AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENT HANDBOOK AND DISCIPLINE CODE

2026 - 2027

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL

Revised: August 2026

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Dear Parents/Caregivers:

This handbook has been compiled to help guide the student and the parent or caregiver through the school year. These policies have been established by a committee and have been approved by the Avonworth Board of School Directors. The goal is to establish clear guidelines for a safe environment, in which students can receive a sound education by minimizing unnecessary distractions to the educational process. It is our mutual task to guide students to make responsible decisions. This handbook also has valuable information about attendance, grading, athletics and co-curricular activities, and consequences for behavior.

Common sense is always the best approach to following rules and regulations. At Avonworth, we strive to help all students become responsible thinking citizens. Thinking before speaking or acting can avoid problems. We encourage you to review this handbook with your child and help him or her to make appropriate, responsible choices. As a school, our goal is to work with you in providing the best educational experience possible for all our students.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Keera Dwulit, AHS Principal
Dr. Kaitlin Remensky, AHS Asst. Principal

Dr. Michael Hall, AMS Principal
Mr. Michael Schmitt, AMS Asst. Principal

Avonworth School District
Inclusive School Climate

Dear Avonworth Students,

Welcome to another school year at Avonworth!

At Avonworth School District, we believe that every student deserves to learn in an environment where they feel welcomed, respected, valued, and supported. Our classrooms are places where every student should feel a sense of belonging and have the opportunity to learn, grow, contribute, and succeed.

Each of us brings unique experiences, perspectives, identities, and talents to our school community. Those differences strengthen our classrooms, broaden our thinking, and prepare us to live, work, and lead in an increasingly connected world. We encourage you to challenge ideas, ask thoughtful questions, listen with an open mind, and engage in meaningful discussions while always treating others with kindness, respect, and dignity.

All of us in the Avonworth community are responsible for creating a welcoming school environment where everyone feels safe, included, and valued. Words and actions that demean, intimidate, or target others because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of their identity do not reflect our values or the kind of community we strive to be.

Learning often involves hearing viewpoints that are different from our own. Disagreement is a natural and valuable part of learning, but it should always be expressed respectfully. We ask each of you to help make Avonworth a place where everyone feels they belong, where differences are respected, and where every student has the opportunity to thrive. Every conversation, every interaction, and every choice we make helps shape the culture of our schools.

In 2020, the Avonworth Board of School Directors reaffirmed the District's commitment to fostering an anti-racist, safe, and inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal opportunity to succeed. That commitment continues today. The full Board resolution and accompanying letter are available on the District website.

When behavior or actions conflict with these expectations, they will be addressed in accordance with District policies and the Student Code of Conduct. Our goal is always to maintain a learning environment where every student feels safe, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

Thank you for the role you play in making Avonworth an exceptional school community. We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to learning, growing, and succeeding together.

Sincerely,

The Avonworth School District Administration

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

The Avonworth School District empowers students through authentic experiences to become innovative thinkers and creative contributors to our world.

District Beliefs

1. Students' strengths and talents are nurtured in a safe and supportive environment.
2. The school district supports diversity, empathy, and respect.
3. Developing essential skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and communication prepares students to navigate a complex world.
4. Learning takes place within and beyond our school walls.
5. The school district and community partner for mutual benefit.



We understand that it is the responsibility of the Avonworth School District to provide an atmosphere that is orderly, promotes safety, and is conducive to learning. We know that it is our responsibility to recognize the individual differences that exist among our students and that we must provide a positive educational experience for all our students.

In pursuit of this goal, we believe in helping all our students to develop and exhibit:

- Courtesy
- Ethics
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Self-Control
- Self-Discipline
- Self-Motivation
- Self-Respect
- Tolerance

We expect students to follow the rules of the school, to comply with state and federal regulations, and to fulfill individual educational requirements while not disrupting the education of others.

To maintain this positive learning environment, each teacher will enforce classroom rules promoting these positive behaviors and will instruct, praise, and reward the students for achieving those positive behaviors. If these positive behaviors are not followed, certain consequences will follow.

Supports to Promote Positive Behavior

The faculty, staff, administration, and School Board of Directors at Avonworth School District have established the following support to encourage positive behaviors in students.

Self-Discipline and School Rules:

Students are expected to practice self-discipline. This means that each person is responsible for their individual behavior. This behavior should be in line with rules and regulations that are established by the Avonworth School District. Common sense should govern students' behavior at all times. If students are not sure about a rule, they should ask one of the school staff. Students should not act first and then hope that a disruptive action will be overlooked because it is not specifically listed in the handbook. The image of the student body and the school, as an institution, is dependent upon the behavior of each student as an individual.

Classroom Rules:

It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain the proper learning environment. To maintain this environment, it is necessary for the students to follow basic rules, and therefore, to be responsible for their own behaviors and actions. Teachers will set up rules for their classrooms that are consistent with the policies of the Avonworth School District.

Counseling Services:

Counseling services are part of the regular educational program for all Avonworth students. Students are seen either individually or in small groups. Students receiving counseling may be assisted in making decisions, setting goals to improve class performance, and discussing personal or social issues. The counselors work closely with teachers, parents/caregivers, and other school staff. They may also work with people from other local agencies. The goal of the counseling staff is to make school experiences rewarding and meaningful. A "Future-Ready" counselor is now taking the lead to prepare our students for the world beyond high school. This counselor will be a resource to sharpen job-ready skills and provide opportunities for Avonworth students to explore potential careers.

Homework:

We believe that homework should be meaningful and grade-appropriate and can significantly enhance learning when used as an extension to classroom activities. Homework is expected to be completed as assigned. Any student experiencing difficulty completing homework should request help from the teacher. Repeated failure to complete homework may result in academic and/or behavioral interventions.

Unlawful Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy:

The Avonworth School District believes that all students have the right to a safe and healthy school environment. We promote mutual respect, acceptance, and tolerance, and will not permit behavior that infringes upon these principles. No student shall harass, intimidate, or verbally abuse another student. Hitting, shoving, teasing, name-calling, manipulating, or shunning other students is prohibited. This policy is in effect

when a student is at school, en route to or from school, or at any school-sponsored event.
Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations outlined in School Board Policies 248 and 249.

If the alleged bullying, cyberbullying or harassment happened outside of the school setting, the school district does not have jurisdiction to issue consequences based on School Board Policy 249. This includes, but is not limited to, interactions taking place over social media or personal devices outside of school or school events.

Staff and administration will contact and show support to parents/caregiver in the event that a student has been hurt either by physical or emotional aggression while in school. Counselors, administrators, teachers, and/or other staff members will follow-up as necessary with parents/caregivers/students to ensure a level of comfort and a safe environment for students who have been bullied or physically hurt.

Student Assistance Program:
Students may be referred to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) if they experience behavioral difficulties that impede their learning or the learning of others. When appropriate, referrals of a student to SAP may result in the SAP team assisting the classroom teacher in developing individualized positive behavior interventions.

Communication with Parents/Caregivers:
Parents/caregivers should receive regular contact from teachers for every student relative to positive academic or behavioral occurrences. This correspondence can occur in person, by phone, email, or letter.

If a student's grade drops significantly (by two or more letter grades or from a pass to a fail) parents/caregivers should be contacted by the teacher in the same manner as above and invited to come in for a conference.

For chronic classroom behavioral issues, prior to any discipline referral advancing to the administrative level, teachers must contact the parent/caregiver in person, by phone, email, or letter before sending a written referral to administration. The administration may ask that a specific mode of communication is used before sending a written referral.

Administrators will contact parents/caregivers prior to any discipline referral resulting in a Saturday detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. Contact will be in person, by phone, email, or by letter.

Recognition:
Recognition is used to encourage positive behaviors that are being exhibited by students. Every effort is made to recognize and reinforce positive behaviors. In addition to formal awards, this may be done through announcements, bulletin boards, parental notification, certificates, etc.

Student Discipline Procedures (School Board Policy 218)
The Avonworth School District recognizes the importance of establishing clear policies and consistent disciplinary consequences for violations of District rules. It allows the Avonworth community to build and maintain a positive, safe, and trusting environment in which our students can learn. We expect our students to act as mature, responsible, and considerate citizens, treating each other with dignity and respect.

When a student violates District rules and regulations, the student will be subject to an appropriate form of

discipline. The information that follows shows the normal sequence and/or combination of disciplinary actions that will be taken for violation of school rules and regulations. Multiple or repeated infractions will result in a higher level of consequences, a different combination of consequences and/or a restorative action.

Once a referral to the principal has been written, the referral is handled according to the Progressive Discipline Procedure. It is understood that behaviors are developmental in nature, some infractions are more serious than others, and that repeated infractions may warrant stricter consequences. When appropriate, restorative or alternate consequences directly connected to the infraction may be used with the goal of teaching positive and proper school behavior. In some cases, the development of an individualized behavior plan may be appropriate. In all cases, consequences are subject to parameters of state and federal law.

If a student violates any policy set forth by the Avonworth Board of School Directors, the teacher, principal or his/her designee is to follow the regulations outlined in the Student Handbook and Discipline Code. The administration of each individual school is given the authority to take appropriate action to ensure compliance with Board policy.

In all cases, the Administration retains the right to use its discretion in evaluating cases.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Screening and Evaluation

Avonworth School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating the specific needs of school-age students requiring special programs and services. These procedures, as required by law, are as follows:

The district, as prescribed by Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity (grades kindergarten-3, 7, and 11); visual acuity (grades kindergarten-12); and speech and language skills (grades kindergarten-12). Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social and emotional skills are assessed by teachers and support staff on an ongoing basis. Screening activities include a review of group-based data such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, ability, and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources as well as information obtained from parents/guardians and outside agencies are assessed, noted within student records, and discussed with parents/guardians. These school records are always open and available to parents/guardians and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" about the child.

Information from records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission by parents/guardians.

If a parent/guardian or the school team feels a more comprehensive assessment of a student is necessary, an evaluation may be recommended. Parental consent is required before a comprehensive evaluation may take place. Evaluations may include a review of the student's records, classroom observations, a gathering of parent/guardian and teacher input, individually administered assessments of achievement and cognitive ability, and other assessments as necessary.

After all of the assessments are completed, an Evaluation Report that includes specific recommendations for the types of interventions necessary to support the child's specific needs is prepared and shared with parents/guardians. In accordance with state regulations, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting, with parent/guardian involvement, may be scheduled to develop an appropriate IEP for the student if they are determined to be eligible for special education services. Parents/Guardians are then notified of the proposed placement and services with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). Parents/Guardians of students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education services may request multidisciplinary evaluations of their child through a written request to the building principal or Director of Student Services at jkaram@avonworth.k12.pa.us . The district has 10 days to respond to a parents request with a permission to evaluate (PTE) or a Prior Written Notice (PWN) explaining the reason for denying the request.

Student Services

All students in the Avonworth School District have access to the following services which address students' needs throughout their district enrollment: school counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services, and social work services to support students in addressing academic, behavioral, health, personal, career and social development issues.

Services for School-Age Exceptional Children:
Avonworth School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to exceptional students according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet the eligibility criteria for mentally, gifted, and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Emotional Disturbance
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Speech or Language Impairment

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include annual development of an IEP, multidisciplinary re-evaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, and placement in a part-time or full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location of the delivery of such services are determined by the parents/guardians and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and level of intensity of the specified intervention.

The school district also provides related services such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits. Prior to the initiation of services parents/guardians are presented a "Notice of Recommended Educational Placement" (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents/guardians disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation, and/or due process hearing.

Independent Educational Evaluations:
Parents/guardians have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense if there is disagreement with an evaluation obtained by a District (34 CFR 300.502). However, the district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, parents/guardians still have the right to an IEE, but not at public expense.

Admission of Service Animals to Schools:
A student or an employee with a disability may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational or employment purposes. However, there is no automatic right to be accompanied by a service animal in the school setting.

Parents/Guardians of students with disabilities who believe the student needs to bring a service animal to school in order to receive a free and appropriate public education shall notify the building principal or the Section 504 or IEP team. The appropriate team shall evaluate the request to use the service animal in school, gather necessary information, and determine whether the student requires the service animal during the school day or at school activities. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities shall be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student's IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools:
Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time basis in a special education program operated in a public school. Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following multidisciplinary evaluations and the development of an IEP. Parents/ guardians of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request multidisciplinary evaluations and development of an IEP. Parents/Guardians of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request multidisciplinary evaluations of their child through a written request to the Director of Student Services at jkaram@avonworth.k12.pa.us .

Services for Protected Handicapped Students/504 Plans:
Avonworth School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aides, services, or accommodations, which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. Additional information about the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students is available by contacting the Director of Student Services at jkaram@avonworth.k12.pa.us or 412-366-7171 ext. 1901.

English as a Second Language Instruction:
When registering their students at Avonworth, all parents/guardians will be required to fill out a Home Language Survey. Based upon the responses to this survey, those children who qualify will be referred for an "English Language Learner Assessment". The results of this assessment will determine if a student requires English as a Second Language instruction. Parents/guardians may not opt their children out of English language learner assessment or ESL instructions if found to be eligible.

Homeless Children:
In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Avonworth School District is attempting to identify all children within the district who may be experiencing homelessness.

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes individuals:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- Living in substandard housing (no running water or working utilities, infestations, etc.).

Children who are experiencing homelessness may qualify for assistance with free school lunch, school supplies/materials, tutoring, and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin throughout the duration of their homeless episode.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact, ***Homeless Liaison, Dr. Bill Battistone, Elementary Principal, at wbattistone@avonworth.k12.pa.us or 412-366-7170 ext 1800*.**

If your living situation changes during the school year, and you and your children become homeless, please be sure to contact the school. We will work with you so that your child(ren)'s education is disrupted as little as possible.

Gifted Services

Determining Gifted Eligibility:

Mentally gifted is defined as "outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program." A child may be eligible for gifted education if he/she:

- Is a year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects.
- Demonstrates an observed or measured rate of mastering new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability.
- Demonstrates achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas.
- Shows early and measured use of high-level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communication skills, foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise.
- Has documented, observed, validates, or assessed evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

Screening and Evaluation:

The term mentally gifted includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher and other factors that indicate gifted ability. Gifted ability cannot be based on an IQ score alone. If the IQ score is lower than 130, a child may be admitted to gifted programs when other conditions strongly indicate gifted ability. The other factors to be considered may include achievement test scores that are a year or more above level; observed or measured acquisition/retention rates that reflect gifted ability, achievement, performance, of expertise in one or more academic areas that demonstrate a high level of accomplishment; higher-level thinking skills and; documented evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE):

A Gifted Multidisciplinary evaluation is a process to gather the information that will be used to find out if a child qualifies for gifted education and, if so, the types of programs and services needed. Part of this process includes an evaluation by a certified school psychologist.

A child may be referred for the first GMDE in several ways:

- Parents may request the school to give their child.
- A child's teacher may also ask to have a child evaluated.

Additionally, there are a few pieces of information to keep in mind with referrals:

- The district will only complete a GMDE once per year.
- A referral does not guarantee that a student will be evaluated for gifted eligibility. If the current available data suggests that a GMDE may not be appropriate, the district may opt to deny the request.

The Gifted Written Report (GWR):
A multidisciplinary team reviews all materials and prepares a GWR that recommends whether a child is gifted and needs specially designed instruction. As a member of the GMDT, a parent may present written information for consideration. The GWR must include the reasons for the recommendations and list the names and positions of everyone who was part of the team. The entire GMDT process must be completed within 60 calendar days, excluding summer vacation, from the date the school district receives the parent's written permission on the Permission to Evaluate form.

The Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP):
If the GIEP team decides the student is gifted and in need of gifted education, the team writes the GIEP at the meeting. The GIEP is based on the unique needs of the gifted student and enables the gifted student to participate in acceleration or enrichment programs, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to the student's intellectual and academic abilities and needs.

Notice of Recommended Assignment:
Upon completion of the GIEP, the parent will receive a NORA and a Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children. The NORA will indicate the educational placement for the student and requires parent approval before the school district will begin implementation. The Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children describes your rights and the procedures that safeguard your rights.

Parent Rights:
At all times, a parent has certain rights with all gifted education services received by their child:

- The right to be notified about a child's program and progress and any changes that take place;
- The right to approve or reject programs and testing;
- The right to privacy

Services for Preschool-Age Children:
Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool-age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. For additional information, please contact the Early Learning Institute, 2500 Baldwick Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, or call (412) 837-1502. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool-age children from ages three through five. For additional information contact Project DART, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, or call (412) 394-5816.

Parents' Rights: Directory Information & FERPA Notification
The Avonworth School District is required each year to provide you with notice of your rights with respect to your child's educational records. The purpose is to advise you of the types of information that may be disclosed to the public throughout the course of the school year. Furthermore, this letter advises you of your right to review your child's educational records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Should you have any questions regarding the information contained herein, please feel free to call the office.

Directory Information:
During the course of the school year, information relating to Avonworth students may be disclosed to individuals and/or the media. For example, individual and/or group interviews, photographs or videos of the students may be taken for use by the District in various publications, or for use in local newspapers. This publicity provides the community with information about various school programs and achievements.

The District may also disclose additional directory information relating to students for various reasons throughout the school year without prior parental consent. "Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degree, and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. Interviews, photographs, and videos, as described above, are also considered to be directory information. (34 CFR §99.3). Directory information does not include disciplinary information, medical records, evaluation records, grades, special education records, or other information that would be considered private in nature.

You have the right to refuse to let the District release directory information pertaining to your child. <u>If you refuse to permit the District to release any or all directory information pertaining to your child, your objection must be in writing to your child's building principal. Telephone calls or voice messages will not be sufficient. Should you desire to exercise this right, please write a letter indicating your objection to your school's office within 14 calendar days of the date of this notification.</u> If you do not provide other written objections, directory information as identified above may be released.

FERPA Notification-Confidentiality of Student Records:
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/caregivers and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day Avonworth receives a request for access. The parents/caregivers of eligible students should submit to the building principal, or appropriate Avonworth official, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/caregiver or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/caregiver or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents/Caregivers or eligible students who wish to ask Avonworth to amend a record should write to the school principal, or appropriate school official, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If Avonworth decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/caregiver or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/caregiver or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/caregiver or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent/caregiver or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent/caregiver, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the Avonworth School District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-8520

With concern or to register a complaint please contact:
Avonworth School District
Dr. Justin Karam
Director of Student Services
jkaram@avonworth.k12.pa.us

SAFETY MEASURES

Proactively approaching safety is the best way to maintain a safe environment. We work hard to find ways to be proactive in identifying students and families in need of assistance. We do this by utilizing all available resources. Forging relationships between students, parents/caregivers, teachers, staff, and administration is paramount to maintaining a supportive culture. Within the school this is fostered through mentoring programs, advisory, and connections programs. Along with a relationship with their families, we want all students to have a go to adult in their school. A team approach allows for adults to become aware of student needs and proactively address them.

Proactive Support

From a proactive support perspective, we have the following programs/resources:

School Counselors - Each building has a school counselor. After the teachers, the counselors are the next level of support for all school related matters from social relationships to school performance.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) - Group of teachers, counselors, and administrators trained to support students and families in need. The SAP team can help families navigate challenges by providing resources as needed.

School Based Therapy -The District has liaison partnerships with multiple on-site mental health services, as well as partnerships with the Department of Human Services and the Office of Behavioral Health.

Social Worker - Works K-12 to coordinate student support through connecting schools, home, and community resources for mental health interventions, crisis management, and support services

Care Solace - A complimentary and confidential care coordination service that can help quickly find mental health or substance use treatment options. Call 888-515-0595 or visit www.caresolace.com/avonworth.

School Resource Officer- The Avonworth School District has a fantastic relationship with the Ohio Township Police Department (OTPD), the Ohio Township Fire Department (OTFD), as well as other local municipality support. The District has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ohio Township Police Department that formalizes this support relationship. Included in the support that the OTPD provides is a school resource officer.

Safe2Say - Act 44 mandates the establishment and use of the “Safe2Say Something”(S2SS) anonymous reporting system by every Pennsylvania school entity. Safe2Say is a life-saving and changing school safety program that teaches students, educators, and administrators how: (1) to recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others and (2) to anonymously report this information through the S2SS app, website, or 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline.

Threat Assessment Teams (School Board Policy 236.1) - Avonworth School District has a trained threat assessment team for both campuses. All threats of violence are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

The entire process is used to determine the level of the threat and the levels of support needed moving forward. The purpose is to ensure the safety of all. There are threat assessment teams established on each campus in the district. Any concern can be brought to a building administrator or reported through Safe2Say.com

Reactive Systems

Unfortunately, we also need to be prepared and able to react to an emergency situation if it were to arise. Below are some of the training and systems we have in place should an emergency situation present itself.

Lockdowns

We conduct "Lockdowns" for a variety of reasons. The can be three general categories are explained below:

General Lockdown/Shelter In Place - This is used when we need the hallways clear for medical reasons or a routine canine search of the building/parking lot. It allows for confidentiality to be preserved.

Lockdown-Exterior Threat - This would be a for when students are not permitted to be outside the school building due to some type of emergency that may be happening in the community.

Lockdown -Interior Threat - This would be for the worse case scenario. This is **one** "Hide" option if there would be an active danger in the building. (Run-Hide-Fight approach)

Run-Hide-Fight

RUN. When an active shooter is in your vicinity:

- If there is an escape path, attempt to evacuate.
- Evacuate if the situation warrants.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape if possible.
- Call 9-1-1 when you are safe.

HIDE. If an evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide.

- Lock and/or blockade the door.
- Silence your cell phone.
- Hide behind large objects.
- Remain very quiet.
- Turn lights off, close blinds, move students to an area of the room out of sight of the door.

FIGHT. As a last resort, and only if your life is in danger:

- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- Act with physical aggression.
- Improvise weapons.
- Commit to your actions.

BUILDING LEVEL CODE OF CONDUCT

AVONWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL/AVONWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Avonworth Middle School
256 Josephs Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412-366-9650
Dr. Michael Hall, Middle School Principal
Mr. Michael Schmitt, Asst. Principal

Avonworth High School
304 Josephs Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412-366-6360
Dr. Keera Dwulit, Principal
Dr. Kaitlin Remensky, Asst. Principal

In 2024 Avonworth Middle School was redesignated as a prestigious Don Eichhorn Schools to Watch for the fifth time. High performing Schools to Watch middle schools embody academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structure.

Avonworth High School students benefit from personalized attention while choosing from a wide array of educational and self-development opportunities. High expectations and individual support prepare graduates to pursue their goals beyond Avonworth and regularly excel in their chosen fields.

Secondary level staff members have been trained in developmental responsiveness and equity, and the academic focus is based upon rigor and differentiating instruction to meet varying needs of students. The school is structured to help all students be successful academically, socially, and behaviorally.

Progressive Discipline Consequences
Descriptions include examples of infractions and consequences, but are not limited to those listed. In all cases, the Administration retains the right to use its discretion in evaluating cases. When appropriate, alternate consequences or restorative actions directly connected to the infraction may be used with the goal of teaching positive and proper school behavior.

Most infractions within classrooms will be handled by a teacher. Prior to referring a student to administration, teachers should speak with the student and contact the student's parent/caregiver regarding their concerns. If an infraction occurs in a common area, staff members should intervene, as it is safe and appropriate to do so, then follow-up with a disciplinary referral.

Level 1: If a disciplinary referral is needed, the following consequences may be applied: Verbal or written warning; teacher conference; parent/caregiver contact; lunch detention; after school detention; LEAD or Open Mod detention; loss of privileges.
Level 2: Saturday detention; partial day in-school suspension; loss of privileges
Level 3: In-school suspension (partial, full, or multiple days), loss of privileges, restriction from school activities
Level 4: Out of school suspension; loss of privileges; administrative referral to school board (for possible expulsion); charges filed if appropriate, building level hearing

Parent/Caregiver notification is mandatory for each occurrence at Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Exclusion from co-curricular and athletic activities is mandatory for Level 3 and 4 offenses and may be appropriate at other levels as well.

Any time a student is assigned a level 3 or 4 consequence, additional interventions may occur. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Regular meetings with school counselor
- Referral to the Student Assistance Program
- Contact law enforcement authorities
- Meeting with parents/caregivers
- Community Service hours

Student Cell Phone Progressive Discipline Procedures:

If a student violates the phone-free procedures in any school area after receiving a staff-issued reminder, the following will apply:

- **First Offense** - Discipline referral to office; After-school Detention assigned (Level 1)
- **Second Offense** - Student sent to office; Discipline referral; Saturday Detention (Level 2) assigned and Parent/Caregiver must pick up the phone from office during school hours
- **Third Offense** - Student sent to office; Discipline referral; restriction from school activities up to 10 days (Level 3); Parent/Caregiver must pick up the phone from office during school hour

Disciplinary Consequences

Detentions:

Detentions during lunch, LEAD, an Open Mod or after school may be assigned by the teacher or principal for minor behavior infractions. Failure to serve assigned detentions may result in students being assigned additional detentions, Saturday detention(s), suspension(s) or restorative action(s).

Saturday Detention:

Saturday detention will be held from 8:30 am until 11:30 am Saturday mornings. The room will be announced.

Students must arrive on time. Students will not be admitted into detention after 8:30 am and must make up the detention and serve an additional Saturday detention.

Students must bring educational materials and use time wisely. Students are not permitted to sleep or eat food. Disruptive students will be directed to leave the detention room and must make up the detention. Further disciplinary action will result.

No electronic devices are permitted in detention except at the discretion of the detention supervisor. Students may be required to engage in a restorative action or lesson during this time.

The detention supervisor may establish additional rules. Students who fail to serve a Saturday detention without previous notification from a parent/caregiver may be assigned additional detentions, Saturday detention(s), suspension(s) or restorative action(s).

In-School Suspension:

Students who are assigned in-school suspension will sit in a designated area during the school day and be supervised by a staff member. They will be expected to complete work given to them by their teachers and are not permitted to participate in any after-school activities during their suspension. Students may be asked to also work on a restorative action during this time.

Out-of-School Suspension:

Students who are suspended are not permitted on school property during suspension. Students are responsible for the work that they miss and must be prepared to participate in their classes upon their return to school. Students may be asked to also work on a restorative action during this time.

Infractions and Consequences

Descriptions below include examples of infractions and consequences, but are not limited to those listed. Administration reserves the right to modify the discipline steps when appropriate.

Infraction	1st offense	2nd offense	3rd offense	4th offense
Acceptable Use Violation	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3 with loss of privileges	Level 3 with loss of privileges	Level 3 with loss of privileges
Assault (Physical)	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Assault (Verbal)	Level 2-4	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Bullying/Cyberbullying in a School Setting	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Bus Misconduct	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3 and possible bus suspension	Level 3 or 4 and possible bus suspension	Level 4 and possible bus suspension
Cell Phone Violation (includes, but not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, and meta-glasses or devices with similar functions)	Level 1	Level 2 + Parent/Guardian device retrieval	School activity restriction and/or Level 3	School activity restriction and/or Level 4
Cheating/ Plagiarism/ Doing Another Student's Work/ Turning in Another Student's Work or Computer-Generated (including AI) Work as One's Own	Level 2 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment	Level 2 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment	Level 3 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment	Level 4 and a score of 0 (zero) on the assignment
Class Cut/Leaving School Grounds without Permission	Level 2 and/or loss of privileges	Level 2 and/or loss of privileges	Level 3 and/or loss of privileges	Level 3 and/or loss of privileges
Computer Misuse	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Conduct Detrimental to the Orderly Operation of School	Level 1 -4	Level 1 -4	Level 1 -4	Level 1 -4
Confrontation (Verbal)	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4
Dangerous Horseplay/Endangering the Safety of Self or Others	Level 2-4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4

Drugs/Alcohol	Level 4 & possible alternate placement per SB Policy 227	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 227	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 227	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 227
Excessive Class Tardies (at 3 or more unexcused per 9 week period)	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2
Excessive School Tardies (at 4 or more unexcused per 9 week period)	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 or 4
Fighting	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department/possible expulsion hearing & alternate placement	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department/possible expulsion hearing & alternate placement	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT Police Department/possible expulsion hearing & alternate placement
Gambling	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
Hazing	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Horseplay/Disruptive Behavior	Level 1 or 2 and/or loss of privileges	Level 2 or 3 and/or loss of privileges	Level 3	Level 4
Inappropriate Display of Affection	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4
Inappropriate Items/Dress	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4
Insubordination/Disrespectful to Staff	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4
Minor Physical Altercation	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Opening Outside Doors/Admitting Unauthorized People into the Building/Food Delivery	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4
Parking/Driving Violation	Level 1 or 2 & possible loss of parking privileges	Level 2 or 3 & possible loss of parking privileges	Level 3 or 4 & possible loss of parking privileges	Level 4 & & possible loss of parking privileges
Refusal to Serve Level 1 Detention	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4
Refusal to Serve Level 2 Detention	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4
Smoking/Vaping/Tobacco (Use or Possession)	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program	Level 4 & restorative action or educational program
Swearing at Staff/Blatant Disrespect to Staff	Level 2, 3 or 4	Level 2, 3 or 4	Level 2, 3 or 4	Level 2, 3 or 4
Terroristic Action or Threat	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4

Theft / Stealing	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4
Throwing Food/Objects	Level 2 or 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
Trespassing	Level 3 or 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible charges filed with OT police department
Truancy	See Attendance Policy			
Unlawful Harassment/ Sexual Harassment	Level 3 or 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4
Use of Inappropriate Language	Level 1 or 2	Level 2 or 3	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4
Use of Offensive Language, Gestures or Symbols (including use of racial slurs and hate speech)	Level 2 - 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4	Level 3 or 4
Vandalism	Level 3 or 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department	Level 4 & possible restitution/ possible charges filed with OT police department
Weapons	Level 4 & informal hearing/expulsion hearing per SB Policy 218.1	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 218.1	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 218.1	Expulsion hearing & alternate placement per SB Policy 218.1

Infraction Definitions

Descriptions below include examples of infractions, but are not limited to those listed.

Infraction	Definition
Acceptable Use Violation	Using the internet or any other computer based program for non-educational purposes, abusing computer equipment or resources and/or using personal electronic devices during class without a teacher's permission.
Assault **(**Physical)	Acting with intent to cause fear in another person of immediate bodily harm or death, or intentionally inflicting or attempting to inflict bodily harm upon another person. Ex: Premeditated fighting, kicking, punching, pushing, tripping, etc.
Assault (Verbal)	Oral or written language toward another person that is intended to intimidate or cause fear of bodily harm or death Ex: Threats to harm another or put another in harm's way
Bullying/Cyberbullying	An intentional electronic, computer/AI based, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts are directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: substantially interfering with a

	student's education, creating a threatening environment within the school, or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school. An imbalance of power between the target(s) and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior exists. If the alleged bullying, cyberbullying or harassment happened outside of the school setting, the school district does not have jurisdiction to issue consequences based on School Board Policy 218. This includes, but is not limited to, interactions taking place over social media or personal devices outside of school or school events. Ex: treating another person in an overbearing or intimidating manner, forcing one's way aggressively or by intimidation, teasing, coercive behavior, mean-spirited conduct, etc.
Bus Misconduct	Any behavior on school transportation that creates a distraction to the driver, thereby threatening the safety of all riders.
Cell Phone Violation	Unauthorized use of personal electronic devices during school hours (includes, but not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, and meta-glasses or devices with similar functions).
Cheating/ Plagiarism/ Doing Another Student's Work/ Turning in Another Student's Work or Computer-Generated Work as One's Own	Cheating includes, but is not limited to copying, forgery, plagiarism and collusion. *Forgery* is writing and using the signature or initials of another person. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit. This includes misrepresenting AI-generated work as original work, not citing AI generated work as AI generated work, or using AI tools without a teacher's approval for evaluated work. *Collusion* is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit. Ex: Copying from another student's test or homework, using material during a test that is not authorized by the person giving the test, possession of materials to be used for cheating, collaborating with another student before or during the test without authority, knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one's self, to take a test, bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered, securing copies of the test or answers to the test in advance of the test, turning in an AI generated essay as one's own work, etc.
Class Cut/Leaving School Grounds Without Permission (multiple class cuts can constitute truancy, see attendance policy for info on truancy)	Not in attendance in the designated/assigned area at the designated time without permission Ex: Reporting to the library instead of the classroom, leaving school grounds, reporting to another classroom or cafeteria instead of assigned room.
Computer Misuse	Technology Misuse is the misuse of computer equipment, deletion or violation of password-protected files, computer programs, or data or system files; inappropriate accessing of files, unethical use of information, violation of copyright laws or writing/sending disparaging or threatening remarks.

	Refer to Avonworth Technology Policy and Harassment Policies.
Confrontation (Verbal)	Language towards others that is argumentative, disrespectful, or defiant. Ex: Swearing, provoking a fight, disrespectful language, etc.
Dangerous Horseplay/Endangering the Safety of Self or Others	Taking actions that a reasonable person would recognize as likely to cause serious harm to property, oneself, or others.
Drugs/Alcohol	Possessing, distributing, using or being under the influence of any controlled substance during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during time traveling to and from school and school sponsored activities. Controlled substances includes controlled substances where use, distribution or use is prohibited by federal and state laws, alcohol, narcotics, vaping fluids/devices containing THC, anabolic steroids, drug paraphernalia, volatile solvents or inhalants, look-alike drugs, substances that when ingested cause a physiological effect similar to the effect of a controlled substance as defined by state or federal law, prescription or nonprescription medications except those for which permission for use in school has been granted pursuant to School Board Policy 210. For more details see School Board Policy 227. Ex: Illicit drugs, alcohol; possession, use, distribution, etc.
Fighting	A hostile encounter where two or more parties make physical contact, usually with intent to physically harm participants. Self-defense is defined as “using enough physical force to remove oneself from a situation”.
Gambling	Gambling includes but is not limited to *playing* a game of chance for stakes or possession of gambling devices such as video games, machines and other items used to promote a game of chance, or *participating* in games of chance for the purpose of exchanging money or other items of value.
Hazing	*Hazing* any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully damages, destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in, any organization. Any activity upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be “forced” activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding Examples include but are not limited to: whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, etc. For more details see School Board Policy 247.
Horseplay/Disruptive Behavior	Any action that disrupts instruction, the normal order of the school day or causes concern for safety or order.
Inappropriate Display of Affection	Inappropriate display of affection is physically demonstrating affection for another person in public Ex: Holding hands, inappropriate touching, kissing, etc.
Inappropriate Items/Dress	Inappropriate clothing as described in the Dress Code and in School Board Policy 221.
Insubordination/ Disrespectful to Staff	Insubordination is a single instance of refusal or failure to comply with school board policies, rules, regulations, instructions, or directions. It is also the failure to accept and carry out reasonable instructions given by one in authority.

	Ex: Behavior disruption, blatant disrespect, refusal to comply, failure to serve detention, failure to comply with safety guidelines, etc.
Minor Physical Altercation	Refers to any altercation that occurs involving two or more persons where unwanted bodily contact is made. Ex: Pushing, tripping, poking, etc.
Opening Outside Doors/Admitting Unauthorized People into the Building/Food Delivery	All doors are locked during school hours. Anyone coming into a school building must be admitted through the main office doors. Food or other items should not be delivered to the school using delivery services such as, but not limited to, GrubHub, DoorDash, etc. This is a potential violation of federal school food regulations as well as a safety concern.
Parking/Driving Violation	Parking without permit or in a place where it is not permitted; driving recklessly or dangerously on school property
Smoking/Vaping/ Tobacco (Use or Possession)	Use, sale, or possession of any tobacco or tobacco-like product, including chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, lighters, vaping mods/pens, e-cigarettes, Juuls, vaping oils/liquids/juice, vaping pods,products containing nicotine and chargers. For details on tobacco possession/use see School Board Policy 222.
Swearing at Staff/Blatant Disrespect to Staff	Purposeful use of profane language directed to staff members, intended to show contempt or defiance.
Tardiness/Excessive Tardiness to Class	Tardiness is not being in one's assigned seat or location at a scheduled time. Ex: Late to school, class or assembly, etc. Excessive tardiness is defined as being late to a specific class without an excuse 3 or more times in a 9 week period.
Tardiness/Excessive Tardiness to School	Tardiness to school is not being in one's assigned seat or location when the first bell rings. Tardy to school includes entering the classroom after class has begun. Excessive tardiness is defined as being tardy 4 or more times without an excuse in a 9 week period.
Terroristic Action or Threat	*Terroristic threat* shall mean a threat communicated (conveyed in person or by written or electronic means) either directly or indirectly to commit any crime of violence with the intent to terrorize another; to cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation; or to otherwise cause serious public inconvenience, or cause terror or serious public inconvenience with reckless disregard of causing such terror or inconvenience *Terroristic act* shall mean an offense against property or involving danger to another person that may include but is not limited to recklessly endangering another person, harassment, stalking, ethnic intimidation, and criminal mischief. The Board prohibits any district student from communicating terroristic threats or committing a terroristic act directed at any student, employee, Board member, community member or school building. Ex: Bomb threat, pulling the fire alarm, etc. For details see School Board Policy 218.2
Theft / Stealing	Theft, Receiving or Possession of Stolen Property is the unauthorized taking, receiving, using, transferring, hiding, or possession of the property of another person.
Throwing Food/Objects	Throwing an object, whether intending to hit a person, object in the room or simply to cause distraction.
Trespassing	Knowingly entering or gaining entry to school building or grounds without an authorized reason to do so; gaining entry to a building by force, breaking, intimidation, unauthorized opening of locks or through an opening not designated for human access

Truancy	Incurring three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance. Habitually truant is defined as incurring six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. A maximum of ten (10) cumulative days may be excused by a parent/caregiver. For more details see School Board Policy 204.
Unlawful Harassment/ Sexual Harassment/ Discrimination	*Harassment* is verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation/identity, or religion when such conduct: 1. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment. 2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance. 3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities. *Sexual harassment* consists of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic status. 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual. 3. Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment. 4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. *Discrimination* is racial, sexual, and religious harassment. An imbalance of power between the target(s) and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior exists. For more details, see School Board Policy 103, 248, 249.
Use of Inappropriate Language	Any use of swear words or language inappropriate for a learning environment
Use of Offensive Language, Gestures or Symbols (including use of racial slurs)	Any use of offensive language (verbal or written), gestures or symbolic representation unsuitable to the school environment and/or likely to interfere with the educational process. Ex: racial slurs, hate speech, sexual jokes, swastikas, symbols/gestures indicative of extremist organizations, etc.
Vandalism	Vandalism is defacing, cutting or damaging any of the following but not limited to: property, technology, or telecommunication equipment that belongs to the school district, other students, staff members or other individuals. For more details see School Board Policy 224.
Weapons	*Weapons* include but are not limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon, any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. *Weapon Possession* is when a weapon is found on the person of a student; in the student's locker; and under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to or from school Ex: Possession, use, distribution, etc. Can include tools such as: hammers, screwdrivers, etc.

	For more details, see School Board Policy 218.1

ATTENDANCE & ACADEMICS

The parent or caregiver of the student is totally responsible for the attendance and actions of their child while enrolled in the Avonworth School District. A student will not be released from school without communication with a parent or approved caregiver.

Student attendance and participation in class is crucial to the learning process. Attendance and tardy patterns are very important parts of a student's permanent record. Parents/Caregivers/Students will be notified by letter or by deficiency notice if the student establishes a pattern of absences, cuts or tardies that could lead to a failing grade or failure to earn credit toward graduation under the school policy.

Student attendance is required in the specific model in which the student is attending each school day. This required attendance can be virtual or in-person, depending on the student situation and building-provided options.

PA School Attendance Laws

Pennsylvania School Code is the basis for laws governing school attendance throughout the Commonwealth. Act 138 (2016), Act 39 (2018) and Act 16 (2019) outline compulsory attendance requirements, define unlawful absences and set up required steps for school attendance improvement. The Avonworth School District meets the requirements of these laws through School Board Policy 204. Parents/caregivers will receive written notification when their student is in violation of PA School Attendance laws.

Attendance Policy (School Board Policy 204)

In Pennsylvania, school attendance is mandatory for students between the ages of 6 and 17 through state law and school district policy. When a student misses school, their parent/caregiver must submit a written notification within 3 days of their return to school. A parent/caregiver or medical practitioner note is needed even if a call was made to the school to report an absence and should include the student's name, the dates of the absences and reason for the absence. Excuses can also be submitted electronically to either msattendance@avonworth.k12.pa.us or hsattendance@avonworth.k12.pa.us.

Absences, tardies or early dismissal are legally **excused**, as determined by the PA School Code, for the following reasons:

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from

school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons.
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.
3. Quarantine.
4. Family emergency.
5. Recovery from an accident.
6. Required court attendance.
7. Death in the family.
8. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
9. Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined in law, for an event or funeral.
    a. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location, and time of the event or funeral.
    b. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the district prior to being excused from school.
10. Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.
11. Nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips, if the following conditions are met:
    a. The person in parental relation submits the required documentation for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate timeframe.
    b. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee.
    c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation and the Superintendent.
12. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
13. Other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness, foster care and other forms of educational instability.

The district may limit the number and duration of nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips, college or postsecondary institution visits for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

Any absence for reasons other than those listed above are considered unexcused. Students may not earn credit for assignments due or completed during class time on the day of an unexcused school/class absence. For other conditions and requirements that may constitute reasonable cause of absence from school not covered in the above list, please refer to Policy 204.

Examples of absences, tardies or early dismissals that are legally **unexcused** include but are not limited to:

- Missed Bus
- Oversleeping/missed alarm
- Childcare for another sibling and/or family member
- Frequent/excessive transportation issues (transportation not provided by School District)
- Leaving school early on the day of an athletic event, school production, concert, or other extracurricular activities in order to rest/prepare for the event.
- "Personal Reasons"

Parents/caregivers of students in grades 6-12 will receive a phone call or text each day from the Middle or High School when their child is not in attendance at school. A written excuse should still follow when a student returns to school.

If a written excuse is not turned in within 3 days of a student's return to school or the reason for the absence is not among the listed acceptable excuses, then the absence will be recorded as unexcused. By law, the school district must send a written notice home once a student accumulates 3 unexcused absences. If a student accumulates 6 unexcused absences, then they are considered, by law, to be habitually truant. A "Student Attendance Improvement Plan" must then be put into place that clearly outlines consequences for further absences. Consequences may include loss of credit or a citation to the magistrate where fines, community service or other consequences as allowed by law may be assigned.

According to Avonworth School Board Policy 204, a maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences in excess of ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed practitioner of the healing arts. ***It is recommended that anytime a student is absent while under the care of a physician, a medical note should be submitted so that the absence does not count against the 10 cumulative limit for parent excuse notes.***

Approved absences for preplanned educational trips and medical excuses are excluded from the 10 total, accumulated parent excused absences that require a medical excuse. If a student will be missing school for a planned trip, an approved absence form should be completed and turned in to the main office BEFORE they leave. Students must have a doctor's excuse upon return if he/she is out for more than three (3) consecutive days. If a doctor's excuse is not submitted when a student is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days, then any additional subsequent days will be marked as unexcused.

Every effort should be made to schedule medical or dental appointments, as well as driver's examinations, during non-school hours. If appointments must be made during school hours, the student must present a signed parental/caregiver note or email (with phone number of where parents/caregivers can be reached) prior to being excused.

Students must check out in the main office before leaving in order for an early dismissal to be excused (unless a student has prior administrative permission to leave on a regular basis to attend school or work). Failure to do so will result in consequences for cutting class or leaving school grounds without permission. Students are responsible for all class work missed due to an appointment.

PIAA Athletic Attendance Procedure:
A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of twenty or more school days, is ineligible to participate in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, or Contest until the student has been in attendance for a total of forty-five school days following the student's twentieth day of absence. (PIAA bylaws)

Appeals Process:
Students who have experienced extenuating circumstances can submit a written appeal to the Principal. The final decision will be made by the administration.

Attendance Procedure:

When students arrive in the morning, they are to go straight to their respective cafeteria, and then to their assigned rooms for attendance at the designated time. Attendance is taken each day for each course. Once a student enters the building, they are not to leave for any reason unless given specific permission from the administration.

High School: Students must be in their first period classroom by 8:00 am unless prior arrangements have been made with building administration. Students who arrive after 8:00 am must enter through the main doors of the High School. Students should then report to the High School Office for a late admission slip or sign into the building if they are permitted to have a flexible start time. Students with four or more unexcused tardies may receive disciplinary action and/or loss of driving privileges. Excessive tardies may result in further intervention and/or a citation to the magistrate.

Middle School: Students must arrive to class by 8:00 am. Students who arrive after 8:00 am must report to the Middle School Office for a late admission slip. Students with four or more unexcused tardies may receive disciplinary action. Excessive tardies may result in further intervention and/or citation to the magistrate.

Class Tardies:

Students who are late to class should have an excuse from a staff member (typically in the digital hall pass system) if they have a legitimate excuse for being late to class (ex - staying late to get help from a teacher, stopping in the office, etc.) A student who is late to a specific class without an excuse 3 times in a 9 week period will be considered "excessively tardy". Teachers should contact parents and complete a discipline referral in Alma for "excessive tardies" after 3 unexcused class tardies. Excessive tardies for a student will prompt a series of supports to include, but not limited to, a referral to our Student Assistance Program, discipline consequences, Counselor and Administrative involvement.

Dismissal Times

Student dismissal times are as follows:

High School: 2:55 pm
Middle School: 2:55 pm

Students are not permitted to leave the building once they have entered and loitering will not be permitted in the halls. Students must be in attendance for a minimum of 4 hours to be considered eligible for afterschool activities on that day unless prior approval has been granted by school administration. Students will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities on any day that they have an unexcused absence from class/school. Furthermore, excessive unexcused absences (including unexcused tardies and early dismissals) may result in extended ineligibility from afterschool activities and suspension of parking permits.

Early Dismissal Request

Caregivers requesting an early dismissal for their student should send a written note to the office with their student, email hsattendance@avonworth.k12.pa.us or msattendance@avonworth.k12.pa.us. No student may leave the building without PRIOR written permission from parent/caregiver containing:

- Dismissal time
- Reason - must be stated and qualified under the acceptable excused reasons (pg. 29)
- Parent/caregiver phone number
- Parent/caregiver signature*

*We may contact parents or caregivers for verification.

Students granted an early dismissal must check out in the main office before leaving in order for an early dismissal to be excused (unless a student has prior administrative permission to leave on a regular basis to attend school or work). Failure to do so will result in consequences for cutting class or leaving school grounds without permission. Middle school students will only be released to a caregiver-approved adult at the door.

Enrollment

Documentation establishing proof of residency is required for enrollment. New students enrolling in Avonworth School District must report to the guidance office and complete an enrollment packet. If the student is not living with his/her parents/caregivers, an affidavit of residency will be required.

Under Pennsylvania's Act 26, prior to admission to the school district, the parent/caregiver, or other person having control or charge of a student shall, upon registration for admission, provide a sworn statement of affirmation stating whether the pupil was previously suspended or expelled from any public or private school of the Commonwealth or any other state for an act or offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs or for the willful infliction of injury to another person or for any act of violence committed on school property. Such registration shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record. Parents and guardians shall be advised that any willful false statement made under this section shall be a misdemeanor of the third degree. When a student transfers to this school district, a certified copy of the student's disciplinary record shall be requested and obtained from the school entity from which the student is transferring. This record shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record and shall be available for inspection as required by law. No child will be enrolled without a certificate of immunization.

For more details see School Board Policies 200, 201, 202 and 203.

Avonworth Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	QPA (Academic)	QPA (Honors)	AP (Advanced Placement)
A	93 – 100	4.00	4.50	5.00
A-	90 – 92	3.75	4.25	4.75
B+	87 – 89	3.25	3.75	4.25
B	83 – 86	3.00	3.50	4.00
B-	80 – 82	2.75	3.25	3.75
C+	77 – 79	2.25	2.75	3.25
C	73 – 76	2.00	2.50	3.00
C-	70 – 72	1.75	2.25	2.75
D+	65 - 69	1.25	1.75	2.25

D	60 - 64	1.00	1.50	2.00
F	59 or below	0	0	0

Graduation Requirements

All seniors must meet credit requirements listed in the Course Selection Book published each spring and in School Board Policy 217 in order to be considered for participation in senior activities including, but not limited to, commencement.

Failure to meet the credit requirements established by the Avonworth Board of School Directors will result in a loss of these privileges, credit recovery requirements and/or failure to receive a diploma or participate in commencement activities.

Grading Variables

Drop/Add in Middle and High Schools:

If a student wishes to drop or add a course, they must do so within two weeks of the semester starting, complete a Drop/Add form available in the Counseling Office and follow the procedures on the form. See the school counselor for assistance. If a drop/add hearing is held and the results indicate that a record of a dropped course should be kept, it will be noted on the official transcript.

Make-Up Work & Homework:

Students or parents/caregivers are encouraged to request make-up work and homework when a student will be absent for an extended period of time. Requests should be made through students' respective Middle School or High School Counseling or Main Offices. A reasonable time to complete work will be given to the student. A failing grade on each assignment will result in work not completed to the teacher's specifications within a reasonable time period. The number of days permitted to make up work will be the same as the number of days absent unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Students who are legally absent; who have been excused from class or are serving a suspension shall be given the opportunity to make up any and all tests.

Students who cut class or are illegally absent are responsible for information missed during the class and may not receive credit for work completed during that time.

Summer Work:

Summer work may be assigned to students. The goal of summer work is reading preparation, connection to class material and work that may enhance the learning anticipated in the school year ahead. All work assigned must be communicated with students via email and/or letter and must be accessible from the high school website. A timeline for the completion of summer work may be suggested, but no work may be required for turn-in prior to the first day of school.

ATHLETICS AND CO-CURRICULARS

Students are encouraged to participate in after-school athletics and co-curricular activities, to develop physical skills, sportsmanship, leadership qualities, and promote school spirit among the students and faculty. It is important, though, to recognize that participation in athletic competition and/or co-curricular activities is a privilege and only supported when the guidelines below are upheld.

Students placed on the *Restriction List*, due to violations against the attendance or academic policies of the District will be ineligible to participate in athletics or co-curricular activities.

Students participating in PIAA sports shall adhere to PIAA rules in addition to District rules.

Academic Eligibility

Eligibility expectations apply to any school-sponsored activity. The Athletics Administrative Assistant will run an eligibility report every week on Wednesday. She will contact coaches and teachers of any student who is failing two or more full credit classes (less than 59%)

Results:

- Coaches, teachers, extracurricular activity sponsors, Athletic Director and Principal will be notified on Wednesday as to any ineligible players on their team/groups.
- If a student is failing **more** than one full credit course, they are deemed ineligible for the **following** week (**Sunday through Saturday**).
    - However, there is a window of opportunity from that Wednesday to that Friday at 2:00 pm for students to do what it takes to improve their grade and regain eligibility by turning in assignments, making up a test, doing extra credit, etc.If the student does in fact bring their grade up to passing by Friday at 2:00 pm, it is the teacher's responsibility to notify, **in writing**, Melissa Kline or the Athletic Director, by 2:00 pm that Friday afternoon.
- If a student is ineligible, they are not permitted to participate in any games, matches, or activities the week of ineligibility.
    - However, if the student shows proof that they are getting help from the teachers in the courses they are failing, then that athlete/student will be allowed only to PRACTICE with the team.
- For more details, please see the **Athletic/Activities Handbook.**

Attendance Eligibility

PIAA Athletic Attendance Procedure:

A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of twenty or more school days, is ineligible to participate in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, or Contest until the student has been in attendance for a total of forty-five school days following the student's twentieth day of absence. (PIAA bylaws)

Late Arrival/Early Dismissal:

Attendance within a school day must be a minimum of 4 hours in order to participate in school-sponsored activities. Students with an excused tardy must be in school by 10:30 am and remain for the rest of their school day. A student with excused early dismissal can not leave campus prior to 12:00 pm to remain eligible.

Attendance Exceptions:
The only exceptions are physician or court issued excuses. These excuses must be signed by the physician or court officers and presented to the attendance secretary upon arrival. If these procedures are not followed, participation in sports and activities will not be permitted that day.

Attendance at funerals, college visitations by juniors or seniors, and school-sponsored field trips are permitted and will not affect a student's ability to participate in sports or activities, however, notification beforehand is required.

Disciplinary Infractions and Eligibility
Participation in athletic competition and/or extra-curricular activities is a privilege. It is expected that students will be positive role models and examples of good behavior. Students suspended out of school for disciplinary infractions will not participate in or attend practice, games, or activities during the time of the suspension, to include afternoon evening events on the day of suspension. The building Principals will have final jurisdiction regarding eligibility questions.

For more details, please see the **Athletic/Activities Handbook.**

Concussion/Traumatic Brain Injury Report
Each school year, prior to participation in an athletic activity, every student athlete and his/her parent/guardian shall sign and return the acknowledgement of receipt and review of the Concessional Traumatic Brain Injury Information Sheet (Board Policy 122).

POLICIES & DEFINITIONS

Access to Students

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), an LEA must provide notice to parents/caregivers of the types of student information that it releases publicly. This type of student information, commonly referred to as "directory information," includes such items as names, addresses, and telephone numbers and is information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The notice must include an explanation of a parent's/caregiver's right to request that the information not be disclosed without prior written consent.

Additionally, § 9528 requires that parents/caregivers be notified that the school routinely discloses names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters upon request, subject to a parent's/caregiver's request not to disclose such information without written consent. A single notice provided through a mailing, student handbook, or other method that is reasonably calculated to inform parents/caregivers of the above information is sufficient to satisfy the parental/caregiver notification requirements of both FERPA and § 9528. The notification must advise the parent/caregiver of how to opt out of the public, nonconsensual disclosure of directory information and the method and timeline within which to do so.

A secondary school student or the parent/caregiver of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing described in the preceding paragraph be excluded from the list and not be released without prior written parental/caregiver consent. The local educational agency shall notify the students and parents/caregivers of the option to make such a written request at least 21 days prior to compilation of the list, and shall comply with any request.

Same Access to Students

Each local educational agency receiving assistance under the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, shall provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as is provided generally to post-secondary educational institutions or to prospective employers of those students. Each school year, parents can choose to submit an opt-out form to prohibit this military contact.

Student directory information will be used specifically for armed services recruiting purposes and for informing young people of scholarship opportunities.

Building Access

All doors accessing the outside of the building are locked while school is in session. Doors should not be propped open. Anyone wishing to enter the building during school hours should push the buzzer and enter through the doors to the main office. Anyone coming into the building through another door or admitting an unauthorized person into the building may be subject to disciplinary action.

Food delivery services such as GrubHub, DoorDash, etc. are not permitted on the secondary campus during the school day. These deliveries potentially violate federal school food regulations and pose a safety risk.

Assemblies

Assemblies are called periodically as part of the academic program offered at Avonworth. All students are expected to adhere to the same District rules as defined in this handbook. Additionally, students will be expected to:

1. Stand when requested by the faculty or administration to show respect for the speakers.
2. Be quiet, courteous and respectful.
3. Sit appropriately, keeping feet off the chairs and away from the aisles.
4. Refrain from eating or drinking anything during this time.

Disruptive students will be removed by the administration or faculty and are subject to further disciplinary action.

Alcohol and Drug Policy (School Board Policy 227)

The Avonworth Board of School Directors recognizes the abuse of alcohol and/or chemical substances as a serious problem with legal, physical, emotional and social implications for the whole school community and adopts the position that a student must be free of illegal and harmful substances.

These substances include, but are not limited to beer, wine, liquor, any other alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, marijuana, hashish, narcotic drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, opioids, chemical solvents, look alike substances and any capsules or pills not registered with the nurse and/or given in accordance with school district policy.

The District's policy is to prevent and prohibit the possession, use and/or mimic of use, sale and/or mimic of sale, distribution of any illegal or controlled mind-altering chemical medication or chemical substance not approved by the health office, on school property, at school-sponsored events or functions including athletic events (even at another school), on school buses, en route to and from school by any mode of travel. This policy applies anywhere that students are under the jurisdiction of the school district. If a violation occurs at a school event, the student involved may be prohibited from attending any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsals, for a specified amount of time, determined by a building principal.

In the event of any violation of this policy, the District Resource Officer will be notified, as well as police from the Municipality in which the school event takes place. Charges may be filed on any student involved in the violation. During an investigation, students will be asked to complete a written student statement. This statement will be requested by District Administration and/or the Resource Officer/police. The student/parent/guardian will receive written notice (by regular mail, electronic mail and/or hand delivery) of the suspension and the scheduling of an informal hearing.

Possession/Use/Under the Influence First Offense:

A student possessing, using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance(s) shall be initially suspended by the building Principal or Administrator on site for a period of not less than three (3) school days and not more than ten (10) days. If a suspension, either by way of initial imposition or extension, exceeds three days, an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents/caregivers within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other

contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days. Also, in addition to the mandated minimum requirements applicable for a 1st offense violation, the student may be recommended to the Administration and School Board for other further discipline, including expulsion.

Mandated minimum requirements of student for 1st Offense violation:

1. Drug & Alcohol Evaluation at accredited organization; at cost of student and/or family.
2. Educational Teen Outreach Program (or other consistent program approved by District Administration); at cost of student and/or family.
3. Referral to the HS Student Assistance Program Team
4. Community Service - minimum *24 hours*
    a. Community Service may begin to be served following the Informal Hearing.
    b. Community Service must be approved by the building Principal, but will occur off school grounds.
    c. Community Service must be served and confirmed by the building Principal *PRIOR TO* returning to or beginning any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsals.
    d. Although a building principal may recommend options, it is the responsibility of the student and/or family to find or identify a community service option acceptable to the Building Principal.
5. A transition team meeting will occur prior to the student's return from suspension and participation in any extracurricular or co-curricular school activities to include, but not limited to clubs, sports, tutoring and theater production and rehearsal.

Academic work will be completed for credit while suspended, but students must coordinate that work with teachers. Students may not be on school grounds during the suspension [see Suspension procedures]. Exclusion from all school activities is a condition of suspension.

Failure to complete the mandated minimum requirements as written within 45 school days may result in further disciplinary action including restorative actions, detentions, additional suspension or expulsion.

The above mandated minimum requirements for a 1st offense violation of the drug and alcohol policy does not limit or preclude the imposition of further discipline. As stated above, other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation may lead to further disciplinary actions, including expulsion.

Subsequent Drug & Alcohol Offenses:

If a student violates the drug and alcohol policy more than once, the student will be suspended for 10 days and an informal hearing will be held with the building principal, the student, and the student's parents within five (5) days of the suspension. The student will be recommended for expulsion to the School Board.

Distribution:

In the case of drugs and alcohol distributed through sale, exchange or other consideration, a recommendation

will be made to the School Board for possible expulsion. If a student is apprehended distributing drugs or alcohol at school or at a school-sponsored event, without a sale, exchange or other consideration, the process and discipline relating to a student possessing, using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance(s) will apply, as set above, with such distribution being an additional factor as to the scope of disciplinary action.

Asthma Inhalers/Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (School Board Policy 210.1)

Students may possess and self-administer asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors. Written requests for such medications from the parent/caregiver and the licensed medical personnel are required to be submitted annually to the nurse's office.

Bus Policy

1. All school rules apply to school district transportation. The bus driver is in charge and his/her directives must be followed. Students are expected to be courteous, cooperative, and punctual. Infractions may result in disciplinary action by the school administration, including suspension from riding the bus.
2. All students must ride their assigned bus.
3. Parents/caregivers are liable for damages done by students to school property or bus property. The student may be billed the cost of fixing damage and/or charges may be filed with the District Magistrate
4. If a bus arrives late to school due to inclement weather or emergency, all students on that bus should report to the attendance office.
5. Students are not to extend heads or arms from the bus windows or doors or to throw objects from the bus.
6. The School Board of Directors authorizes the use of video and audio recording on school buses and school vehicles.

Discrimination, Intimidation, Bullying, or Harassment (School Board Policies 103, 248 & 249)

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation/identity, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability.

According to School Board Policy 249, bullying is an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of creating a threatening environment within the school.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

An imbalance of power between the target(s) and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior exists. If the alleged bullying, cyberbullying or harassment happened outside of the school setting, the school district does not have jurisdiction to issue consequences based on School Board Policy 249. This includes, but is not limited to, interactions taking place over social media or personal devices outside of school or school events.

Complaints of bullying will be investigated promptly, and corrective action will take place when allegations are verified. Students who have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may include, but is not

limited to, mandatory counseling, parental/caregiver conference, loss of school privileges, detentions, exclusion from school or school-sponsored activities (including bus transportation), or referral to law enforcement.

According to School Board Policy 248, unlawful harassment consists of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation/identity or religion when such conduct: 1. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment. 2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance. 3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities. For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic status. 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual. 3. Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment. 4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. Staff and administration will contact and show support to parents/caregiver in the event that a student has been hurt either by physical or emotional aggression while in school.

Counselors, administrators, teachers and/or other staff members will follow-up as necessary with parents/caregiver/students to ensure a level of comfort and a safe environment for students who have been bullied or physically hurt.

Tobacco and Smoking Policy (PA Act 93 of 2019 & School Board Policy 222)

Smoking and use of tobacco or nicotine products (including chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, lighters, vaping mods/pens, e-cigarettes, Juuls, vaping oils/liquids/juice, vaping pods, and chargers) will not be permitted in any indoor or outdoor school area, stadium and field areas, any areas within sight of school property during the time to and from school, and other school district property including busses.

Per Pennsylvania Act 93 of 2019, smoking and all other uses of tobacco by students will not be permitted during any school-sponsored game or practice taking place on or off school property. This policy shall apply to all users of school district facilities.

Once Administration has determined that a student has used or is in possession of an item in violation of this policy, the prohibited items will be confiscated and given to the School Resource officer. As some of these items can be a means to use illegal substances, the School Resource officer may test the confiscated item(s) for the presence of such a substance. If such a substance is detected, then the Drug & Alcohol Policy (SB Policy 227) will apply.

If no illegal substance is indicated, then the following consequences will apply:

First Offense: One day out of school suspension and mandatory attendance at an educational Smokeless Saturday session (sponsored by Breathe Pennsylvania) assigned at cost of the student. If a

student fails to attend, then the student may be assigned additional detentions or suspensions.

Second Offense: Citation, 3 days out of school suspension and a referral to Student Assistance Program

Third Offense: Citation and immediate 3 day out of school suspension and an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents/caregivers within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days.

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses: Citation and immediate 3 days out of school suspension and an informal hearing will be held with the building Principal, the student, and the student's parents/caregivers within five (5) days of the suspension. At the informal hearing, consideration will be given to the nature of the offense and any mitigating or compounding circumstances, including other contemporaneous violations by the student of District policy and the Pennsylvania School Code, a student's prior disciplinary record, and a student's defiance and lack of cooperation through an investigation. Following the informal hearing, a suspension may be extended by the building Principal but not to exceed a total of ten (10) school days. The student may be recommended to the Administration and School Board for other further discipline, including expulsion or alternative placement.

Vandalism (PA Act 26 of 1995 & School Board Policy 224)

Students who willfully or carelessly damage school property (books, equipment, lockers, school buses) will be assessed the cost of the repair. Act 26 of 1995 lists vandalism as an infraction that must be reported to the state, outlines reporting to the state of monetary damages to school property, and lists sanctions the district can set for vandalism. Suspension will be issued, and will be determined by the severity of the damage caused. School records will be withheld until all debts resulting from damage or destruction are paid.

Weapons Policy (PA Act 26 of 1995 & School Board Policy 218.1)

No person shall possess, handle or transmit any knife, cutting instrument or tool, brass or metal knuckles, cane, machete, firearm, shotgun, rifle, B.B. or pellet gun, look-alike gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and/or other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury in any school building, on any school premises, or on any school bus, on or off the school grounds at any school activity, event or function.

Any person discovered to have any weapon or other item in violation of this policy in his/her possession (including in a car) or threatens to use a weapon on another person shall not be permitted to remain in any school building, or on any school bus, or at any school activity, event or function. Where any person violates this policy, the police department of the appropriate jurisdiction shall be notified.

The school district shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year any student who violates this weapons policy. This is mandated under Pennsylvania Act 26 of 1995. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law.

Act 26 also requires schools to maintain records on acts of violence and weapon possession and must forward

student discipline records should a student transfer to another school.

Any violation of Act 26 results in an initial consequence of exclusion from school.

School Wellness (School Board Policy 246)
Avonworth School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn in accordance with federal and state laws.

Student Acceptable Use Policy: Access & Use of District Technology Systems (School Board Policy 815)
The use of technology for purposes other than those defined by the policies and programs of the Avonworth School District (ASD) is prohibited. Adherence to copyright laws and licensing agreements is required at all times.These prohibitions and requirements apply to technology related systems which may be internal or external to the school district, but which clearly exist within the District's legal jurisdiction. Unauthorized accessing, copying, altering, damaging and/or destroying any technology by students, employees or others will result in an appropriate response by District officials. Such a response may include warnings, loss of technology privileges, disciplinary and/or legal action.

Definition:
Technology is the hardware, networks, software, data/information, documentation or any combination of these or other components, which constitute the data processing systems of the ASD.

Guidelines:
The administration is authorized and directed to develop programs, guidelines and rules which:
1. Publicize in District handbooks, manuals and publications, the District's policy on access and the use of technology by students, employees, parents and the community.
2. Alert students, employees and other users of District technology to the consequences of misuse of technology.
3. Include in appropriate student course descriptions instruction regarding the legal and ethical use of technology.
4. Include in appropriate staff development programs instruction regarding the legal and ethical use of Technology.

Students are expected to read and follow the Acceptable Use Policy and the AI Student Guide. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Unified District Cell Phone & Personal Device Usage
Purpose:
The Avonworth School District acknowledges that cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, and other personal communication devices are an integral part of modern life. While students may bring these devices to school, our priority is to maintain a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. Each building has specific expectations for when and how devices may be used. These expectations are outlined below.

General Expectations for All Buildings (Grades K–12)

- **Device Responsibility** – It is suggested that cell phones not be brought to school. If students bring a personal cell phone, they are expected to store their device per building procedures. Phones will be

stored throughout the school day in assigned locations. While the district will make reasonable efforts to safeguard all devices temporarily collected, students and parents acknowledge that cell phones and other personal electronic devices are brought to school at owner's risk.

- **No Sharing Devices** – Students are not permitted to share their personal devices with others. Possessing another student's device without permission may result in disciplinary action under the district's theft policies.
- **Recording Restrictions** – Students are prohibited from taking photographs, videos, or audio recordings of themselves, other students, or staff without prior express permission. Posting such content from the school day without permission may result in disciplinary action.
- **Cyberbullying/Cyberbaiting** – Will not be tolerated. Consequences are outlined in the Student Handbook and Discipline Code.
- **Technology Misuse** – Activities such as hacking, bypassing security measures, or introducing harmful software into the network are strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.
- **Contacting Students** – Time sensitive communication between parents/guardians and students during the school day must be directed through the main office.
- **Failure to Comply** – Refusal to hand a device to staff when asked or failure to comply with building procedures may result in disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension for insubordination.
- **Administrative Discretion** – The building principal may address situations not covered in this policy on a case-by-case basis in alignment with Board Policy 237.

Avonworth Middle School & Avonworth High School Building-Specific Guidelines

- **During the School Day** – Cell phones and other personal electronic devices must be turned off and stored per building procedures. At the middle school, students will not be allowed to access devices at any time during the school day. At the high school, students will be permitted to have their device only during Lunch and transition times. They should not have their phones out during Open Mods, LEAD, and when leaving classrooms during class time. Use of Digital Hallpass should be through Chromebooks.
- **Parent/Student Communication** – Students may use a classroom or office phone with teacher permission if needed, or use their device during a permitted time. If parents/caregivers need to reach Students right away, they should call the main office.

- **These guidelines are subject to change over the course of the year.**

EXPECTATIONS & RULES

Cafeteria/Commons Rules

The cafeterias in the Avonworth School District strives to offer a quality breakfast and lunch program for our students. No students are permitted to leave school grounds for lunch or have lunch delivered from an outside service.

The following rules must be followed when students are in the cafeteria:

1. Food and drinks are not to be taken from the cafeteria.
2. Students are asked to refrain from loud talking or yelling while in the cafeteria.
3. Students are not permitted to cut serving lines.
4. Trash is to be deposited in the proper receptacles. Trays, silver, and dishes are to be returned to the proper collection area. Each student is responsible for the cleanliness of the area where they eat. Chairs should be placed back in the proper position before exiting.
5. Throwing objects or engaging in food fights is unacceptable behavior. After eating, students must remain in the cafeteria area until the end of the lunch period.
6. Students not following cafeteria rules may be assigned to an alternative lunch program or assigned consequences.

Cheating

Any student caught cheating on a test or assignment will receive a grade of “zero” for that test or assignment. Details of the incident will be submitted by the teacher to the administration. Parents/Caregivers will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken.

Using AI tools to generate evaluated work without a teacher’s approval, turning in AI generated work without proper citations, or presenting AI generated work as original work is considered cheating and will be treated as such. For specific guidelines, refer to the AI Student Guide.

Academic Integrity

The District views academic integrity to be of the utmost importance. Students should not take others' work and attempt to pass it off as their own or cheat on assignments, quizzes, or exams. Students are responsible for respecting the intellectual and academic property of self and others. Any student caught cheating on a test or assignment or plagiarizing an assignment will receive a grade of "zero" for that test or assignment. The teacher will submit details of the incident to the administration. Teachers should notify the student and the parents/caregivers and that disciplinary action will be taken.

Classrooms & Hallways

The classroom teacher is in control in their classroom and has a right, an expectation, and a duty to establish clear rules and expectations for proper student conduct. Failure to follow specific directions from a classroom teacher on student conduct may result in disciplinary action as determined by the teacher and/or administration. will result in detention with the teacher and/or administrative disciplinary action. Repeated incidents will result in removal from the class for a period of time to be determined by the Administration.

Disrespectful language or behavior will not be tolerated.
Any action that interferes with the education or safety of fellow students will not be tolerated.

Class Cuts/Leaving School Grounds without Permission

Students are expected to be in the areas they are assigned to be in at all times. Students who miss classes without permission from the proper authority will be subject to disciplinary action. Students may not leave school grounds during school hours without prior, written parental/caregiver permission or administrative authorization. Unless a student has an early release form on file, students are expected to check with the main office before either entering or leaving school grounds during school hours. Failure to follow these procedures will result in disciplinary action.

Computer Use

Computer misuse will result in disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, using AI tools to generate evaluated work without a teacher's approval, turning in AI generated work without proper citations, or presenting AI generated work as original work. Information and programs stored on Avonworth computers, storage systems, or peripherals are the private property of the individual creator of Avonworth School District, and shall not be duplicated.

Dress Code

The Dress Code Policy is intended to support the creation of an educational environment promoting self-respect and appropriate exposure while not inhibiting self-expression. Faculty and administration have the right to question a student's dress if perceived as inappropriate and/or offensive. Dress should be appropriate for a school environment as preparation for appropriate dress in the workplace.

Caregivers will be notified and be required to bring a change of clothing if the student cannot make adequate adjustments. Classes missed by the student as a result of the dress code violation will count against the school's attendance/discipline policy.

Students are not permitted to wear sunglasses in the building during the school day. No clothing, including coats, which interferes with the function of the class is to be worn.

Clothing that is obscene and vulgar or promotes the use of illegal substances (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, guns and/or gangs/violence) sexual innuendo or discrimination may not be worn.

Tops exposing the chest or a bare midriff are not permitted and must be able to meet the top of the student's pants, shorts or skirt while standing up. Shorts and skirts must be of a length that does not expose the buttocks.

It is strongly suggested that students not wear flip-flops. Slippers are not permitted to be worn. Flip-flops and slippers are unsafe footwear for the halls, stairs, and buses.

Field Trips

If a student requires medicine during the school day, it is required that a school nurse attend the field trip or the student must take the required medicine prior to leaving school for the field trip.

Students and chaperones attending overnight field trips are subject to bag searches prior to leaving and may include a search completed by the K-9 unit. Students and chaperones may not bring baked goods on any field

trips. All food and drink items must be factory sealed.

Gambling

Any form of gambling is prohibited. Money or materials will be confiscated. Appropriate discipline will be assigned, including, but not limited to, the assignment of a Saturday detention in Middle School/High School for a first offense.

Hazing (School Board Policy 247)

Hazing of any student, on or off school property, as it relates to school sponsored activities is prohibited and will be dealt with immediately. Those involved in such acts will be suspended out-of-school for a minimum of three (3) days. They may also face a Board hearing for possible expulsion proceedings as well as face charges filed with the local police department.

Library

The library staff works hard to make the library materials accessible and to assist all students, faculty members and school staff with research, reading enrichment and personal development. The library is appropriate for quiet study; students who are noisy or disturb others may be asked to leave and/or face disciplinary action.

Each student is expected to observe the rules for signing out and returning books and magazines, and for the use of other library materials. It is expected that books, magazines or material taken from the library be to be signed out at the circulation desk even if they are to be used for part of a school period. If the materials are taken without being signed out, they are considered stolen and students caught stealing library materials will be disciplined. A fee will be charged for each book not returned by the end of the school year. Additionally, any theft or damage done to materials or furniture in the library will be met with charges for restitution and disciplinary action.

Student's records will be withheld until their fines are paid unless special arrangements have been made with the librarian and/or building principal.

Media (School Board Policy 235.1 & 816)

Throughout the school year, the news media may have an occasion to visit the building. They may ask students questions or take pictures or a video of the school for their use. The school district also operates and authorizes social media accounts which are subject to guidelines in School Board Policy 816. Pictures or video may be used on these accounts as a representation of the district and its activities. If a parent or caregiver does not want their student depicted through any type of media, a letter must be sent to the building principal requesting that this not occur. If a letter is not received, it will be assumed that this will not be a problem and permission therefore will be granted.

Off-Campus Student Behavior and Expression (School Board Policies 218 & 220)

According to the Supreme Court decision in Mahoney Area School District v. BL (2021), the school district is limited in applying disciplinary action to activities and expression that take place off school property. Expression includes verbal, written, technological, or symbolic representation or communication. The student Code of Conduct still applies to student behavior and expression outside of school when:

1.) It incites violence, advocates, threatens or makes likely the use of force or otherwise threatens serious harm directed at students, staff or the school environment;
2.) It materially and substantially disrupts or interferes with the school environment;

3.) It interferes with or threatens to interfere with the rights of students or school staff or the safe and orderly operation of the schools and their programs;
4.) It involves the theft or vandalism of school property; or
5.) The proximity, timing or motive for the conduct in question or other factors to the conduct otherwise establish a direct connection to attendance at school, to the school community, or to a school-sponsored activity.

On Campus Parking - Bicycles and Motor Vehicles

The Avonworth School District regards the student use of bicycles and motor vehicles for travel to and from school as a privilege for which full responsibility must be assumed by both the parents/caregivers and the student. The use of such must follow the guidelines set by each building principal and in accordance with the rules of the district.

At the High School level, if students drive themselves anywhere while on school time, the following must be secured by the principal and available on file in the principal's office:

- Administrative permission.
- Parental/Caregiver permission form.
- Forms indicating that the vehicles being driven are covered by automobile liability insurance currently in effect.

All rules of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code will be enforced while vehicles are on school property. No student is to park in the spaces designated for the disabled, for visitors or for the staff. Students are expected to be on time to school and park in the large lot across from the main entrance of the high school. Students who park without a permit may be subject to disciplinary action.

Once a student parks their vehicle and enters school, they should not expect to return to their vehicle until they are ready to leave school for the day. In rare instances where a student may need to return to their vehicle during the school day, they must have permission from the office. All school rules/regulations apply to the parking lot area and the vehicle when it is on school grounds.

Student drivers are responsible for all items in the vehicles they drive to and park on school property. School officials may search a student vehicle on school property if they have a reason related to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students or staff, and to enforce school board policies and procedures (School Board Policy 226). A student has the option to be present if his or her vehicle is searched. Vehicles are subject to search by police canine units under the authority/supervision of school administration.

The parking privilege of any students may be withdrawn by the administration for violation of the rules or regulations established at the respective buildings. Additional disciplinary measures may be imposed upon the student who refuses to comply with building policies concerning driving to school. This may include the assistance of the local police department.

Sexual Harassment

Avonworth School District is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. Please refer to guidelines in Board Policy 103 and 248.

Definition of Sexual Harassment (According to Board Policy 103):

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex and is subject to this policy. **Sexual harassment** shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's status in any educational or other programs offered by a school; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for educational or other program decisions affecting a student; or
3. Such conduct deprives a student or group of individuals of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or
4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that a reasonable person in the complainant's position would find that it unreasonably interferes with the complainant's performance in school or school-related programs, or otherwise creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school or school-related environment such that it unreasonably interferes with the complainant's access to or participation in school or school-related programs.

Federal law declares sexual violence a form of sexual harassment. Sexual violence means physical or sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol. An individual may also be unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Sexual violence includes but is not limited to rape, sexual assault, sexual battery and sexual coercion.

The District's Title IX Compliance Officer is the Director of Human Resources, Kristen Butler, kbutler@avonworth.k12.pa.us or (412-369-8738 x 1515).

Student Injuries

If a student is injured during the school day, the school nurse will be notified to provide treatment and make decisions about the medical care of a student. If the school nurse is out of the building, another building nurse will be notified and/or an Emergency Medical Team will be called for assistance.

Student Privileges

If appropriate, the administration may revoke some or all of the following student privileges: parking in school lots, hall passes, use of student restrooms, participation in activities (includes, but is not limited to dances, athletic events, field trips, performances, co-curricular clubs and sports, homecoming and prom).

Student Speech & Expression (School Board Policy 220)

The district recognizes the right of public school students to freedom of speech as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It also recognizes that this right is not unlimited and must be balanced with maintaining a safe and orderly school environment.

Students wishing to distribute and/or post non-school materials must receive approval by the building principal one (1) school day in advance of distributing or posting the material. Materials will be dated upon approval, and the district may remove them within 10 days. Students violating this policy are subject to disciplinary action. Nonschool materials include any printed, technological or written materials, regardless of form, source or authorship, that are not prepared as part of a curricular or approved extracurricular district program.

Students have the right to express themselves unless such expression is likely to or does materially and substantially disrupt or interfere with educational processes. Student expression is prohibited where it

1.) Violates federal, state or local laws, School Board policy or district rules & procedures;
2.) Is defamatory, obscene, lewd, vulgar or profane;
3.) Advocates the use or advertises substances that pose a health threat such as tobacco/vaping products, alcohol or illegal drugs;
4.) Incites violence or advocates use of force or threatens serious harm to the school or community;
5.) Materially or substantially disrupts or interferes with the educational process;
6.) Interferes with, or advocates interference with, the rights of any individual or the safe and orderly operation of school & their programs;
7.) Violates district procedures on time, place and manner for dissemination of otherwise protected expression.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Board has the authority and responsibility to establish reasonable rules and regulations for the conduct and deportment of district students. At the same time, no student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence, and free expression and association, in accordance with Board policy and school rules.

Tardy to School or Class

A student is considered tardy to class if they arrive to class after the start of class. Refer to attendance policy.

Unassigned Class Time - "Open Mods"

The expanded schedule of classes provides mods per week, which are free of any assignment for some students. These are independent study mods. They present a challenge, as it is the student's responsibility to use them to personal advantage. Those who wish to get the most from the school day will develop a self-tailored study plan.

During these times, students should report to an assigned "Open Mod" area and sign in using the procedures outlined by the administration. Students should not be roaming hallways, moving locations excessively or disrupting the instruction of teachers in any part of the building, including middle school and gymnasiums. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines may be assigned to a supervised Study Hall and/or be subject to disciplinary action. In the case of an emergency, students must report to the closest office personnel or Librarian upon evacuation of the building. Teachers are responsible for reporting extra students during these situations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Complaints

The Avonworth teachers are always the first line of contact for parents/caregivers concerned about their student or programs. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to call or email their student's teacher first if there are issues to be discussed concerning the classroom. If satisfaction is not reached, then parents/caregivers are to contact the building principal. If still not satisfied, the parent/caregiver is encouraged to contact either the Director of Student Services or the Superintendent. As a last resort, the Board of School Directors will hear complaints, upon prior permission from the Board President, to address the Board at large in executive session.

Financial Obligations

The District believes that students must respect property and develop feelings of pride in community institutions. The school issues books needed for particular courses of study, a locker for books, and extra articles of clothing (sports). It is the student's duty to take care of all these loaned items. Any destruction, accidental or intentional, must be paid for at the respective school main offices.

The secretary will give the student a receipt for all paid debts and fines. Quarterly report cards may be withheld for any student who fails to pay their fines or debts incurred for damaged or lost items. Subsequently, charges could be filed with the local magistrate for unpaid debts or fines.

Legal Notification (PA Act 30)

Act 30, passed by the Pennsylvania legislature, requires the court judicial system, through the juvenile probation department, to provide school administrators information concerning the adjudication of an enrolled child. Such reports include a description of delinquent acts committed by the student, disposition of the case, probation or treatment reports, prior delinquent history, the established supervision plan and any other information deemed necessary. The building principal is required to share the information with the child's teacher or teachers or the principal of another school to which the child may transfer.

Medication

The Avonworth School District recognizes the need for medications to be provided to students when prescribed by a practicing physician. To avoid any possible misinterpretation of this need, the following provisions cell phones shall be followed:

- All medications should be given by the parent/caregiver whenever possible.
- It is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to inform the school of any medication that must be brought to or taken in school.
- School personnel in school may give prescription medication only when instructions for administration and possible side effects are on file with the school nurse. The parent shall be responsible for supplying the labeled medication in its original container. When the nurse is not available, the responsibility for such will be delegated by the building principal.

For details see School Board Policy 210.

Personal Search

The Avonworth School District recognizes that all people want and expect the security and privacy of their persons, that there should be clear and good reasons to violate this expectation, and that the violation should be as unobtrusive as possible to protect the safety and order of the schools.

Procedures to be followed are outlined in Pennsylvania Code Title 2, Chapter 12.14: Searches will be conducted when it can be determined through reliable information that a student had illegal material on school property or his or her person. Personal bags, lockers, cars, equipment, etc. belonging to a student and on school property are also subject to searches given reasonable suspicion (School Board Policy 226).

Snow Days, Emergencies, Cancellations, or Delays

The Avonworth School District utilizes a notification system, which allows us to reach parents, caregiver, students, and staff members instantly via an automated telephone system. The District also urges parents/caregiver to listen to or watch the following stations, rather than to call the school office: KDKA (1020AM), WTAE (1250AM), WPXI TV, WTAE TV for announcements of school closings or delays due to snow or inclement weather. Additionally, information will be posted on the school website, *avonworth.k12.pa.us* and social media.

Any parent/caregiver who feels that local road conditions are not safe for travel should feel free to keep a child at home. Students may be excused from missing school in this circumstance, if approved by the building principal.

School Security

Avonworth School District maintains a safe environment for students, staff, and community. Security cameras are installed in public areas to alert administration of any potential misconduct. A School Resource Officer is on site frequently to address law enforcement.

Outside doors, other than the main entrances, should remain closed/locked during the school day. Visitors should enter only through the main entrance.

For more details see the “Safety Measures” section of this handbook.

Valuables

Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or other personal valuables, including cell phones to school. Students, not the school, are held responsible for the loss of their personal property.

Visitors

Students are not permitted to bring visitors without special permission from the building principal.

APPENDICES & FORMS

VIRTUAL LEARNING GUIDELINES

The use of video conferencing can help connect teachers to their students while learning from home, including days that are district virtual learning days. Avonworth teachers will be using this resource to meet with classes, small groups, and individual students. The District is using two video conferencing platforms: Google Hangouts/Meet. The District has taken several precautions to ensure the privacy of these video conferences, but we rely on our partnership with caregivers to ensure these tools are used appropriately by students while they learn from home. Students and parents/caregivers are expected to follow these video conferencing guidelines:

- Students' ability to use video conferencing with or without a parents'/caregivers' direct supervision is a decision parents/caregivers need to make based on the age and independence of the child. For example, while K-2 students may require an adult's direct assistance while using video conferencing tools, older students may be able to use these learning resources independently.

- Parents/caregivers should be mindful of the family activities and images that are or heard/seen during a student's use of video conferencing. Please have your children use these tools in a space that you can monitor, yet private enough for them to minimize distractions.

- Students need to ensure that video conferencing devices are fully charged in advance of the video conference session, and they should know how to turn off the camera or microphone as needed.

- Please remind students to dress and behave appropriately when video conferencing. The same rules of conduct and behavior that apply to the classroom apply to video conferencing. Please refer to the District's Code of Conduct to review behavior expectations.

- Students/parents/caregivers are not permitted to take photos, screenshots, or recordings of any video or audio from these video conference sessions. Participants do not have permission to do so and should be aware that this is a violation of the Student Acceptable Use of Technology policy.

- Teachers may choose to record instructional video conferencing sessions and share them with students who cannot attend the live session. Recordings of sessions will not be publicly available, and will only be shared within a secure resource such as Google Classroom or Seesaw, or as a link in an email to the class or individual students. Students and parents/caregivers are not permitted to share links provided by teachers with anyone. Faculty will announce their intention to record the session giving students/parents/caregivers the opportunity to turn off their camera and/or microphone if privacy is of concern.

STUDENT DEVICE USER AGREEMENT

The purpose of this document is to delineate the terms and responsibilities for families taking possession of an AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT issued device. Although families will take temporary possession of the device, the device remains the property of the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT. All equipment must be returned or made available to AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT upon the student's separation from AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT, either by graduation, withdrawal, or at the request of AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT Administration. The option to purchase insurance for the device will be made available annually, at the beginning of the school year, through the District.

Students in the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT are being provided access to technology for educational purposes. Students must follow the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT *Code of Conduct* and *Acceptable Use Policy* for responsible use of technology in order to maintain the privilege of accessing such technology. The student and parent/caregiver(s) will be responsible for taking the necessary precautions to safeguard the device. If the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT determines that loss and/or damage is the result of negligence, the parent/caregiver(s) may be held financially responsible for the repair or replacement of the device. AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT reserves the right to review, monitor, and restrict information stored on or transmitted via the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT owned device and to investigate inappropriate use of resources. The District will provide filtered Internet access to its students in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. Students will be educated in the proper use of the device and options for data storage.

This information is provided to make all users aware of the responsibilities associated with efficient, ethical, and lawful use of the District's technological resources. If a student violates the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT *Code of Conduct* or Responsible Use Policy, privileges may be denied and appropriate disciplinary action shall be applied. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension/expulsion for students. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

The Student and Parent/Caregiver signature signifies that the student will:

- Use the device in a responsible and ethical manner that upholds the standards of AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT.
- Understand that the device is at all times the property of the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT.
- Not uninstall, disable and/or modify any hardware or software installed on the device or install new or additional programs on the device.
- Not permit individuals, other than AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT administrators or authorized AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT IT Department personnel, to access, repair or service the device.
- Adhere to the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT Acceptable Use Policy found in the *Code of Conduct*. Devices used off school property are subject to all applicable AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT Board Policies, rules, and regulations.

- Understand the device will not be used for personal and/or private purposes and is to be used for the student's educational use and school responsibilities. Devices should not be used to cheat, including the unauthorized use of AI.

- Report loss and/or damage of the device to the AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT IT Department. If the loss and/or damage is a result of negligence, the student/parent(s) or caregiver(s) may be held financially responsible.

- Adhere to this Student Device User Agreement in the event the student is issued a "loaner" device during service.

- Notify the administration immediately if a student should receive an electronic communication containing materials that may be unlawful, inappropriate, affected by a virus, and/or a potential violation of the *Code of Conduct*.

- Not share login credentials and log off and secure their device to protect their work and information.

- Have a fully charged device prior to the start of the school day.

**** Agreement to abide by this service agreement will be done electronically through ParentSquare***

AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Avonworth High School Pre-planned Educational Tour/Trip Form

Please either complete this linked Form or turn the form below into the Main Office at least 1 week prior to departure.

Student's Full Name: _____ Grade: _____

Date(s) of Proposed Absence: _____

Person(s) Directing and/or Supervising Student during Above Absence:

Name: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Itinerary of the trip:
Include activities which could be educational in nature and will, therefore, provide the child with some valuable experiences outside the classroom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please note: planned trips or tours should be scheduled with mandatory state testing dates in mind. Voluntary traveling during these dates is highly discouraged.

- *Testing window for 2026-27 school year is:*
  - *PSSA April 26- May 7, 2027*
  - *Keystone May 17 & 18, 2027*
  - *AP testing May 3 - 14, 2027*

Classroom assignments are the responsibility of the student to obtain, preferably prior to departure. All assignments must be completed. Upon their return, students shall be given the number of days to complete their assignments equal to the number of days absent.

I certify that all of the above information to be true and agree to comply with the above conditions.

_____ _____ _____

Signature of Parent or Caregiver Date Best Contact Phone #

AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT
PHOTOGRAPH OPT OUT FORM

During the course of the school year, photographs or videos of Avonworth students may be taken by students and staff of Avonworth School District for educational learning outcomes, celebratory purposes, District publications, newspapers, yearbook, television and or the District website. Personally identifiable information such as students' names are **NOT** used.

In addition, the school district partners with a multitude of outside companies and organizations to enhance the learning opportunities we provide our students. Examples include but are not limited to: Pittsburgh Children's Museum, Heinz History Center, Warhol Museum, Inventionland, Parrot, etc. Through these partnerships, pictures and or videos may be shared. Any pictures or video shared with partner companies will **NOT contain personally identifiable information such as a student's name.**

If for any reason you do **NOT** want photographs or videotapes of your child used in this manner, please check the box below:

_____ I **DO NOT** want photographs or videotapes of my child/children used in this manner.

_____ _____

(Student Name) (Grade)

_____ _____

(Parent/Caregiver Signature) (Date)

**** Print this page, sign it, and turn it into the school office.***

AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE HANDBOOK

The Student Handbook is available on the Avonworth School website, or by hard copy upon request to the main office of your school building.

Student Name (please print): _____ Grade: _____

My child and I have reviewed the contents of the **2026-2027** Avonworth Student Handbook. We acknowledge the expectations, procedures, and consequences explained throughout the handbook including the attendance procedures and policies. All students and parents are expected to follow these guidelines as members of the Avonworth School Community regardless of acknowledgement of receipt.

_____ _____
(Student Name/ Signature) (Grade)

_____ _____
(Parent/Caregiver Signature) (Date)

Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the Student Handbook will be completed electronically through ParentSquare

Avonworth Board of School Directors

John Brandt, President
Yu-Ling Cheng, Vice President
Danielle White, Treasurer
Adam Livingston
Jessica Opalko
Justin Panuski
Jenna Paulat
Nora Silvey
Amy Tokar

Avonworth School District Administration

Jeffrey Finch, Ed.D.	Interim Superintendent of Schools
Cindy Donovan	Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent
Jillian Bichsel, Ed.D.	Assistant Superintendent
Jennifer Sheridan	Director of Fiscal Management and Support Services
Justin Karam, Ed.D.	Director of Student Services
Kevin McCabe	Director of Technology and Information Systems
Kristen Butler	Director of Human Resources
Brant Colamarino	Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Nate Milsom	Director of Athletics
Melissa Schad	Director of Food Services
Keera Dwulit, Ed.D.	High School Principal
Kaitlin Remensky, Ed.D.	High School Asst. Principal
Michael Hall, Ed.D.	Middle School Principal
Michael Schmitt, M.S.Ed.	Middle School Asst. Principal

The Avonworth School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry, complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for disabled persons, should contact:

Title IX Compliance Officer
Kristen Butler
Director of Human Resources
258 Josephs Lane Pittsburgh, PA 15237-1064
(412) 369 8738 ext. 1515