal and his/her designee should also immediately inform parents/guardians when students are removed from the school setting by emergency medical or law enforcement personnel. The principal has the authority to assign In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension for 10 days or less. Questions regarding In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension should be directed to the school administration.

The determination of whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct will be founded solely on a majority of the evidence, which means that it is more likely than not based on all of the evidence available that the student did violate the Code of Conduct. Once it has been determined that the student did have an infraction in violation of the Code of

Conduct the administrator will follow the progressive discipline process.

JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Students in the Lee County School System are subject to the rules and regulations of the Lee County Board of Education during the school day, while in attendance at school-related activities and while traveling to and from school or school-related activities. This includes traveling in school vehicles or in public or private vehicles (which are being utilized at the time for purposes of transporting students to and from school or school-related activities), as well as waiting at a school bus stop. In addition, students may be disciplined in those instances where conduct at other times and places is deemed to have direct and immediate impact or effect on the health, safety, discipline or general welfare of the school community. Use or possession of controlled contraband at any time or place is presumed by the Board of Education to have a direct and immediate impact or effect on the health, safety, discipline or general welfare of the school community.

A student whose conduct off campus could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including a referral to a disciplinary tribunal.

A parent, guardian, custodian or person, excluding a foster parent, responsible for the care or control of a minor child enrolled in the Lee County School System shall be responsible financially for such child's destructive acts against school property or persons. The responsible party may be requested to appear at school by an appropriate school official for a conference regarding the acts of the child and, if summoned by proper notification by an appropriate school official, shall be required to attend the discipline conference.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

School administrators are required under state law to enforce compulsory school attendance laws. Regular attendance by students facilitates the development of the skills and knowledge necessary to function in today's society.

It is the belief of the Lee County Board of Education that regular school attendance is important to all students and to the school system. Course content and grading procedures should be structured so that regular attendance is necessary in order to successfully complete course requirements.

Subject to parental guidance, each student must be responsible for his/her own attendance. Administrators and teachers will make every effort to encourage regular attendance by students and to solicit assistance from parents and guardians in accomplishing this objective.

An absence is defined as non-attendance (except for in-school activities excused by school authorities) in a regularly scheduled class or activity regardless of the reason for such non-attendance.

Homeless (Displaced) and Unaccompanied Youth

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence may qualify for educational supports and protections.

A student may be considered homeless (displaced) if they are:

- Living in a shelter, motel, hotel, campground, or transitional housing;
- Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station, or similar setting;
- Temporarily doubled-up with family or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in housing that is inadequate, substandard, or unstable.

An unaccompanied youth is a student who meets the definition of homeless and is not in the physical custody of a

parent or legal guardian. This may include youth who have run away, been asked to leave home, or whose parent or guardian is unable to provide housing.

Students who qualify under McKinney-Vento have the right to immediate school enrollment, the ability to remain in their school of origin when in the student's best interest, and access to transportation and other educational supports.

Families who are experiencing housing instability or believe their child may qualify for services may contact Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Homeless Liaison, at 903-2100 for assistance and determination of eligibility. All information will be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality as required by law.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law – Family Information (Grades K–12)

Georgia law requires students between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school regularly. Students must be enrolled in and attend a public school, private school, or a state-approved home study program. Regular attendance is essential for learning at all grade levels. In the early grades, consistent attendance supports the development of foundational skills, while in middle and high school, attendance directly impacts course credit, academic progress, and graduation readiness.

Parents, guardians, or other adults who have control or charge of a student are responsible for ensuring that the student is enrolled and attends school each day unless an absence is excused. As students grow older, they also share responsibility for attending school regularly and arriving on time. Excused absences may include illness, medical appointments, court appearances, military or National Guard testing or physical examinations, and other reasons approved by the school in accordance with state and local guidelines.

Schools monitor attendance and are required by Georgia law to respond when concerns arise. In alignment with current attendance guidance and Senate Bill 123, schools focus on early communication and supportive intervention. When a student begins to miss school, the school may contact the family to understand barriers to attendance, review attendance patterns, and involve a school-based support or attendance team. Strategies may differ by grade level but are intended to help students return to regular attendance as quickly as possible.

When a student accumulates five unexcused absences, the school is required by law to notify the parent or guardian in writing. This notice explains compulsory attendance requirements, possible legal consequences, and available school or community supports. Parents or guardians and students who are ten years of age or older are asked to acknowledge receipt of this information. If the school is unable to obtain a signature after reasonable attempts, the notice may be sent by mail to meet legal requirements.

Georgia law emphasizes that absenteeism alone should not result in exclusion from school. Students may not be expelled solely due to attendance concerns. Schools are expected to continue providing instruction, monitoring progress, and documenting interventions. Court involvement is considered a last resort and is only pursued after required notifications have been provided and reasonable school-based efforts to support attendance have been made.

If attendance concerns continue despite interventions, Georgia law allows for referral to the court system. In such cases, a parent or guardian may be held legally responsible for failure to comply with compulsory attendance requirements. Possible consequences may include fines, community service, or other court-ordered actions. Each unexcused absence that occurs after required notice may be considered a separate violation. Educational services for the student continue as required by law.

Our schools believe that attendance challenges are often connected to real-life circumstances and that the best outcomes occur when schools and families work together. Families are encouraged to communicate with the school as early as possible if attendance concerns arise so that appropriate supports can be provided and students can remain engaged and successful in school.

While regular attendance is essential, a sudden, unexplained, or persistent refusal to attend school, particularly in younger students or students with disabilities, may indicate a safety concern. Parents, teachers, and counselors are encouraged to report such changes to the school social worker for follow-up, which may include a structured interview to rule out bullying, harassment, or abuse. Such referrals shall not be treated as disciplinary matters

Attendance and Instructional Time

In accordance with Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, a student must be present for at least one-half of the required instructional time in order to be counted present for that school day.

For all grade levels (K–12):

- A student must be present for half of the instructional day to be counted as present for the day in state attendance records.
- If a student is present for less than one-half of the instructional day, the student is counted absent for that day for state reporting purposes.

These standards are required for accurate state attendance reporting, FTE funding eligibility, and calculation of attendance-related components of the CCRPI. Attendance coded in the student information system must reflect whether the student met these instructional time requirements in order to be included in the school's official attendance totals.

A student enrolled full-time in the Lee County School System must be present for half of the school day in order to participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular or interscholastic activity.

Student Withdrawals for lack of attendance

With no proof of enrollment in another school, another LEA, private school, or home study program, an LEA can withdraw a student from a school after ten consecutive unexcused absences; however, the Lee County Procedures for Student Withdrawals should be followed for proper coding of the withdrawal. Each superintendent or superintendent's designee shall use due diligence to notify the parent, guardian, grandparent or other person if the LEA plans to withdraw such students. The superintendent of the LEA or the superintendent's designee shall document a minimum of three attempts to contact the parent, guardian, grandparent, or "other person" for the explicit purpose of holding a withdrawal conference.

School System Procedures

The school system will monitor student attendance daily.

Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents and guardians will be given notice of State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the notice by requesting signatures from parents/guardians that this notice was received and understood. This notice will be received by all students who have reached age ten (10) or above by September 1 of that school year. This notice will be kept on file by the school.

Each school will establish an Attendance Support Team, (AST) which will be chaired by each school's Principal/Assistant Principal and include as its members the Coordinator of Student and Family Services and faculty having direct contact to the specific student(s) to be discussed. School Resource Officers will also be invited to participate, as appropriate. Each school's AST will meet regularly and be responsible for implementing and monitoring attendance requirements to reduce tardy days, early withdrawals, and truancy. Parents/guardians shall be invited to and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Reasonable attempts will be made to call the parents/guardians of absent students. In cases known to involve joint or shared custody or guardianship of a student, efforts should be made to contact all individuals with custodial rights. This

standard shall also apply to steps mentioned hereinafter.

After three (3) consecutive absences, the homeroom teacher or administrative designee should notify parents and document the outcome of the conversation in Infinite Campus under the Contact Log tab of the student.

After five (5) unexcused absences, attendance postcards/letters will be sent to parents by the school informing them of the amount of absences incurred by students.

Students Counted Present in Special Circumstances

The following situations are considered special circumstances in which a student may be counted present even though the student is not physically attending regular classroom instruction. These situations are limited in scope and, unless otherwise required by law, must be approved in writing by school-level administration prior to the absence in order to be counted as present.

Students may be counted present when:

- Participating in school-approved field trips, co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, or programs sponsored by 4-H that have received prior written approval from school administration. Serving as an official page of the Georgia General Assembly, with documentation and prior administrative approval.

In accordance with state law, a foster care student who attends court proceedings related to his or her foster care placement shall be counted present and shall not be recorded absent, either excused or unexcused, for any day or portion of the day missed for this purpose. Documentation may be required; however, prior administrative approval is not required in these instances. Requests for prior approval must be submitted in writing to the school principal or designee at least five (5) school days in advance of the anticipated absence and must include the date(s), purpose of the activity, and supporting documentation. Approval is not guaranteed and will be provided in writing if granted.

Excused Absences

A student shall be excused for absences from school for the following reasons:

- Personal illness or attendance in school that endangers a student's health or the health of others.
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day.
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces/ National Guard and has been called to duty/ is on leave from deployment shall be granted up to a maximum of five school days per school year to visit with his/her parent/legal guardian prior to/during their leave.

Additionally, the school principal may allow excused absences for the following:

- Travel opportunity with educational benefits;
- Specialized, supplemental or extracurricular experience;
- Other circumstances that are mutually agreeable to the parent and school.

In these cases, students cannot already have absences in excess of 10 days. These absences must be pre-approved by the principal or designee in order to be excused. The parent or guardian must submit a request in written form to the principal outlining the travel opportunity and benefit of the absences. The principal shall ensure that an accurate record of all such absences is maintained and verified. The final decision to excuse such an absence(s) rests with the principal.

Make-up work may be requested before, during or after the student's absence. However, availability of make-up work

prior to an absence will be at the discretion of the teacher.

Absence for reasons other than those listed above as "excused" shall be considered unexcused.

Tardiness, Late Arrivals, and Early Dismissals

- Students are expected to be in their assigned classrooms and ready to begin when the bell rings. Students who arrive after the school day has started must report to the main office to check in before going to class.

- Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, and other appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

- Car trouble and similar routine transportation issues will be recorded as unexcused tardies.

- Students who must leave school before dismissal due to a valid reason must be checked out through the main office and signed out by a parent or guardian. Telephone calls or notes will not be accepted in place of in-person sign-out.

- Tardies and early dismissals for medical appointments will be excused only when appropriate medical documentation is provided.

- Repeated tardiness, excessive late arrivals, or frequent early dismissals may be addressed under the district's attendance protocol and could result in action related to habitual truancy. All tardies and early dismissals are recorded and become part of the student's attendance record.

When Attendance Is a Concern

<u>Our Commitment</u>
In accordance with Georgia law and Senate Bill 123, the district emphasizes early intervention, documentation, family engagement, and supportive responses to attendance concerns. Students may not be expelled solely due to absenteeism. Court involvement is used only as a last resort after reasonable, documented efforts to support attendance have been implemented

<u>Step 1: Early Support and Communication</u>
Schools monitor attendance daily and begin outreach as soon as unexcused absences occur or when attendance patterns indicate concern. Consistent with the district attendance protocol, families may be contacted by phone, email, ParentSquare, or written notice. The purpose of Step 1 is early identification, communication of attendance expectations, and problem-solving to address barriers to attendance. Teachers and school staff may review attendance data, clarify excused versus unexcused absences, and provide initial school-based supports to prevent further absences and escalation. All communication and interventions are documented.

<u>Step 2: Attendance Support Team (AST) Meeting</u>
When a student reaches eight (8) unexcused absences, or when attendance data shows the student is approaching chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of instructional days for any reason), the school advances to Step 2 of the attendance process. Prior to this step, teachers and the school counselor have implemented and documented early interventions. At Step 2, the school counselor contacts the Coordinator of Student and Family Services and coordinates a formal Attendance Support Team (AST) meeting with the parent or guardian. The AST includes, at a minimum, an administrator, school counselor, Coordinator of Student and Family Services, and the parent or guardian. Student participation may be requested when appropriate based on age and circumstances. During the AST meeting, the team reviews attendance history, prior documented interventions, and contributing factors impacting attendance. A documented Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) is developed. Interventions may include school-based supports and referrals to community or outside agencies, such as CHINS services, mental health supports, or other family resources,

to address identified barriers. Attendance progress is monitored, and interventions are adjusted as needed.

Step 3: Compliance Review and Escalation

If attendance concerns continue and a student reaches fifteen (15) unexcused absences, or if chronic absenteeism persists despite documented interventions, the attendance process advances to Step 3.
At this stage, the school counselor refers the case to the Coordinator of Student and Family Services, who acts i in the capacity of the Attendance Officer, to conduct a formal compliance review. This review includes examination of attendance data, prior interventions, parent communication, and implementation of the Attendance Improvement Plan. Based on the compliance review, the Coordinator of Student and Family Services determines appropriate next steps, which may include additional school-based or community supports, referral to outside agencies, or escalation to the court system when required to ensure compliance with Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law. Court referral is considered a last resort and occurs only after required notifications and documented interventions have been completed.

Parent Excused Absences

Parents or guardians are responsible for reporting the reason for a student's absence. To be considered excused, a written explanation must be submitted within three (3) school days of the student's return to school. A parent excuse may be provided in one of the following ways: a signed written note sent with the student, a ParentSquare message to the student's homeroom teacher, an email to the homeroom teacher, or a fax sent to the school.

Parent or guardian excuses may be used for up to ten (10) school days per year. After the tenth parent-excused absence, additional absences will be recorded as unexcused unless valid medical documentation or other approved documentation is provided.

All excuses must include the student's full name, the date(s) of the absence, and the reason for the absence. The principal or system attendance officer may request additional documentation to determine whether an absence qualifies as excused.

Excused absences may include, but are not limited to, documented medical appointments or illness; court appearances; religious holidays; military or National Guard obligations; required government appointments; death or serious illness of an immediate family member (parent or guardian, sibling, grandparent, foster parent, or another adult living in the home in a parental role); school-approved activities or college visits for secondary students; and emergencies approved by school administration.

Important: Not all absences are automatically excused. Absences may be recorded as unexcused if documentation is not submitted within the required timeframe, if the reason does not meet excused criteria under state or local guidelines, or if the annual limit for parent-excused absences has been exceeded.

In case of extended illness, hospitalization or injury, the parent should apply for hospital homebound service. Hospital homebound service should be applied for immediately when absences of ten (10) days or more are anticipated for the student. The student's principal along with the school counselor can assist with this process. For more information on Hospital Homebound, please refer to the following link: https://www.lee.k12.ga.us/departments/social-services

Absences Due to Pregnancy

A student who is or becomes pregnant during the school year is expected to continue attending school unless a licensed treating physician provides written medical documentation stating that the student is unable to attend due to pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition.

If a physician determines that the student is medically unable to attend school, the parent or guardian may submit a written Request for Homebound Services along with the required medical documentation. Homebound services will be considered and, if approved, provided in accordance with district procedures and state guidelines.

Excused absences related to pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions will be treated the same as any other medically

excused absence. Missed work may be made up under the same terms and requirements applicable to all excused absences. Upon return to school, the student may be required to provide updated medical clearance if applicable.

Students who become pregnant may request to attend the Transitional Learning Center (TLC) if they or their parents/guardians feel the pregnancy will interfere with normal school activities. A pregnant student transferring to the Transitional Learning Center (TLC) may elect to return to her regular school at any time.

Make-Up Work

If a student is absent for any excused reason, the student shall make arrangements with the teacher within three school days after he/she returns to school to make up missed work. In making arrangements for make-up work, the teacher should consider the type of illness, the length of time absent, and the amount of make-up work due in all classes.

Long term assignments such as research papers, special projects, etc. are due on or before the due date even if the student is absent on the date the assignment is due. In unusual cases, extenuating circumstances will be given consideration. Please refer to the school handbook for further details.

Dexter Mosely Act/Homeschool Students

Under the Dexter Mosely Act (Senate Bill 42), home study students in grades 6 through 12 are eligible to participate in extracurricular and interscholastic activities in the Lee County School District. In order to participate, home study students must be homeschooled for at least 12 months prior to registration and complete at least one qualifying course during any semester the student participates in an activity. A "qualifying course" means an on-site class, an online course facilitated by Lee County School District or a dual enrollment course. Participation is only available at the public school a home study student would attend based on his or her address.

To enroll a home study student in at least one Lee County School course, the online registration process must be followed and all required documents provided. Refer to the specific items needed for new student registration posted on our website in order to ensure all of the required paperwork is in order. Families interested in enrolling under the Dexter Mosely Act must complete the same online enrollment application as full-time Lee County School System students.

When completing the Student Demographics Section of the application, please check the box labeled *"Is this student enrolling under the Dexter Mosely Act (For Homeschool Students)?*". Registration must take place at least 30 calendar days before the first school day of the semester in which a home study student will enroll in a qualifying course.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Georgia law and local protocol states employees of the Lee County School System report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to an administrator/designee or their supervisor (click here for policy).

Supervision of Students at School

Students are under the supervision of school staff during the school day. The school is not responsible for students on school grounds during any time other than the school day or during school-sponsored events after the school day.

Schools are not responsible for supervising students more than 30 minutes before the start of the school day each morning.

Student Supervision

- Middle Schools: 7:30 AM – 3:45 PM
- Transitional Learning Center: 7:45 AM – 3:45 PM

Transfer Students

A student must be in good standing and must have no disciplinary action pending against him/her by the school he/she is leaving in order to be eligible to enroll in any other school in the Lee County School System.

School Counseling Services

Students may experience personal, social, or emotional concerns that can impact their learning and overall well-being. Schools have a responsibility to provide a comprehensive guidance and counseling program that supports students' academic, social, and emotional development. School counseling services are designed to help students develop skills, address concerns, and access resources that promote success in school and beyond. Information and support are provided in an objective, developmentally appropriate manner.

As part of the comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors provide classroom guidance lessons aligned with state standards and student needs. These lessons may address topics such as academic skills, social-emotional learning, safety, personal boundaries, and healthy decision-making. In accordance with Georgia law, schools will also provide instruction required under Erin's Law, which is designed to help students recognize unsafe situations, understand personal safety, and know how to seek help from a trusted adult. Parents or guardians who wish to have their child opt out of Erin's Law instruction should communicate this request directly with the school counselor.

School counselors may also offer small-group counseling to support students with shared needs, such as attendance concerns, social skills, coping strategies, or academic engagement. Small groups are short-term, goal-focused, and supportive in nature. Once classroom guidance lessons or small-group counseling opportunities are planned, the school counselor will reach out to families to share additional details, including the purpose and focus of the group when applicable.

The school counseling program is intended to complement instruction and support families by providing proactive, preventive, and responsive services that help students thrive academically and personally.

MEDICATION

Prescription Medications

Medication administration in schools is discouraged unless medically necessary for the student's health, safety, and optimal learning. If medications can be given at home, before or after school hours, please do so. However, if medication administration is absolutely necessary during school hours, the following procedures must be followed:

- Contact the nurse at your student's school in order to discuss the procedure.
- Once approved, complete the district approved form.
- The parent/guardian or student (age appropriate) must transport medication to the health clinic or main office immediately upon arrival to school. Controlled medications should not be transported on the bus.
- The first dose of any new medication or new dosage must be given at home where the parent/guardian can monitor for potential side effects and adverse reactions.
- A nurse is not always available to assist in the administration of the medication; therefore, the student may be assisted by an adult designated by the principal.
- Medication that is prescribed to be taken once, twice, or three times a day will not be given at school unless the physician specifically states a time during the school day which it is to be given. (e.g. an antibiotic and/or other medication which is to be given three times daily should be given before the child leaves for school, when he/she gets home, and at bedtime)
- If medication is required at lunch daily (e.g. medication for ADD), the physician must specifically state time to be given on prescription.
- Prescription medications must be in the original prescription bottle, clearly labeled with the student's name, physician's name and contact information, medication name and strength, amount given per dose, route and time of administration, and dispensing pharmacy. We request that you ask the pharmacist to give you two labeled prescription bottles so that you have one bottle at home and one at school.
- The school staff will have the right to refuse to give medication that is questionable or expired.
- Narcotic and/or other prescription pain medications (e.g. Tylenol with codeine, hydrocodone, etc)

will not be administered at school and the student cannot be at school under the influence of such medications.

- The prescribing physician must complete and sign, along with a parent/guardian, an Authorization to Give Medication at School in order for school staff to administer medication.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the school of any changes in the administration of his/her student's medications. A new Authorization to Give Medication at School is required for any change in medication given at school.
- If these procedures are not followed, medication will not be dispensed at school.
- Unused medication will be disposed of unless picked up within one week after the medication is discontinued and/or at the end of the school year.

Over-the-Counter, Non-Prescription Medication

- All over-the-counter medications must be provided by the parents/guardians.
- Medications will only be administered within the parameters of the directions on packaging and for the complaints specified by the parent/guardian on the district approved form.
- School staff will not administer OTC medication for more than 5 consecutive school days without a note/order from their medical provider.
- Unused medication will be disposed of at the end of the school year unless picked up by parent/guardian.
- All students who carry medication must adhere to the code of conduct re: sharing medications, selling meds, etc.

6-8th Grade:

- Students may carry medications in the following categories with them during the school day, field trips or other school-related activities, if parental permission is provided in advance on the district-approved form. A copy of the signed form will be kept in the clinic as well as with the student.
    - acetaminophen
    - antacids
    - cough or throat lozenges
    - ibuprofen
    - Midol
    - oral/topical antihistamines

A. All other medications must be stored in the clinic, which may be administered only with parental permission provided on the completed district-approved form.

9-12th Grade:

- High school students may carry medications in the following categories with them during the school day, field trips or other school-related activities.
    - acetaminophen
    - antacids
    - aspirin
    - cough or throat lozenges
    - ibuprofen
    - Midol
    - oral/topical antihistamines

Parents of middle and high school students who do not wish for their student to carry their own OTC medications have the option of storing these medications in the school health clinic to be administered by school health staff. They will be administered only with signed parental permission provided on the completed district-approved form.

Transitional Learning Center (TLC)

- Students are not permitted to carry any medications on their person.
- All over-the-counter medications must be provided by the parents/guardians.
- All medications must be stored in the clinic and will only be administered with parental permission provided on the district approved form.
- Medications will only be administered within the parameters of the directions on packaging and for the complaints specified by the parent/guardian on the district approved form.
- School staff will not administer OTC medication for more than 5 consecutive school days without a note/order from their medical provider.
- Unused medication will be disposed of at the end of the school year unless picked up by parent/guardian.

Health Records

Georgia Law requires that every student enrolled in Georgia public schools have a valid Certificate of Immunization (GA Form 3231) on file. Non-compliance of this law will prevent the child from attending school unless a Religious Exemption for school immunization is provided. Out-of-state transfer students are given a reasonable grace period to furnish the school with the appropriate Certificate of Immunization. Vaccinations and vaccination records may be obtained from the County Health Department or from your private physician.

Georgia Law also requires that all children enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program or public school must have a Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (Form 3300/EEDN). Your local health department or physician can conduct these screenings and complete this form. Out-of-state transfer students are given a reasonable grace period to furnish the school with the appropriate certificate.

SECURITY OF STUDENT RECORDS

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, you have a right to:

- Inspect and review, within 45 days of a request, the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student aged 18 or older, your own education records (FERPA rights transfer to the student at age 18 or upon enrollment in a postsecondary institution). Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent will make arrangements for access and provide notice of such arrangements.
- Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. To request the school district to amend a record, parents or eligible students should write to the school principal, specify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorize disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a member of the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, or therapist or online educational services, such as electronic data storage; or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee) or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. The district allows school officials to access only student records in which they have a legitimate educational interest. School officials remain under the district's control with regard to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information, which may be used only for the purposes in which disclosure was made and cannot be

released to other parties without authorization. Upon request, the school district forwards educational records without prior consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

- The Lee County Board of Education has designated the following information as directory information:
    - Student's name;
    - Student's month and day of birth;
    - School at which student is enrolled;
    - Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
    - Weight and height of athletic team members used in information for the public;
    - Dates of attendance at schools within the district;
    - Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in the Lee County School System;
    - Photograph used to publicize awards, honors, extracurricular activities, or school promotions;
    - Grade level

    Unless a parent/guardian or eligible student notifies the principal that this information not be designated as "directory information" for the individual student, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters or institutions of higher learning, upon request, with the name, address, and telephone numbers unless parents have advised the school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. Parents/guardians/eligible students who wish to exercise this right must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within ten (10) days after officially enrolling in school or within ten (10) days of the date of the receipt of this notice.

Parents/guardians/eligible students may file with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the Board of Education to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder. 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, D.C. 20202-4605.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

Parents and eligible students (18 or older or emancipated minors) shall be notified at the beginning of the school year of the approximate dates during the school year when any of the activities listed below are expected to be scheduled. In accordance with Board policies, prior written consent must be obtained from parents before students are required to submit to any survey that contains questions about one or more of the areas listed in subparagraph (1)(A) and that is funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education. You have the right to inspect any survey or instrument used in the collection of information under subparagraphs (1)(A) and (1)(B) before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and to opt your student out of participation in any activities described in paragraph (1) in accordance with procedures developed by the Superintendent or Principal.

A. The administration of any survey containing one or more of the following items:
    a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
    b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
    c. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
    d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
    e. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
    f. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, administers;
    g. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
    h. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student.
B. Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from

students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose).

C. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

Parents/guardians may, upon request, inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their student.

The school is required by federal law to give this notice to parents. However, the school does not have scheduled any such activities as are described in paragraph 1. If any such activities are initiated during the school year, you will be notified accordingly and will be afforded all the rights as described herein.

LUNCHROOM PROCEDURES

Free/Reduced Lunch Forms: LCSS operates under the National School Lunch & School Breakfast federal program. Applications are provided to each student for their families to apply for free or reduced lunches. Applications must be filled out completely and returned for approval each year, or applications can be filled out online at www.schoolcafe.com- apply for benefits.

LCMS-East, LCMS-West, TLC: Lunch: $3.00 full pay, $0.40 reduced Breakfast: $1.75 full, $0.30 reduced Extra Milk: $1.00

To encourage good nutrition, breakfast and lunch are offered daily. Meal prices are available at www.lee.k12.ga.us under Departments-Food Services. Students desiring to purchase an additional lunch must pay the adult price. Students are responsible for disposing of their trash properly and leaving their table and chair in an orderly arrangement. Students are not allowed to leave campus for lunch. Students may bring a lunch from home, but students may not send out for lunch, accept delivery of food from off campus, or enter classrooms after checking in with a bag of food. The parking lots are off limits during school hours.

Money paid to charge lunch may only be used to purchase school lunches.

Students will not be allowed to charge over $23.75 for meals in the cafeteria. By allowing charges up to $23.75, students will continue to receive breakfast and lunch for a reasonable grace period in the event they forget to bring their money. After students have reached their charge limit, they will receive an alternate meal consisting of a sandwich and milk.

Although the Food Service program will make attempts to notify parents of account shortages, it is the responsibility of the parent to check account balances. Additional action will be taken if charges remain unpaid. The charge/no charge policy will be enforced to eliminate unnecessary debt within the School Nutrition Program. Federal Law prohibits anyone being in debt to a School Nutrition Program (2 CFR § 200.426 and applicable USDA regulations (7 CFR Part 210)).

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The discipline of students receiving services and/or accommodations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is subject to applicable state and federal laws, in addition to the Lee County School System Code of Student Conduct. To the extent any conflict exists, state and/or federal law will prevail. In accordance with the law, the Code of Student Conduct shall apply to all students unless a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan specifically states otherwise.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When it becomes necessary to impose consequences for disciplinary infractions, school administrators and

teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of consequence to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will consider the student's discipline history, the age of the student, and other relevant factors.

The following actions may be imposed for any violation of this Code of Conduct:

- Warning and/or conference with a school administrator, counselor, or social worker
- Loss of privileges
- Removal from class or activity
- Notification of parents
- Parent conference
- Work assignment
- Detention / Lunch Detention
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Short term suspension out of school (OSS)
- School bus suspension (for infractions occurring on school buses)
- Placement in the Transitional Learning Center (alternative education program - grades 6-12)
- Referral to a disciplinary tribunal for alternative placement, long-term suspension, or expulsion
- Suspension or expulsion from the school bus
- Saturday School (grades 9-12)
- Night School (grades 6-12)

Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The school will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer as outlined in Code Section 20-2-754.

Parents or students may elect not to go to a disciplinary hearing to contest whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline. In such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would involve waiving the right to a hearing in lieu of accepting the consequence agreed upon by the school and the parent/guardian. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved by the disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer, or by another designee determined by the Superintendent.

Before a student is suspended for ten days or less, the principal or designee will inform the student of the offense for which the student is charged and allow the student to explain his or her behavior. If the student is suspended, the student's parents will be notified if possible. School officials may involve law enforcement officials when evidence necessitates their involvement, or when there is a legal requirement that an incident be reported.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Detention

A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work or time missed, or to spend a specified amount of time as a disciplinary action. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after school.

Lunch Detention

A requirement that the student report to a specified location during lunch to eat in an area that is isolated from other students or interaction to make up work or time missed, or to spend their lunch in quiet reflection as a consequence for a minor discipline infraction.

In-School Suspension

In-school suspension (ISS) is a structured disciplinary action in which a student is isolated or removed from regular classroom activities but is not dismissed from the school setting. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to assign students to the in-school suspension program for a reasonable and specified period of time. When students are assigned to ISS, they are restricted from being on other school campuses or property and are restricted from attending or participating in any Lee County School programs or activities until the suspension is complete. An exception to this should be given in writing by the school administrator.

Short-Term Out of School Suspension (OSS)

OSS is a short-term suspension from school (10 days or less). During that time, the student is prohibited from being on other school campuses or property and is prohibited from attending or participating in any Lee County School System co-curricular or extracurricular programs or activities.

Transitional Learning Center (TLC)

The TLC was designed to serve students who have difficulty succeeding in the regular education environment. This difficulty may be academic or behavioral, or a combination of the two. Students may be placed in the TLC based on agreements between the home school principal (or designee), the director of the TLC, and the parent/guardian of the student. Students may also be placed at the TLC as a result of a due process hearing (discipline tribunal hearing), due to severe or chronic discipline infractions. Parents must be given notice of the due process hearing date and location in a timely manner before the hearing is held. Any student that has been adjudicated through the juvenile court system or regular court system and placed in any type of detained facility (YDC, RYDC, jail, etc.) may transition back into the school system through the TLC. In this case, the length of placement will be determined by the director of the TLC and the principal (or designee) of the home school.

Students may also be placed in the academic section of the TLC based on specific criteria. This placement includes necessary consent from students, parents, the school administration, and the TLC. Parents should contact the principal or guidance counselor for more information.

Students are prohibited from driving to, on, or from the TLC campus. Students in the academic section of TLC with the proper parking permits from the high school are permitted to drive to the high school, then ride the transfer bus to and from TLC. Students in the discipline section of TLC may not drive to school whatsoever.

Offenses which would result in an assignment to the Transitional Learning Center are generally the same as those outlined for out of school suspension in this Code of Student Conduct; however, students may be placed for other infractions.

Students assigned to the discipline section of the Transitional Learning Center are prohibited from being on

other school campuses or property and are prohibited from attending or participating in any Lee County School System co-curricular or extracurricular programs or activities. This restriction remains in force until the students have completed their assignment to the Transitional Learning Center. If a student has been placed at the Transitional Learning Center on two previous occasions, the next tribunal may result in a minimum of a 12-month suspension.

Parents/Guardians of students returning to their home school from a placement at TLC during the school year are required to attend a re-entry meeting before the student returns to his/her home school. This meeting may include the development of a behavior contract.

School Bus Suspension
Principals or his/her designee may deny a student the privilege of riding a school bus based on misconduct of the student. This action will be for a reasonable and specified period of time.

Physical Restraint
Principals or designated staff members trained in safety management may use reasonable physical restraint when harm is imminent, a risk of harm to themselves or others. Any restraint must be implemented in accordance with the procedures and techniques in which personnel have been formally trained. Law enforcement may be contacted to assist when necessary. Parents/guardians will be notified on the same school day (or as soon as is practicable) when any restraint is used, in accordance with Georgia State Board Rule 160-5-1-.35.

Dress Code
The policy of the Lee County Board of Education is that personal appearance is an essential element in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, it is expected that students dress in such a manner that will ensure their health and safety while at school. Furthermore, the dress and personal appearance may not be disruptive or interfere with the legitimate interest and welfare of the students.

Dress expectations for Middle School Students

- Clothing should cover the body from mid-chest to mid-thigh. For example, all clothing should be non-revealing in the chest area and midriff area whether standing or sitting.
- Skin should not be visible 6 inches above the knee when students are wearing shorts, jeans, or leggings containing holes or tears.
- Hats and caps, bandanas, and other head coverings are not allowed.
- No clothing with any reference to drugs, sex, alcohol, violence or profanity, and gang affiliation clothing, accessories, styles will not be allowed to be worn at school.
- No tank tops, halter tops, tube tops, or tops that reveal parts of the midriff. Sleeveless shirts or dresses must cover the majority of the shoulder and be non-revealing in the chest area. Undershirts that can be seen through sheer shirts must follow this dress code.
- No body piercing (example- tongue, eyebrow, nose, navel or lip).
- No clothes/jeans with tears should show any skin that is 6 inches above the knee.
- If you wear a dress/skirt/top with no leggings, it must come to the knee.
- No face painting or stick on tattoos- unless it is spirit day.
- Tops should be no more than six inches above the knee when wearing leggings.
- No spike jewelry, clothing or wallet chains.
- Undergarments should not be visible.
- No pajama pants, pajama tops or bedroom shoes may be worn (unless a school activity permits such garments).
- Blankets are not allowed at school.
- Hair must be clean and groomed in a style not disruptive to the learning environment.
- Pants, shorts and/or skirts should be worn at the natural waistline. No sagging or showing of any undergarments or second layer of clothing including, but not limited to, gym shorts and

boxer shorts.
- Bodysuits (or any one-piece clothing item that is form-fitting to the body) are not allowed.

Transitional Learning Center

Academic Placement:

- No hats, pullover hoodies, bandanas/headbands, or sunglasses.
- Permitted footwear: athletic/tennis shoes, dress shoes, Crocs, or slides. No boots or heels are allowed.
- No clothing or accessories with any reference to drugs, sex, alcohol, gangs, violence, or profanity.
- No tops that reveal the chest area, or tops that reveal any parts of the midriff. All shirts must have straps that are at least 2 finger widths wide.
- Pants and jeans should fit around the waist and should be a proper length. No tears, holes, or frays more than 6 inches above the knee.
- Skorts, skirts, and dresses must come to the knee.
- No shorts, and no form-fitting yoga-type pants/leggings.
- Athletic shorts may not be worn under regular pants.
- Undergarments should never be visible.
- No pajama pants, pajama tops, or bedroom shoes/slippers may be worn.
- One body piercing is permitted. Example: a nose ring is permitted, but you may not have a nose ring AND any other body piercing.
- No spiked jewelry, clothing, or wallet chains.
- Blankets are not allowed at school.
- No purses, bookbags, or pencil pouches are allowed by any student.

Discipline Placement:

- Follow the academic placement in addition to the following:
    - Shirts must be golf/tennis/polo-style with collar, long or short sleeves. Long sleeved dress shirts are also permitted. Any solid color is permitted.
    - Uniform pants must be khaki in color. No shorts allowed.

Any student violating the school dress code may be suspended for the remainder of the school day and may receive unexcused absences in the classes missed. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to determine what constitutes a violation of the dress code.

Sexual Harassment

The policy of the Lee County Board of Education forbids sexual harassment of or by any of its students or employees.

A. General Prohibitions and Definitions
    a. Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature - May include verbal or physical sexual advances, including subtle pressure for sexual activity; touching, pinching, patting, or brushing against; comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature; and sexually-oriented “kidding,” “teasing,” double entendre, and jokes.
    b. Sexual harassment- Sexual harassment can take many forms and it is not possible to define or itemize every aspect of the harassment forbidden by the School District. Sexual harassment may include conduct or speech that entails unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demands for sexual favors, taunts, threats, comments of a vulgar or demeaning nature, or physical contact that creates a hostile environment. There may be other speech or conduct which students experience as inappropriate or illegal harassment, all of which is forbidden. Sexual harassment defined in the Federal Regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is defined as follows;

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of the District conditioning the provision of a District aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity; or
3. "Sexual assault"- an offense classified as a forcible or non-forcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system or the Federal Bureau of Investigation; or

"Dating Violence" – sex-based violence committed by a person-

A. who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
B. where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
    i. The length of the relationship.
    ii. The type of relationship.
    iii. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship; or

"Domestic Violence" - sex-based violence which includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabiting or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence law of the jurisdictions; or

"Sex-based Stalking" – engaging in a course of conduct directed to a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

A. fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or
B. suffer substantial emotional distress.

Students, parents or other persons wishing to report alleged sexual harassment of a student should promptly notify the student's school principal, school counselor, or Title IX Coordinator. All reports or complaints regarding alleged sexual harassment of students will be handled in accordance with Board Policies JAA and/ or JCAC, as applicable.

Reporting

A. Students or their parents or guardians who reasonably believe that other students or School Board employees in the Lee County School System are guilty of sexual harassment are encouraged to report such to the principal of their school and/or to the civil rights compliance administrator (names found on the following page).
B. Students or their parents/guardians are also urged to report unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by fellow students or School Board employees, whether or not such conduct interferes with the student's educational environment.
C. Confidentiality will be maintained an no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment. Students who are found guilty of sexual harassment or retaliate against one who has filed such charges are subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, warning, suspension, or expulsion disciplinary action.

District Internet and Network Access

As part of the curriculum and instruction, the Lee County School System provides students with access to a private computer network that serves all of the schools and programs in the district. Internet access is an integral part of the services offered and use of resources is a privilege, not a right. The school system utilizes a Children's Internet Protection Act (link: CIPA) compliant internet

content filter to block controversial material that is not appropriate for instruction. The network is designed to provide resources in support of instructional goals and objectives as well as school system administration. These resources are provided as a non-public forum. Computer technology facilitates learning through development of digital citizenship, communication, innovation, resource sharing, and access to information. Students using school system computers as well as the wireless network must adhere to the administrative guidelines regarding its use. Student browsing should not violate any of the prohibited uses and the school system reserves the right to monitor all computer activity by students.

Violating the established policies and administrative procedures shall be subject to revocation of privileges and potential disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action. Students will also adhere to the following prohibitions in the interest of personal safety. Prohibited uses include but are not limited to:

- Posting personal information about themselves or others (Personal contact information includes images, telephone numbers, social security numbers, email addresses, passwords, or home address);
- Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks (including bypassing firewalls);
- Searching for or accessing inappropriate sites;
- Photographing or recording employees, students, or visitors without their consent and the consent of school officials;
- Transmitting or sharing photographs, recordings conducted on school or school system locations without the consent of school officials;
- Transmitting or viewing threatening, pornographic, racist, or sexist material;
- Using any type of social media to bully or harass other students.

Students should:

- Utilize their school issued G Suite for Education accounts and not utilize personal accounts for school work;
- Maintain the privacy of their personal information;
- Adhere to copyright guidelines and avoid plagiarism;
- Strive to understand the importance of Digital Citizenship (Parent ProTech link: https://app.parentprotech.com/997/lee-county/en/signup?source=admin)

Discrimination/Harassment Grievance Procedure

Any student of the Lee County Schools who believes he/she has been discriminated against, harassed, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation, in any of the school system's education programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, religion, belief, national origin, ethnic group, or disability, may file a written complaint with the Lee County School System. Complaint may be filed using the discrimination/harassment report form or sexual harassment report form. Those complaints shall be processed and investigated in accordance with board policy GAAA/JAA.

Discriminatory Complaints Procedure

Complaints made to the Lee County School System regarding alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in violation of Title VI, on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX or on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act will be processed in accordance with the policies adopted by the Lee County Board of Education. For further information, you may contact the following administrators at (229) 903-2100:

- Title VI, Title IX: Dr. David Sims
- Section 504: Dr. Elizabeth Brand
- ADA: Mrs. Holly Strickland

Gender Equity in Sports
State law prohibits discrimination in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act O.C.G.A §20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Lee County School System does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. Inquiries, further information, or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the sports equity coordinator.

Student Clubs/Organizations
In accordance with state law, a list of student clubs or organizations for each school is located in the individual school's student agenda.

Parent Right to Know
In compliance with the requirements of the *Every Students Succeeds Act*, the Lee County School System would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student's teacher—
    - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
    - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
    - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher and/ or paraprofessional qualifications, please contact the Principal of your student's school. The name of the Principal and number of the school is located on the back of the Code of Conduct.

Gifted Education
Students, grades kindergarten through 12, in the Lee County School District who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual and/or creative abilities, exhibit an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excel in specific academic fields are provided with special instructional services by the Program for Gifted Students. The State Board of Education determines eligibility criteria for placement in the program. Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals may make referrals for consideration for eligibility for gifted services with knowledge of the student's abilities. For a summary of eligibility criteria or for further information about the Lee County School System Gifted Program, please visit the Teaching and Learning page on the Lee County School System website and view the Gifted Manual. If you should have specific questions regarding your child, please call the Instructional Supervisor/Assistant Principal at your child's school. For further information, you may contact the Gifted Learning Coordinator at 229-903-2100.

Special Education Program
The Lee County School System offers a free appropriate public education to all children, ages 3-21, who are eligible for special education and related services according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Specially designed instruction is provided through a continuum of services, ranging from least restrictive to most restrictive environments, depending on the specific needs of the student. The type and degree of services provided are determined through the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet the unique needs of the child with a disability. For more information, contact the Special Education Department at 229-903-2100.

Section 504
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States

Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

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

For more information regarding Section 504, or for questions or additional assistance, please contact the Section 504 Coordinator.

Federal Programs Complaint Procedures: The Lee County School System will monitor any complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of federal programs from parents(s) legal guardians(s), students and providers. Formal complaints filed in the Federal Programs Office shall include the following:

- A written statement of the allegation(s).
- A summary of the facts upon which the allegation(s) is based.
- Any documentation supporting the allegation(s).
- The complainant's contact information, including name address and telephone number.

Questions or complaints should be sent to the Federal Programs Director.

The Federal Programs Office will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing within 10 business days. The Federal Programs Office will investigate the allegations set forth in the complaint and make a determination as to whether the allegation(s) warrant further review or action. If necessary, the Federal Programs Office may conduct an on-site visit to clarify any issues raised by the complaint. The on-site investigation may include an examination of relevant records and conduct interviews of relevant persons to determine whether there has been a violation of any applicable state or federal law, guidelines, or rules. The Federal Programs Office shall send to all appropriate parties the steps necessary to resolve the complaint, including technical assistance activities, negotiations, and corrective actions to achieve compliance.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Use of Technology

The use of technology to provide educational material is not a necessity but a privilege. All members of the Lee County School System community agree to commit to the following responsible use guidelines:

I will:

- use digital devices, networks and software in school for **educational purposes and activities only,** unless specifically authorized by the school's administration.
- keep my personal information (including home/mobile phone number, mailing address, and user password) and that of others **private.**
- show **respect** for myself and others when using technology, including social media.
- give **acknowledgment to** others for their ideas and work.
- report **inappropriate** use of technology immediately.
- accept the **responsibility** for my device (school is **NOT** responsible for theft or damages).
- adhere to the rule of "no technology" in any type of **testing** environment.
- **comply** with my teachers' requests regarding the use of technology.

- utilize only the **LCSS network**.
- **turn my electronic device over** to a school teacher/administrator if under suspicion of causing problems or inappropriate use.
- **follow Internet safety** as per Lee County School System Board Policy IFBG.

Artificial Intelligence

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Lee County School System is intended to enhance the learning experience and prepare students for a tech-driven world. AI integration may be utilized under the direction of the classroom teacher. Unless explicitly permitted by the teacher for a specific assignment, all submitted work must be the original creation of the student. Using AI to generate essays, solve exam questions, or complete coursework without authorization is considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. When AI tools are permitted, students are required to provide full transparency by citing the specific tool used and describing how it contributed to the final project.

The ethical use of AI is a mandatory standard for all members of the school. The use of AI technologies to create, distribute, or amplify content that involves harassment, bullying, or the defamation of others is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the generation of "deepfakes," non-consensual imagery, or any AI-assisted messaging designed to intimidate or disparage peers or faculty. Misusing these tools to compromise the privacy or dignity of others will result in immediate disciplinary action, ranging from loss of technology privileges to suspension or expulsion, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Bullying (LCBOE Policy JCDAG)

Bullying is defined as follows: An act that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
    a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
    b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education or otherwise substantially infringing upon the rights of a student;
    c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
    d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Electronic communication includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

<u>Reporting Procedures</u>

1. Any student, parent, guardian, or school employee who witnesses or has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall report the incident to a school administrator or designated staff member as soon as possible.

2. Reports may be made verbally or in writing. Anonymous reports will be accepted and investigated to the extent possible.
3. School administrators must document all reported incidents of bullying and promptly initiate an investigation to determine whether bullying has occurred.

Investigation Procedures

1. Upon receiving a report of alleged bullying, the administrator or designee must begin an investigation within one school day.
2. All involved parties will be interviewed and relevant evidence collected.
3. The investigation should be completed within five school days, and findings will be documented.
4. The administration will also determine whether other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination should be implemented and what other steps should be taken. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken based on the findings, consistent with the school's Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary Action

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Conduct. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

Students found to have engaged in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action ranging from counseling or behavioral interventions to suspension or expulsion, in accordance with the severity and frequency of the behavior and the school's Code of Conduct.

Notification

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

Where appropriate, law enforcement or other agencies will be notified in accordance with state law and school policy.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against any student, parent, guardian, or school employee who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Conduct.

Prevention and Training

The school district shall provide age-appropriate bullying prevention programs for students and ongoing training for staff. Training will include recognition of bullying behaviors, reporting procedures, investigation protocols, and strategies to foster a positive school climate.

Policy Review and Publication

1. This policy shall be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to comply with state law and best practices.
2. The policy shall be published in student and employee handbooks, posted on the Lee County School System website, and distributed to all parents and guardians at the beginning of each school year. Information on the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition shall also be posted at each school.

Drug Abuse

The intent of the Lee County Board of Education is to comply and to cooperate fully with the laws regarding illegal drug use and drug abuse. The Board of Education understands that there are times when prescription drugs may be used by students for medical reasons. Under these circumstances, the student or his/her parent(s) or guardian should register the prescription with the principal or his/her designated person(s) in order to protect the student.

Local School Rules and Regulations
Principals with the approval of the Superintendent may supplement the Code of Student Conduct with rules and regulations that are applicable to the particular school. These rules shall not be contrary to the rules of the Code of Student Conduct. Such rules and regulations shall be reasonable and related substantially to the maintenance of discipline and the implementation of the academic program of the school. Adequate notice of all rules and regulations shall be given and violators shall be treated fairly and consistently.

Threats of Suicide, Self-Harm, or Harm to Others: Crisis Response Procedures
The Lee County School System takes all statements, gestures, behaviors, or written communications indicating suicidal thoughts, self-harm, or threats of harm to others seriously. Student and campus safety is the highest priority. Any student expressing such concerns will be immediately supervised and referred to a trained administrator, school counselor, or designated crisis response staff member. In accordance with the district's Crisis Response Protocol, a suicide and/or threat risk assessment will be conducted to determine the level of concern and necessary safety measures. Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible. If the assessment indicates moderate or high risk of harm to self, the parent or guardian will be required to obtain a same-day, in-person evaluation by a qualified, licensed mental health professional. The student may not return to regular school activities until appropriate documentation and recommendations are provided to the school.

If a student presents a credible threat of harm to others, district threat assessment procedures will be implemented, which may include administrative action, safety planning, referral for evaluation, and involvement of law enforcement when appropriate. If a parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to obtain a required evaluation and the student presents an immediate safety risk, emergency services may be contacted.

Confidentiality will be maintained as permitted by law; however, information related to safety concerns cannot remain confidential and may be shared with parents, appropriate school staff, emergency responders, or law enforcement as necessary to protect the student and others.

Following evaluation, the school may develop a safety plan and require ongoing communication with the family to support the student's safe return and continued well-being.

Student Personal Belongings
Personal belongings may not be brought to school or on field trips or off campus travel (co-curricular or athletics) unless they have been approved as part of a class assignment. If such items are brought to school, they may be taken up and kept in the school office until parents come to claim them. Also, students are subject to disciplinary action for bringing inappropriate items to school without the consent of the school administration. The School District is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal belongings.

Per Georgia's Distraction-Free Education Act (HB 340), students in grades K-8 may not possess or use personal electronic devices (including, but not limited to, cellphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, earbuds, and tablets) on school property during the instructional day, from arrival to dismissal. Exceptions may only be made in extreme cases of documented medical needs or IEP/504 accommodations that have been approved by school administration. Violations will result in progressive discipline up to confiscation (returned only to the parent/guardian).

Reporting of Criminal Conduct
Any action or failure to act by a student which is a violation of any law or which an administrator or teacher believes may be a violation of a law may be reported to the School Resource Officer (SRO). School Resource Officers The primary goal of the School Resource Officer (SRO) is to provide a safe learning environment for the school community. It is the duty of the SRO to uphold the constitution, all applicable laws, and protect the citizens. The existence of officers on school campuses and at school-sponsored events is designed to establish presence and create a safe environment. The SRO works to establish positive relationships with the school community, and is a valued resource for students, parents, and teachers regarding matters of safety, security, and criminal law.

Whenever events of crime or threats to safety occur, the SRO can respond within his or her capacity.

Student Allegations of Employee Misconduct
Instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student should be reported to the principal or to the Human Resource Services Department at (229) 903-2100. As authorized by Georgia law, if it is determined that a student deliberately falsified or misrepresented information alleging employee misconduct, the student will be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion. No student who makes a good-faith report of employee misconduct, however, even if unsubstantiated after a thorough investigation, shall face any disciplinary action.

Student Questioning by Officials
School Administrators: Principals and Assistant Principals have the duty and authority to question students for the purpose of ensuring a safe and orderly school environment. Though it is important to inform parents about issues of concern, parental consent is not required prior to the questioning of students.

Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS): DFCS officials investigating suspected child abuse and/or neglect are permitted to conduct reasonable interviews and inspections of children. Notice to parents is neither required nor desirable when the object of that investigation may be the parents.

Guardian Ad Litem: The Guardian Ad Litem is a trained professional appointed by the court to represent the best interests of minor children in court cases. Any request to interview a student or to inspect the student's school record should be submitted, in writing, along with court documentation establishing the Guardian Ad Litem relationship with the child.

Student Searches
To maintain order and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school administrators may search a student, student desks, student work spaces, student learning devices, and student lockers at any time. As well as, a student may be searched if administrators have reason to believe the student is in possession of an article or substance which is illegal, prohibited by school or district rules, or potentially dangerous. Students will be given the opportunity to produce the item requested, or to volunteer to empty their pockets, purses, or book bags. School administrators may use an electronic wand device for the detection of illegal articles. Students may be asked to remove their jacket, vest, shoes, or socks. A School Resource Officer will be called if search yields illegal substances or other illegal materials. A student who refuses to allow an administrator to search him/her will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or a disciplinary hearing.

Metal detectors or drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities that occur outside normal school hours or off of the school campus at the discretion of administrators.

School Safety Zone
It shall be unlawful for any person to carry or possess or have under such person's control while within a safety zone (all property in, on, within 1,000 feet of any real property owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, school board and used for elementary or secondary education) or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school, any weapon or explosive compound. Any person who violates this subsection shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than $10,000.00, by imprisonment for not less than two nor more than 10 years or both. This paragraph excludes any instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher and principal.
Reference: O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1

Video Surveillance
In an effort to maintain order and discipline on school property and in school vehicles, LCSS utilizes a video surveillance system. However, students do not have permission to tape teachers or other students without their consent. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

Visitors
Georgia Law prohibits visitors on a public school campus for social or nonessential reasons. Students are not to bring visitors to school with them or meet visitors around fringe areas of the campus during school hours. Violations of this rule could result in arrest of visitors and serious disciplinary action taken with students. Visitors with specific purposes are welcome and asked to check in with the main office. Visitors should use the front parking lot.

To promote uninterrupted instructional time and for the protection and safety of our students, we are following these visitation guidelines:

1. All visitors, including parents, are to stop in the office and receive a visitors' pass.
2. Appointments will be made for conferences and classroom visitation.
3. To prevent interruptions, younger children should not accompany parents during visitations.

Anonymous Alerts
Students or parents in the school community can anonymously report any suspicious activity, bullying, or other student-related issues to a school administrator by completing an electronic form through Anonymous Alerts. The link is at the top of the Lee County School System web page, or may be accessed at https://tips.anonymousalerts.com/leecountyschools.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

School Day
The school day for middle school will begin at 8:05 am and end at 3:05 pm. The first bell will ring at 8:00 am and the tardy bell will ring at 8:05 am. Students will need to be in class by 8:05 am.

Office Hours
The front office is open each day from 7:30 a.m. until 3:45 PM. It is here that any necessary contact between the home and the school is made. All record keeping and other school business takes place in the administrative office. Please call the school if you have any questions. Emergency calls after 3:45 PM: 903-2100 (Central Office) or 903-2212 (Bus Shop).

Hours of Supervision
Student supervision is provided from 7:30 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. Students who are on the campus before or after supervised hours may be picked up by the school resource officer and transported to the police department for parent pickup. Students who are continuously on the campus after supervised hours may be asked to use the bus transportation provided by the school system.

6-8 Pass/Play Policy
All students participating in any interscholastic competitive activity must meet the requirements of State Board Policy of No Pass/No Participate. Briefly, the requirements are as follow:

- The grading period is one semester (18 weeks).
- Students must meet Lee County Board of Education promotion policy.
- Any interscholastic activity on a day preceding a school day may not begin prior to the end of the regular school day and must end by 7:00 PM.
- A physical examination completed on the state mandate form provided by the school and completed by a medical doctor is required for all students prior to any involvement in any athletic activity; a physical is valid for one calendar year. Completed forms will be on file at the school.
- Special education students must meet eligibility requirements as specified by the student's IEP.
- Ineligible students in athletics are prohibited from practicing, traveling, or trying out for a team or program.
- In order to participate in an interscholastic event, students must be present for more than ½ the school day. Check-ins must be by 11:30 AM. Extenuating circumstances may be considered for approval by the Principal.
- All students must have all documents (physicals, concussion forms, etc.) on file before participation. This includes students who transfer in during the school year.
- Holds will be placed on academic transcripts for any players with unpaid fees/fines.

The Board of Education is responsible for regulating competitive interscholastic activities in grades 6-8, and therefore adopts the requirements set forth in State Board Rule 160-5-1-.18 Competitive Interscholastic Activities in Grades 6-12, as to student eligibility, physical examinations, time restrictions, seasonal practice, special provisions and appeals. For eligibility purposes, all students in grades 6-8 must be promoted to the next grade to participate in competitive interscholastic activities. In addition, if a student fails 2 or more academic subjects in one semester period, they are ineligible for participation the following semester.

Students in ISS or OSS are prohibited from participation in practices or contests on the day(s) that the suspension is being served.

Visitors/Volunteers
Visitors are welcome but should report to the main office. Visitors are to obtain and wear a visitor's pass. Parents must complete a request to visit in the classroom, and this request must be approved in advance. All volunteers in the school system must complete an annual background check. This process can be completed by visiting the front office of the school.

Field Trips
Students attending school-sponsored trips must have written permission from parents. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner, or they will have forfeiture of future field trips in addition to application of school discipline procedures. Students are expected to be in good academic and behavioral standing to be excused for educational field experiences. Sometimes, money paid for field trips is nonrefundable should the student be unable to attend.
Chaperones should be the parent/legal guardian/grandparent of the student and must be 21 or older. All chaperones will be required to complete a volunteer background check through the Lee County Sheriff's Office using the form that is available at the Board of Education Central Office. These forms are completed by the Sheriff's Office, then picked up by district personnel, who will approve or deny background checks, then place the approved background checks in a file. All approved background checks must be approved and filed at least one week prior to the field trip. When a background check is approved, the chaperone will be cleared for events at any school in the system.

Non-Instructional Activities
Students are allowed a maximum of ten days (60 hours) for school sponsored activities as authorized by GADOE Rule 160-4-2-16. Such activities must be sponsored by the GHSA or a recognized educationally related local, state, regional, or national organization or college visitation/scholarship competition. Students are not counted absent for participating in non-instructional activities (NI days), but are responsible for all assignments or makeup work.

Approval of Additional School-Sponsored Non-instructional Absences: The Board of Education will observe the following procedures for the evaluation and approval of individual absences beyond the maximum ten days (60 hours) allowed for school-sponsored non-instructional activity.

- A written request for absence shall be submitted by the student through the school principal or his or her designee 30 days in advance of the anticipated date(s) of absences. Under emergency circumstances, the Superintendent may waive the 30-day requirement.
- The student's request must contain the dates of the anticipated absence, background information explaining the reasons for the first ten days of absences due to school sponsored non-instructional activities, and a rationale to support approval of additional days, including an explanation of how such additional activities away from class will be academically and instructionally beneficial to the student.
- The school principal will verify the reasons for the ten allowable absences and provide a recommendation for approval or disapproval of the request for additional absences.
- The Superintendent (or designee) will evaluate the student's request and the principal's recommendations and either approve or deny the request.

State Testing
The Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG) Assessments are designed to provide information about how well students are mastering the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. These assessments give students important feedback about their achievement and readiness for the next grade level, course, or future endeavors such as college or career, while also informing parents, educators, and the public about how well students are learning key content. The results serve as a barometer of the quality of educational opportunities across the state and are a key component of Georgia's accountability system, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is a comprehensive program spanning grades 3 through high school and measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted standards in the core content areas. Students in grades 6 through 8 take End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics, while students in grade 8 also take EOG assessments in Science and Social Studies. Additionally, middle school students enrolled in courses designated by the State Board of Education take End-of-Course (EOC) assessments. For more information, visit the Georgia Milestones Assessment System at Georgia Milestones Assessment System (https://gadoe.org/assessment-accountability/georgia-milestones/).

Guidelines for Testing Out of High School Courses

State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1.15 (AWARDING UNITS OF CREDIT AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER CREDIT AND/OR GRADES) provides the opportunity for students to "test-out" of any high school course for which there is an associated Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) Assessment as an attempt to earn credit for the course through the test out process. The only EOC course that is currently offered at the middle school level is Algebra Concepts & Connections. The Lee County School System only offers the test out option for courses that have an associated EOC assessment.

Eligibility for Test Out

Students must meet the following requirements to exercise the test out option for course credit:

1. Not currently or previously enrolled in the course
2. Have earned a grade of B or better in the most recent course that is the same content area of the course for which the student is attempting the EOC
3. Received a teacher recommendation from the teacher of the most recent course in the same content area for which the student is attempting the EOC
4. Received parent/guardian permission if the student is less than 18 years of age.
5. Be enrolled in Lee County Schools in order to participate in EOC testing that is offered in the district.

Consideration of the test out option will not be exercised for students without deliberation and clear evidence of the likelihood of student success both on the test itself and in future coursework/endeavors. Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria above will not be assessed for this purpose.

Test Administration Guidelines

Per state guidance, when allowing students to attempt to earn course credit through testing out, the district will:

1. Allow eligible students one opportunity only per course to demonstrate subject area competency.
2. Award applicable course credit to students who reach the distinguished achievement level on the EOC prior to taking the course. Once a test-out credit has been posted to a student's transcript, a student may not enroll in the course. If a student is enrolled in high school, the distinguished score will be recorded on the student's transcript and will be calculated in the student's grade point average (GPA). Honors, Accelerated, and Advanced Placement designations do not apply to course credits earned through the EOC test out option. If a student takes the EOC test out option prior to high school, the distinguished score will be recorded on the student's transcript but will not be calculated into the student's high school GPA.
3. Require students who do not reach the distinguished achievement level on the EOC to enroll in and complete the associated course when applicable. The student would be required to take the EOC again at the conclusion of the course regardless of their score during their attempt to test out.
4. Not permit students who are currently enrolled, or who have previously been enrolled, in a higher level course to attempt to earn credit for a lower level course through the test out process. For example, a student taking AP Physics may not attempt to earn credit for Physical Science by testing out.
5. Adhere to the system's local EOC testing calendar for administration of all EOC assessments, including those for the purpose of testing out. This stipulation is critical to ensure test security. For example, students taking the Algebra Concepts & Connections EOC for the purpose of testing out will be administered the test on the same day or consecutive days that the system is administering the Algebra Concepts & Connections EOC to all other students.
6. Allow students a maximum of three units of credit by demonstrating subject area competency through the test out option.

Test Out Process

The opportunity for students to test out will be offered during the June, August, September, and March administration EOC windows. The established fee for the administration of an EOC for the purpose of testing out is currently $50.00 per test. This fee is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian, and it must be paid at the time the test out option is requested. Students who reach the distinguished achievement level in order to earn course credit will be refunded the $50.00 fee. Students who attain the achievement level of Beginning Learner, Developing Learner, or

Proficient Learner will not earn course credit, nor will they be refunded the associated EOC fee. All requests for testing out must be submitted in advance by the stated deadline on the Request to Test Out form.

Further questions regarding the EOC test out option should be directed to your student's School Testing Coordinator or School Principal.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home with students at the end of every nine weeks. Numbers are used to report grades as follows:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- F= 69 and below

Honor Roll

Superintendent's Scholar	96-100
Principal's Scholar	90-100
Jr. Trojan Scholar	85-100

Students must have the above grades in all subjects including a yearly average of connections and physical education classes to qualify for Honor Roll each nine weeks grading period. Honor Roll for the year will be based on the students' yearly average as of the 4th nine-week grading period progress report. This average will be calculated separately for each subject. Students must meet the above criteria for each subject in order to be a Superintendent's Scholar, Principal's Scholar, or Jr. Trojan Scholar for the year.

The tardy policy for middle school is applicable to the number of unexcused tardies accumulated per semester. See the policy below:

- **3rd tardy:** Written Warning/Parent Contact from the teacher
- **4th tardy:** Detention (set by the teacher)
- **5th tardy:** Office Referral for ISS

All subsequent tardies will result in an office referral for ISS/OSS.

Students must be present every school day and must not have been tardy and/or checked out early more than 6 times to qualify for the perfect attendance recognition. The principal has the responsibility of making decisions relating to check-outs. A decision will be made in the best interest of the student when emergencies or unusual circumstances arise.

Code of Student Conduct

Grades 6-12

Lee County School System

School Year 2026-27

A teacher shall have the authority, consistent with board policy, to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or his designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. Any teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that violates the student code of conduct and
repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his/her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, shall file a report of such behavior with the principal or his/her designee.
The principal and teacher shall thereafter follow the procedures set forth in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A § 20-2-737-738.

The Superintendent shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from a classroom pursuant to the provisions of this law and the Superintendent and/or his designee shall develop procedures as necessary for implementation of this policy and this state law.

CLASSIFICATION OF VIOLATIONS
Violations of the Code of Student Conduct are grouped into four classes (Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV). Before determining the classification of a violation, the principal or his/her designee(s) will consult with the involved student(s) and school personnel. Once the classification of the violation is determined, the principal or his/her designated person(s) will implement the disciplinary procedure.
The classroom teacher may deal with classroom disruption by taking in-class disciplinary action, by contacting parents/guardians where appropriate, and/or by scheduling conferences with the parents/guardians and other school staff. When the action taken by the teacher is ineffective, or the disruption is severe, the student should be referred to the principal or his/her designee.

CLASS 1

1.01	**Behavior Detrimental to Learning** Any conduct and/or behavior that disrupts or distracts from the orderly educational process in the classroom or any other instructional setting.
1.02	**Participation in a prohibited organization** Participation in, supporting, or furthering the cause of any group or organization, either on campus or off campus, whose activity or proposed activity is disruptive to the orderly educational process.
1.03	**Refusal to Comply** Refusal to comply with directions given by a Lee County School System employee.
1.04	**Gambling** Participation in games of chance for money and/or other things of value.
1.05	**General Profanity** Intentional and/or non-direct use of profane, offensive or obscene language.
1.06	**Dress Code** Non-conformity to the dress code.
1.07	**PDA** Inappropriate public display of affection.
1.08	**Improper Sign Out** Leaving campus without signing out properly.

1.09	**Misuse of Property** Unauthorized and/or inappropriate use of school or personal property.
1.10	**Unauthorized Display or Distribution** Distribution or display of printed materials on school property or at a school activity without the approval of the principal or his/her designee.
1.11	**Offensive Touch (not sexual)** Offensive touching of another student (not of a sexual nature).
1.12	**Unauthorized Possession/Use - Electronic Devices (Distraction-Free Education Act – Grades K-8)** Unauthorized possession/use of electronic devices, to include (but not limited to) cell phones, earbuds, tablets, personal laptops, smartwatches, smart glasses, etc. ● 1st violation - Device taken up and returned at the end of the day with consequence. ● 2nd violation and after - Device will be picked up by a parent or guardian at his or her convenience during school hours. Student will receive consequences based on the "Class 2" table for violations.
1.13	**Unauthorized Sales/Purchases** Unauthorized purchase and/or sale of merchandise.
1.14	Any other violation which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances.
1.15	Soliciting, procuring, causing, encouraging, aiding, or assisting another to commit any of the foregoing violations.

Grades 6-12 - Class 1 Offenses and Consequences		
Offense number	**Minimum Consequence**	**Maximum Consequence**
1st violation	Conference / Warning	Parent Contact and 1 Day In School Suspension (ISS)
2nd violation	Detention and Parent Contact	Parent Contact and 1 Day ISS
3rd violation	Detention / Saturday School	Parent Contact and 2 days ISS
4th violation	Chronic Discipline Meeting and 1 Day ISS	Chronic Discipline Meeting and 3 Days ISS
5th violation	Parent Contact and 2 days ISS	1 Day Out of School Suspension (OSS)
6th violation	Parent Contact, Review Chronic Discipline Plan and 1 day OSS	Parent Contact, Review Chronic Discipline Plan and 3 days OSS
7+ violations	Parent Conference and 3-5 days OSS	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

Class 2

2.01	**Disrespect** Disrespect toward district employees, students, or visitors.
2.02	**Biting**
2.03	**Defiance of School District Employee's Authority** Any verbal or non-verbal refusal to comply with a lawful direction or order from a Lee County School System employee.
2.04	**Tobacco Possession/Use** Possession or use of any tobacco product or "vapor" device and/or paraphernalia. The use or possession of a tobacco product or Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) device (including, but not limited to, e-cigarettes, vape pens, vapes, personal vaporizers, tank systems, mechanical mods, etc.) or any other "inhaling" device or innovation/paraphernalia. *Note: All items collected are subject to testing by law enforcement to determine the presence of THC.*
2.05	**Matches and/or Lighter Possession/Use/Transfer** Possession, use, and/or transfer of matches or a lighter.
2.06	**Vandalism / Criminal Mischief** Intentional and deliberate action resulting in injury or damages of less than $200 to public property or the real or personal property of another.
2.07	**Petty Theft / Larceny / Stealing** Taking and/or carrying away of property valued at less than $50 belonging to or in lawful possession or custody of another
2.08	**Possession / Use of Gambling Device** The possession or use of any device or item which can be used to promote or facilitate gambling. The intentional, unlawful participation in gambling activities.
2.09	**Theft / Possession of Lost Property** Obtaining or exerting control over the property of another which is known to have been lost or mislaid, and failing to take reasonable measures to discover and notify the owner. Possession of stolen property while knowing the property is stolen.
2.10	**Threats / Extortion** Verbal, written, printed, or electronic communication that threatens injury to a person, or to the property or reputation of a person. This may include the intent to extort money or any pecuniary advantage whatsoever, or the intent to compel the threatened person (or any other person) to do any act or refrain from doing any act against his/her will. *Note: Completion of the threat, either by the victim complying with the demands or the carrying out of the threats against the victim, constitutes a Class III offense.*
2.11	**Trespassing** Willfully entering or remaining in or on any structure, conveyance or property without being authorized, licensed or invited, or having initially been authorized, licensed or invited, having been warned by an authorized person to depart and refusing to do so. Unauthorized presence, entering or remaining on public school property or attending any school related activity while under any kind of home suspension,

	assignment to the Transitional Learning Center or suspension / expulsion.
2.12	**Offensive Materials** Possession of obscene and/or offensive materials.
2.13	**Obscene/Offensive Communication/Manifestation** Use of obscene and/or offensive communications and/or manifestations (verbal, written, gesture) directed toward another person and/or communications and/or manifestations (verbal, written, gesture) which are deemed to create a hostile environment.
2.14	**Excessive Tardiness** Repeatedly reporting late to school or class.
2.15	**Skipping Class / School** Unauthorized absence from class or school and/or unauthorized leaving class/campus.
2.16	**Pocket Knife Possession (Unintentional)** Unintentional possession of a pocket knife (blade less than two inches).
2.17	**False Information** Intentionally providing false information to a school district employee, including, but not limited to, student information data and the concealment of information directly related to school business.
2.18	**Simple Assault** Intentionally touching or striking another student against his/her will or without his/her consent.
2.19	**Honor Code Violations and/or Cheating** Giving and/or receiving unauthorized aid, assistance, or an unfair advantage on any assignment or assessment.
2.20	**Inappropriate Use of Technology** Use of technology resources to: ● Create, send, display, and/or download offensive/unauthorized messages, pictures, or other media; ● Harass, insult, or attack others; ● Use obscene, profane, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language; ● Violate copyright laws; ● Intentionally waste technology resources; ● Participate in online chat rooms, direct messaging, or other forms of online communication without the permission and supervision of an authorized school district employee.
2.21	**Possession / Use of a Disruptive Device** Possession and/or use of any device which could disrupt the educational environment or process (e.g. laser light pointer, “stink bombs”, sirens, or any other device that causes such a disruption)
2.22	Any other violation which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances.
2.23	Soliciting, procuring, causing, encouraging, aiding, or assisting another to commit any of the foregoing violations.

Grades 6-12 - Class 2 Offenses and Consequences		
Offense	**Minimum Consequence**	**Maximum Consequence**
1st violation	Parent Contact and Saturday School	Parent Contact and 2 days ISS
2nd violation	Parent Contact and 1 day ISS	Parent Contact and 3 days ISS
3rd violation	Parent Conference and 2 days ISS	Parent Conference and 1 day OSS with a Chronic Discipline Meeting
4th violation	Chronic Discipline Meeting and 3 days ISS	Chronic Discipline Meeting (if not on 3rd) / Parent Contact and 2 days OSS
5th violation	Parent Contact and 4 days ISS	Parent Contact and 3 days OSS
6th violation	Parent Conference and 3 days OSS	Parent Conference and 5 days OSS (review Chronic Discipline Plan)
7+ violations	Parent Contact and 5 days OSS (possible referral for tribunal)	Parent Contact and 5 days OSS (possible Referral for tribunal)

Class 3

3.01	**Fighting** The initiation or provocation of a fight or physical altercation, or the participation in a fight or physical altercation absent mitigating circumstances.
3.02	**Provoking/Inciting a Confrontation** Provoking, agitating, and/or inciting a fight/confrontation.
3.03	**Tobacco Sharing/Transfer/Distribution** The sharing, transfer, distribution, and/or sale (or promoting the sharing, transfer, distribution, and/or sale) of any tobacco product or "vapor" device and/or paraphernalia. The sharing, transfer, distribution, and/or sale of a tobacco product or Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) device (including, but not limited to, e-cigarettes, vape pens, vapes, personal vaporizers, tank systems, mechanical mods, etc.) or any other "inhaling" device or innovation/paraphernalia. *Note: All items collected are subject to testing by law enforcement to determine the presence of THC.*
3.04	**Drugs (Prescribed or Over-the-Counter), Imitation Controlled Substances, Alcohol, Intoxicating Inhalants, and/or Legal Marijuana Derivatives not containing THC (Refer to US Code of Controlled Substances)** Admission of and/or being under the influence of and/or unauthorized possession or use of drugs, imitation controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages and/or intoxicating inhalants *Note: Student(s) may be referred to a Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing upon first offense.* **Any student possessing prescription or over-the-counter medication not in accordance with requirements listed in the Medication section will be considered in violation of the LCSS Code of Student Conduct and shall be subject to the discipline set forth in the Student Handbook*.
3.05	**Arson** The willful and malicious burning of any part of School Board property (damages under $500).

3.06	**Assault upon School Board employee** The unlawful touching or striking or an attempt to touch or strike a School Board employee against his/her will or the causing of bodily harm to a School Board employee.
3.07	**Criminal Mischief** Willful and malicious injury or damages more than $200 (but less than $500) to public property or to real or personal property belonging to another.
3.08	**Possession of Weapons**

	Possession of any item that could be considered a weapon as covered in Lee County Board Policy JCDAE. Possession of weapons described in the policy may result in an immediate referral to a school disciplinary tribunal hearing. *NOTE: Any object used in a threatening manner towards another person could be considered a weapon.*
3.09	**Threats of Death or Serious Bodily Injury** Communication (verbal, written, electronic, etc.) of a threat to kill or do serious bodily injury to another person.
3.10	**Sexual Misconduct** Any inappropriate act of a sexual nature that involves physical contact or that rises above a Level 2 offense; any act of indecent exposure, including "flashing," "mooning," or "streaking" as those terms are commonly understood; any act of indecent fondling, groping or touching of the student's own intimate body parts or the intimate body parts of another; any act of sexual intercourse, oral sex, or sodomy as the term is defined by the laws of the State of Georgia; any act of viewing or possessing which involves another student; selling, buying or transmitting sexually explicit or sexually exploitative materials, or any materials which depict a minor in a sexual manner; any act of recording images of intimate body parts, whether of oneself or of another person. *Note: May also involve a separate sexual harassment investigation under Sexual Harassment Policy JCAC: Sexual Harassment of Students.*
3.11	**Offensive Touching (Sexual)** Offensive touching of another person or self (including sexual in nature)
3.12	**Computer / Network Damage** Intentionally damaging computers, software/programs/apps, and/or computer networks, to include changing workstation or printer configuration. Also, intentionally bypassing network filtering and security to visit inappropriate websites.
3.13	**Tampering with Safety Equipment** Unjustified activation or tampering with fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, security alarm system, or other safety equipment.
3.14	**Inciting or Participating in Student Disorder** Leading, encouraging or assisting in activities or disruptions which result in destruction or damage of private or public property or personal injury, and/or the disruption of school business or educational process.

3.15	**Fleeing** Fleeing a school district employee to elude contact or questioning.
3.16	**Offensive Manifestations to District Employee(s)** Use of obscene and/or offensive manifestations (verbal, written, gesture) directed toward a district employee or volunteer and/or use of offensive manifestations (verbal, written, gesture, electronic, etc.) which are deemed to create a hostile environment (including racial comments).
3.17	**Action/Extortion After Threat** The completion of a threat to injure a person, property, or reputation of another. This includes extorting money or any pecuniary advantage whatsoever by compelling another person to do an act against his/her will.

3.18	**Gang Graffiti or Paraphernalia** Possession, transfer, distribution, or use of written material, drawings, signs, or other media related to or used in gang activities. Gang related slogans, names, apparel, etc. are not permitted on any school campus or at any school related activity.
3.19	**Bullying** As defined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.4) and in LCBOE Policy JCDAG, bullying another student in school or through cyberbullying on or off campus. The Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the Lee County School System expressly prohibits bullying. Also see LCBOE Policy JCDAG: Bullying
3.20	**Forgery** Forgery, alteration, use of users' files, folders, work, or password, or misuse of any document, record, or instrument of identification belonging to the school district.
3.21	**False Information Concerning District Employee** Falsely alleging inappropriate behavior by a teacher or other personnel.
3.22	**Inappropriate Use of Technology (including but not limited to cell phones) - level 3** Use of technology resources to: ● Create, send, display, and/or download offensive/unauthorized messages, pictures, or other media; ● Record/copy/possess/distribute video of student disorder (including, but not limited to, bullying and fighting).
3.23	**Harassment / Intimidation** The threatening, stalking, teasing, taunting, or seeking to coerce or compel a person to do something; engaging in verbal or physical conduct that threatens another with harm, including intimidation through the use of epithets or slurs involving race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, religious practices, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability that disrupts the educational process.
3.24	Any other violation which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within this category after consideration of extenuating circumstances.
3.25	Soliciting, procuring, causing, encouraging, aiding, or assisting another to commit any of the foregoing violations.

Grades 6-12 - Class III Offenses and Consequences		
Offense number	**Minimum Consequence**	**Maximum Consequence**
1st violation	Parent Contact and 1 day OSS	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing
2nd violation	Parent Conference and 2 days OSS	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing
3rd violation	Chronic Discipline Meeting and 4 days OSS	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing
4th violation	Parent Contact and 5 days OSS	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing
5th violation	Parent Conference and 7-10 days OSS	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing
6th violation	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing	Referral to Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing

Class 4

4.01	**Drugs (Illegal - Real or Imitation Controlled Substances, Intoxicating Inhalants, marijuana derivatives, and/or any item containing THC (Refer to US Code of Controlled Substances).** • Admission of and/or being under the influence of and/or unauthorized possession or use of illegal drugs, imitation controlled substance, drug paraphernalia and/or intoxicating inhalants (to include products containing THC). • Transfer, distribution, sale (or the communication of the intent or desire to buy, sell, or facilitate the sale or exchange) of drugs, imitation controlled substances, alcohol, and/or intoxicating inhalants (to include products containing THC). **Any student possessing prescription or over-the-counter medication not in accordance with requirements listed in the Medication section will be considered in violation of the LCSS Code of Student Conduct and shall be subject to the discipline set forth in the code of conduct and/or the student handbook.*
4.02	**Arson - Severe** The willful and malicious burning of any part of School Board property (damages over $500).
4.03	**Intentional Assault upon School Board employee** The intentional touching or striking of a School Board employee against his/her will or the intentional causing of bodily harm to a School Board employee.
4.04	**Robbery** The taking of money or other property which may be the subject of larceny from the person or custody of another by force, violence, assault or instilling the fear of same.
4.05	**Criminal Mischief - Severe** Willful and malicious injury or damages at or in excess of $500 to public property or to real or personal property belonging to another

4.06	**Possession / Use of Weapons (inciting)** The possession and/or use of a weapon that incites fear in others present. *NOTE: Any object used in a threatening manner towards another person could be considered a weapon.*
4.07	**Terroristic Threats - District Property** Any threat (written, verbal, electronic, etc.) or act which creates a fear of harm and/or conveys a serious expression of intent to harm, to commit any act of violence or to burn or damage property. Terroristic threats shall also include, but are not limited to, bomb threats, making false calls to 911 which have the effect of causing a lock-down of a school building, the evacuation of a school building, or the search of a school building, or any bus, property, or building belonging to the school district by the school resource officer or any other public safety officer or agency, or the use of electronic communication to convey text, video, or images which have the effect of causing a disruption of the school.

4.08	**Threats of Death or Serious Bodily Injury to Staff Member** The verbal or written communication of a threat to kill or do serious bodily injury to a Lee County School System staff member.
4.09	**Sexual Acts - Violence** Acts of a violent sexual nature including, but not limited to, battery, intercourse, attempted rape or rape.
4.10	**Possession/Use of Explosive Devices** Possessing and/or igniting fireworks, firecrackers or smoke bombs, or any other dangerous device which could disrupt the educational environment or process.
4.11	**Aggravated Assault** Intentionally causing bodily harm, disability or permanent disfigurement by use of a weapon or any instrument that could be considered a weapon.
4.12	**Fighting - Excessive Force** The initiation, provocation, or participation in a fight or physical altercation that a) is violent and causes a major disruption to the school operational environment or the educational process; b) involves three or more individuals (group fight); and/or c) causes significant harm or injury (e.g. swelling, concussions, broken bones, sprains, and/or where medical attention was sought for a significant injury).

Disciplinary Actions – Class 4 Offenses

The disciplinary action for such offenses will be an automatic referral to the LCSS tribunal hearing committee. The committee could assign consequences ranging from assignment to the Transitional Learning Center (TLC) and/or out of school suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion by the principal as authorized in the expulsion procedures.

Student Due Process Disciplinary Hearings (Tribunals)

For the purpose of conducting student discipline hearings (tribunals), rendering a decision, and imposing punishment, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The Superintendent/designee shall convene a hearing when a student has violated any school or system rule or engaged in any other act of misconduct or insubordination that may require long-term disciplinary placement in the Transitional Learning Center, a long-term suspension, or an expulsion.
2. When a student is referred to tribunal, the Superintendent/designee shall choose three school or district administrators to serve on the tribunal committee. No member of the hearing tribunal shall be a member of the

staff at the school that the student attends.

3. In the event a student or his/her parent does not wish to contest the charge(s) of violation(s) of the discipline rules of the school's code of conduct for which a tribunal has been requested, the student and parent may voluntarily accept the consequences prescribed by the school by signing a Waiver of Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing form. Such waiver shall specify the rule violation; the date and description of the incident, the prescribed consequences, and an agreement to waive the opportunity to participate in a tribunal hearing, present evidence, cross examine witnesses, and be represented by an attorney. The decision to waive the tribunal shall be final and cannot be appealed by the school or family. The waiver must be signed by the student, a parent, a school administrator and a district level administrator from the superintendent's office, who shall act as hearing officer with authority to approve the disciplinary consequences set forth in the waiver.
4. Whenever a principal/designee refers a student discipline matter to the Superintendent/designee, a certified letter shall be mailed to the student and his/her parent/guardian containing a statement of the time, place and nature of the tribunal hearing, a statement of the matters asserted and charges against the student, and a statement setting forth the right of the student to present evidence, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by legal counsel.
5. The school principal or his or her designee shall be responsible for presenting evidence in support of the charges against the student. All parties will be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses on all issues. The hearing tribunal shall make a verbatim electronic or written record of the hearing. This record shall be available to all parties.
6. The hearing tribunal shall render a decision on whether the student committed the offense and, if so, the appropriate disciplinary action. The decision of the hearing tribunal shall be based solely on the evidence received at the hearing, including any evidence presented by either party relevant to the appropriate disciplinary action imposed. The hearing tribunal shall render a decision in writing within ten (10) days of the close of the record and shall furnish a copy of the decision to the student, his/her parents/legal guardians, the principal/designee and the Superintendent. The decision of the hearing tribunal shall be final and shall constitute the decision of the Board of Education unless either party should appeal the decision to the Board of Education.
7. Either party may appeal the decision of the hearing tribunal to the Board of Education by filing with the Superintendent a written notice of appeal within twenty (20) days from the date the decision is rendered. Such notice of appeal shall set forth the decision of the hearing tribunal and the basis of the appeal. Any decision of the hearing tribunal not appealed in this manner shall be final. In cases of out-of-school suspension or expulsion, the Superintendent may place the student in the Transitional Learning Center pending the outcome of the appeal. In other cases, the Superintendent may suspend the disciplinary action imposed by the hearing tribunal pending the outcome of the appeal.
8. The Board of Education shall review the record of the hearing, the decision of the hearing tribunal and the notice of appeal and shall render its decision in writing within ten (10) days from the date they receive the notice of appeal. The decision of the Board of Education shall be based solely on the record before the hearing tribunal and the Board shall not consider any other evidence in ruling on the appeal. The Board may find the facts to be different than those found by the hearing tribunal and the Board may modify the disciplinary action. Any decision of the local Board may be appealed to the State Board of Education by filing an appeal, in writing, within thirty (30) days after the local Board renders its decision.
9. Any student subject to a disciplinary hearing who withdraws from the Lee County system prior to the hearing must appear before a hearing tribunal to determine the student's eligibility to return to the Lee County School System in the event the student ever seeks to return to the system.
   Alternatively, the school district may proceed with the hearing in accordance with board policy despite the student's withdrawal from school.

Unsafe School Choice

Major offenses, including but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board Rule 160-4-8-.16, Unsafe School Choice Option. A student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of that student's primary, elementary, or middle school will have the opportunity to transfer to a safe school. Transportation will be provided for that student up to the limit of funds provided by the federal government for transportation.

Night/ Summer School Discipline

The Code of Student Conduct and dress code for the school hosting night/summer school will be strictly enforced. Disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior during night/summer school will lead to student dismissal from night/summer school. Decisions of the administration in charge of night/summer school will be final.

There will be no refund of tuition to students who are dismissed.

Safety in Transportation of Students

Safety Rules at the Bus Stop

- Be at the designated bus stop five minutes before time for the bus to arrive.
- Wait a safe distance of 12' from the road and be prepared to quickly board the bus.
- Refrain from pushing, horseplay, or any other unsafe activity while at the bus stop.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the red stop sign to come out, the red flashing lights to activate, and the door to completely open before approaching the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops; then walk to the door and board the bus in an orderly manner.
- When having to cross the road, wait on your side of the road for the bus to arrive.
- Wait for the driver to give hand signal that it is safe to cross the road (stop, look, listen).
- Be sure that all traffic has stopped in both directions before crossing the road.
- If you miss the bus, do not chase after it. Return home and tell your parents.

Safety Rules for Entering and Exiting the Bus at the Stop and at the School

- Walk in front of the bus to stay in the driver's view when crossing the road. Never cross the road behind a school bus.
- Load the bus in single file without making contact with the one in front of you.
- No pushing, shoving, or horseplay while loading the bus.
- Use the handrail when entering or exiting the bus.
- Board the bus quickly and safely and be seated as promptly as possible.
- Do not linger near the bus after exiting. Get clear of the roadway as quickly and as far as possible.
- While unloading at the school, unload from the front to back of the bus.
- When stepping off the bus onto the bus ramp, keep moving and go straight to the sidewalk.
- Never stop to get mail from the mailbox until bus has moved and traffic is flowing again.
- Never return to the bus without first getting the attention of the driver.
- Never retrieve a dropped item around the bus unless you first get the attention of the driver.
- If the bus horn sounds at any time, it is a signal for danger and you should react quickly to bus driver's directions to avoid injury.
- Remove ear buds and/or headphones when loading/unloading bus.

Safety Rules While on the Bus

- Follow the bus driver's instructions at all times.
- Remain in your seat until the bus reaches your school/home and has come to a complete stop.
- Keep your voice at a normal speaking level while speaking to other students.
- Keep conversation with the driver to a minimum while the bus is moving.
- Never speak to the driver while loading and unloading other students at a stop.
- Be completely silent at all railroad crossings until the bus has completely cleared the tracks.

Bus Evacuation Guidelines

- When any type of evacuation occurs, all must follow the instructions of the driver to safely unload and relocate (at least 100 feet away from the hazard and the roadway if at all possible).
- Evacuation will be practiced on each bus with students twice during every school year.
- All buses are designed with several "emergency exits". These locations are, but not limited to the entrance/exit

door, rear door, emergency exit windows and roof hatches.

- Always use the front entrance/exit door during an evacuation when possible.
- All other exits should be used only when front entrance/exit door and the rear exit door are not available to use.
- When loading door is not available and the rear door is the chosen exit, selected older/mature students are instructed to assist others to the ground by sitting and sliding out feet first.
- Leave all personal belongings on the bus and to exit from the front to the back of the selected exit location.

Additional Guidelines

- Any type of conversation or behavior that distracts the driver during loading and unloading of buses should be avoided. During this critical time, complete concentration by the driver is required.
- Parents should avoid conversation with the driver during loading and unloading. During this critical time, complete concentration by the driver is required.

Bus Discipline

The following specific provisions shall govern student conduct and safety on all school buses:

(1) All provisions of the Student Code of Conduct apply to behavior on the school bus, including but not limited to, acts of physical violence as defined by Code Section 20-2751-6, bullying as defined by subsection (a) of the Code Section 20-2-751.4, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior;

(2) A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district officials must be held to form a school bus behavior contract whenever:
   - A student is found to have engaged in bullying; or
   - A student is found to have engaged in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

The school bus behavior contract shall provide for age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Provisions may include, but are not limited to, assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

These provisions regarding use of a bus behavior contract are not to be construed to limit the instances when other code of conduct violations may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

(3) Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones; pagers; audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus; and

(4) Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

The Lee County Board of Education places the highest priority on the safety and welfare of the students riding buses. In an effort to inform students and parents/guardians of acts that can threaten safety and welfare, bus rules and regulations have been adopted. The driver, along with the Transportation Director and the school principal, has full responsibility for discipline on buses.

Bus Regulations

- Students shall obey the driver promptly and at all times. The driver is in charge of the bus and students.
- The driver has the right to assign seats as he/she deems necessary.
- Students are to help keep their bus clean by not throwing trash on the floor. Students are not to throw any object out of the windows.
- Students may not, at any time, extend their head, hands, arms, or any part of their body out of the window.

- Individuals who damage buses or equipment will be responsible for paying to fix the damage.
- Bottles, cans, knives, sharp objects, or any object that might endanger another student cannot be brought onto the bus at any time.
- Students must ride the bus to which they have been assigned.
- Students must remain seated and should face the front of the bus at all times.
- Students will behave in an appropriate and orderly manner.
- At the driver's discretion, food and drink may be allowed on the school bus. Water is allowed at all times.
- Use of electronic devices may be allowed on the school bus as long as it does not disrupt the driver or interfere with necessary communication on the bus.

Bus Disciplinary Offenses

Consequences - 6-12 Bus Suspension

1st offense - Up to two days
2nd offense - Up to five days
3rd offense - Up to eight days
4th offense - Up to twelve days
5th offense - Up to sixteen days
6th offense - Up to twenty days
7th offense - Possible expulsion from school bus remainder of the school year

Major offenses on the school bus

Any offense which is classified as a Class II or Class III offense in the Code of Conduct may also necessitate consequences at school.

A fight/physical aggression or other major offense committed on the school bus produces a dangerous situation where other students are in jeopardy and the driver is distracted. This type of situation and the consequences will be taken very seriously. Consequences may include the following and or a combination of the following: bus suspension, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or referral to the district disciplinary tribunal. A complaint may also be filed with law enforcement authorities.

Communication Numbers

Lee County Board of Education – Dr. Kathleen Truitt, Superintendent

☎	BOE Main Number	**903-2100**
☎	Plant Operations (Maintenance and Custodial Services)	**903-2210**
☎	School Food Services	**903-2127**
☎	Transportation	**903-2212**

Lee County Elementary School – Dr. Hailey Kilcrease, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-2220**
•	FAX Number	**903-2237**

Lee County's Georgia Pre-K Program – Mrs. Ashley Brim, Director

☎	Main Number	**903-2136**
•	FAX Number	**903-3997**

Lee County High School – Mrs. Melissa Edwards, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-2260**
•	FAX Number	**903-2291**

Lee County High School Ninth Grade Campus – Mrs. Ginger Lawrence, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-3590**
•	FAX Number	**903-3595**

Lee County Middle School West Campus – Mr. John Savelle, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-2140**
•	FAX Number	**903-2160**

Lee County Middle School East Campus – Mr. Trey Haynes, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-3500**
•	FAX Number	**903-3521**

Lee County Primary School – Mrs. Jaimie Murdock, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-2180**
•	FAX Number	**903-2196**

Kinchafoonee Primary School – Mrs. Pam Willis, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-2200**
•	FAX Number	**903-2218**

Twin Oaks Elementary School – Mr. Rocky Ledford, Principal

☎	Main Number	**903-2240**
•	FAX Number	**903-2257**

Transitional Learning Center - Mr. John West, Director

☎	Main Number	**903-3920**
•	FAX Number	**903-3925**