

Code of Student Conduct and Discipline



2026-2027

Effective August 2026

Richmond County School System
Acknowledgement of Receipt of the
Code of Student Conduct and Discipline
2026-2027 School Year

The undersigned parent or guardian and student acknowledge receipt of a copy of the **Code of Student Conduct and Discipline** of the Richmond County School System for the 2026-2027 school year on the date set forth below. The parent agrees to review the Code with the student to ensure the student is knowledgeable of the conduct expected and range of consequences for rule violations, including, but not limited to bullying as well as, the attendance and tardy protocol, which is part of a county-wide attendance initiative. Please review the provisions governing technology.

Parents are encouraged to discuss with their children the consequences, including potential criminal penalties for underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

Additionally, the undersigned parent or guardian acknowledges receipt of the Family Dynamics Letter, Complaint Procedures, Right to Know, Discipline Matrix, Due Process Hearing Request Information, Technology Loan Agreement, Student Fines, Fees and Charges, Safe Schools Act Notification, Water Safety Education Course Information, as well as the Parent and Family Engagement Policy which are found in the Appendix section of this Code.

We, the undersigned, understand a copy of this receipt and acknowledgement is to be returned to the school after we have signed below.

This _____ day of _____, 20_____

Name of Student

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Signature of Student

(Required for Middle and High School students only)

Name of School

Mission Statement

Empowering Every Learner Every Day.



Vision Statement

To prepare every student to thrive, adapt,
and lead in an ever-changing world.

FOREWORD

Much work and thought have gone into the preparation of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. It is consistent with State Board policy, state legislation, and the most recent court decisions. It should prove to be beneficial to everyone involved: students, parents, and school employees. This code is reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, by a committee composed of educators, board members, students and parents.

In essence, it does the following five things:

- *It provides substantial guidance for behavior standards and expectations for students.*
- *It assures due process and fair treatment for every student, assuring each an opportunity to be heard.*
- *It is the foundation that should foster a wholesome environment within the schools of the system.*
- *It affords each student an uninterrupted opportunity to pursue academic excellence.*
- *It provides rules designed for the safety and welfare of the students.*

It does not, in any sense, weaken the position of the teachers and principals with regard to the maintenance of good conduct and order. In addition, the Richmond County School System provides various resources to help schools establish a positive school climate for staff and students and to help address student behavioral problems.

This booklet should be used as a reference until another is revised and issued by the Richmond County Board of Education.

RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

School attendance is a right guaranteed to students and will not be denied without due process. So that students may attend school in a setting conducive to learning, all students are expected to conduct themselves in a proper and lawful manner.

Students will be held personally accountable for behavior that may adversely affect the educational process or endanger the health, safety or well-being of other students, teachers or employees of the School System while on any property of the Board of Education, attending school sponsored events or activities, riding as passengers in vehicles operated by or on the behalf of the School System, at the bus stop, en route to and from school, or while within a school safety zone as defined in O.C.G.A § 16-11-127.1. This accountability includes, but is not limited to, passive participation, being an accomplice, or inciting, advising or counseling others to engage in acts that are in violation of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, as well as federal and/or state laws. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline also addresses conduct off school grounds which has a direct and immediate effect of the student being criminally charged with a felony and/or when the student's continued presence at school becomes a disruption or a potential danger to persons or property at the school.

Additionally, the Richmond County School System does not tolerate possession and/or use of drugs including alcohol, acts of violence, and possession of weapons within a school safety zone as defined in O.C.G.A § 16-11-127.1.

The Richmond County School System retains the authority to assign to an alternative educational program disruptive students or students who frequently or severely violate the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. Students may be placed in an alternative educational program by the tribunal panel, and in some cases by the Superintendent, or his designee. The alternative educational program is available for students in grades six through twelve.

Authority of the Principal

The principal, as the designated leader of the school, is responsible for its orderly operation. In this capacity, the principal has the discretion to use professional judgment to determine the most appropriate course of action regarding discipline violations or illegal activities not explicitly covered by prescribed dispositions in the Richmond County Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Principals have the final authority to make disciplinary judgment regarding assignment of students to In-School Suspension (ISS) or short-term Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) (10 days or less). Recommendations for Out-of-School Suspensions or expulsions which exceed 10 school days require a request for a student disciplinary hearing before the tribunal panel.

Enrollment of Students

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2, a student who attempts to enroll or who is enrolled in any school within the Richmond County School System during the time in which that student is subject to a disciplinary order (*i.e.*, any order of a local school system in this state, a private school, or a public school outside of this state which imposes short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion upon a student in such system or school) should be aware that the Richmond County School System is authorized to refuse to enroll the student or to subject that student to short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion for any time remaining in that other school system's or school's disciplinary order upon receiving a certified copy of such order if the offense which led to such suspension or expulsion in the other school system or school was an offense for which suspension or expulsion could be imposed in the enrolling Richmond County school. The final decision will be based upon the approval of the Deputy Superintendent or designee. RCSS follows the provisions of H.B. 268, and all other applicable laws regarding the enrollment and withdrawal of students.

Students returning from boot camps, incarceration, RYDC or the YDC must report to the Superintendent, or designee, for appropriate transition before enrolling in the Richmond County School System and may be assigned to the Alternative Education Center for an appropriate period of time. The compulsory attendance policy of the State of Georgia applies to the Alternative Education Center and the students assigned thereto.

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CHARACTER EDUCATION INFORMATION CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Parents should take the lead in teaching and demonstrating good character for their child or children. Whenever possible, it is recommended that students be referred for counseling to reinforce character education. Below are the Rules of the Code of Conduct with the corresponding character trait that befits the code violation.

Rule 1

Disruption and Interference with School

Character Trait

Citizenship: Respect for and Acceptance of Authority
Respect for Others

Rules 2 & 3

Damage, Destruction or Theft of School Property

Damage, Destruction or Theft of Private Property

Character Trait

Citizenship: Respect for Environment and Respect for Others

Rules 4(A) & 4(B)

Physical Assault on an Employee of the School System; Verbal Assault and Disruptive Conduct

Physical Violence Against Teachers, School Bus Driver, or Other School Official or Employee

Character Trait

Respect for Self: Self Control and Virtue
Respect for Others: Courtesy
Citizenship: Tolerance

Rule 5

Physical Assault to and/or Fighting with a Person Not Employed by the School

Character Trait

Respect for Others: Compassion, Kindness,
Respect for Self: Self Control
Citizenship: Tolerance

Rule 6

Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

Character Trait

Respect for Self & Others: Accountability, Civility, Self Control

Rule 7(A)

Alcoholic Beverages

Character Trait

Self-Esteem: Knowledge
Respect for Physical, Mental Health

Rule 7(B)

Narcotics, Drugs and Controlled Substances

Character Trait

Self-Esteem: Knowledge
Respect for Physical, Mental Health

Rule 8

Illicit or Immoral Activities by a Student

Rule 9

Disregard of Directions or Commands

Character Trait

Respect for Self: Self Control, and Virtue
Respect for the Creator, Accountability
Respect for Others: Kindness, Compassion

Rule 10

Attendance

Character Trait

Citizenship: Respect for and Acceptance of Authority
Respect For Self: Self Control and Virtue
Work Ethic: Cooperation and Diligence

Rule 11

Unexcused Absence from Detention Class

Character Trait

Work Ethic: Punctuality, School Pride, Diligence, Accomplishment

Character Trait

Respect for Others: Civility, Accountability
Work Ethic: Diligence

Rule 12
Tardiness

Character Trait
Respect for Self & Others: Accountability,
Commitment, Perseverance & Diligence, Frugality,
Work Ethic: Punctuality, Dependability

Rule 13
Leaving Campus Without Permission

Character Trait
Citizenship: Respect for and Acceptance of
of Authority
Respect for Others: Courtesy and Cooperation

Rule 14
Dress and Grooming

Character Trait
Self-Esteem: Cleanliness, Respect for
Physical Appearance, Knowledge

Rule 15
Smoking

Character Trait
Self-Esteem: Knowledge, Respect for Physical,
Mental Health

Rule 16
Cell Phones and Personal Electronic
Devices

Character Trait
Citizenship: Respect for and Acceptance of
Authority
Respect for Others: Civility

Rule 17
Compliance with Rules and Regulations

Character Trait
Citizenship: Respect for and Acceptance of Authority

Rule 18
Falsified Address and Enrolling Out of Zone

Character Trait
Respect for Others: Integrity, Honesty,
Truthfulness

Rule 19
School Bus Rules and Student Responsibilities

Character Trait
Citizenship: Respect for and Acceptance of
Authority
Respect for Self: Accountability

INTRODUCTION

The rules of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline are divided into four parts:

- PART I** **Lists the types of student conduct which represent violations**
- PART II** **Outlines the method that will be followed in the processing of alleged violations or in the operation and inspection of motor vehicles on campus**
- PART III** **Outlines appropriate procedures for search of students, students' lockers, and students' desks**
- PART IV** **Outlines alternative means of discipline**

School Assignment

Student assignment to an attendance zone is based on residence. There are exceptions to the residence rule as provided by Federal and State law. The Deputy Superintendent determines such exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Every parent or guardian is required to complete and sign a certificate of residence so school officials may verify that the child is attending the proper school.

If a student moves outside the Richmond County School District or from one zone to another within the district, (excluding those transferred because of attending school out of zone), he or she may be allowed to complete the grading period before transferring if private transportation is provided, and provided that certain conditions are met. Approval must be given by the Superintendent or his/her designee, the Deputy Superintendent. Refer to **Rule 18** for related information.

School System Jurisdiction

Except where otherwise indicated in the provisions of this Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, for each Rule provision, the authority of the School System over the conduct of students extends to the following locations and circumstances:

- (a) On the school grounds and within the school safety zone during, before and after school hours;
- (b) On the school grounds and within the school safety zone as either a spectator or a participant at any other time when the school is being used by a school-sponsored group;
- (c) Off the school grounds at any school-related or school-sponsored activity, function, or event as a participant or a spectator. School-related activities include online and remote learning environments that are maintained or sponsored by School System staff;
- (d) Enroute to and from school, including, but not limited to, the school bus and the school bus stop;
- (e) Off school grounds, when a student's behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order or discipline in schools or maintaining the safety and welfare of the students and staff;
- (f) Off school grounds which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and when the student's continued presence at school becomes a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process;
- (g) Off school grounds, when the conduct involves the misuse of school-owned equipment provided in order to access the online learning environment; or
- (h) Otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of School System authorities.

Improvement of the Student Learning

Environment

Parents and guardians are encouraged to inform their children of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

NOTE: See the **State Discipline Matrix** in the **Appendix** which shows the correlation between a local rule violation and the requirements for reporting a rule violation to the **State Board of Education**. Any provision or definition within this **Code of Student Conduct and Discipline** which is found to be in conflict with **State law** or **State Board of Education (SBOE)** rules and regulations, shall be superseded by said **State law** or **SBOE rule(s)**.

PART I - VIOLATIONS

Rule 1 [State 2, 4, 6, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 33, 34] Disruption and Interference with School

No student shall:

- (a) Occupy or attempt to occupy any school building, gymnasium, school grounds, properties, or part thereof with intent to deprive others of its use, or where the effect thereof is to deprive others of its use.
- (b) Block or attempt to block the entrance or exit of any school building or property or corridor or room thereof so as to deprive others access thereto.
- (c) Set fire or attempt to set fire to or otherwise damage any school building or property.
- (d) Possess, display, or otherwise threaten to use any firearms, explosives, other weapons or any instrument not covered under Rule 6, that can reasonably pose a danger to the health and safety of students, teachers, or any other person.
- (e) Prevent or attempt to prevent the convening or continued functioning of any school, class, activity, or lawful meeting or assembly on the school campus.
- (f) Prevent students from attending a class or school activity.
- (g) Block or attempt to block normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a school campus or adjacent grounds except under the direct instruction of the principal.
- (h) Continuously make noise or act in any other manner so as to interfere seriously with the teacher's ability to conduct the class.
- (i) Cause or attempt to cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school in any manner, by the use of violence, intimidation, force, noise, coercion, threat, harassment, fear, passive resistance, technology, Internet or any other conduct, or engage in any such conduct causing the disruption or obstruction of any such lawful mission, process or function or obstruct or hinder any school employee from performing his or her assigned duty.
- (j) Refuse to identify self or provide false identity upon request of any teacher, principal, superintendent, school bus driver, or other authorized school personnel.
- (k) Verbally assault or verbally abuse or use vulgar or profane or threatening language or gestures or exhibit disrespectful conduct toward any other student, teacher, principal, assistant principal, administrator, school bus driver, any other school personnel, or other persons attending school related functions.
- (l) Possess vulgar or obscene materials, magazines, books, pictures, or any other vulgar or obscene materials that are disruptive to the education process. This rule shall not include magazines, books, pictures, or literature which are part of the library inventory of the school or which are a part of any prescribed assignment.

(m) Forge the signature of parents, guardians, teachers, school officials, or any other person and/or alter any official document.

(n) Sell, distribute, or take orders for any items for the purpose of raising money for personal gain or for non-school-related activities at school or during school hours. Soliciting, selling, or collecting from school personnel by students on campus is forbidden. Students may have bake sales and car washes after school at privately operated businesses in order to raise funds for clubs, provided that they have prior approval of the establishment where the event is held. Students, however, are not to go from door to door throughout the community selling items to raise money for school projects. Students are allowed, however, to sell advertisements for the school yearbook and newspaper. Also, students may sell booster ribbons, banners, etc., before school, during lunch, after school, and at school activities for approved school-related projects. Fundraising projects at the schools shall be limited to school pictures, school store items, and the above related activities.

(o) Urge, bring, or encourage unauthorized persons to visit school campuses. The principal is empowered to take appropriate action against non-students who invade the building, grounds, or other school property. Such action shall include the right to request assistance from police authorities and swear out warrants after conferring with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee or the Board Attorney.

(p) Gamble or possess gambling devices of any type, kind, or description. HOWEVER, the student may possess, upon the express instruction of a teacher or other authorized personnel, gambling devices for use in the instructional program or particular educational project. In such cases, the particular teacher must verify to the office that the possession of such gambling devices was at the express direction or with the express permission of the teacher for use in the instructional program.

(q) Enter upon the campus of another school without prior approval of the school administration of the school to which the visit is to be made.

(r) Use electronic devices, including but not limited to computers, tablets, cellular phones and smart phones, except as permitted by the School System's Internet Acceptable Use Procedures contained in the Internet Acceptable Use Policy (IFBG), and the School System's Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy, which are included herein. **The principal or the principal's designee has authority to revoke a student's electronic device privileges when such Procedures have not been followed.** By way of specification and not limitation, the following will be considered inappropriate uses of the Richmond County School System's Technology Network:

1. Electronically capturing or sharing any image of other persons without the express permission of the person.
2. Posting, publishing, sending or creating materials or communications that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal, or engage in any other type of behavior which constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind, or is in violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, state law or federal law. NOTE: Students who engage in such activity off campus and cause a material disruption of school operations shall be subject to discipline rules contained in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, as well as criminal charges, if warranted.
3. Accessing, sending, creating or posting materials or communications that could be inconsistent with the System's educational needs and goals.
4. Using the network for financial gain, advertising or commercial activity.

5. Transmitting any material in violation of federal law, state law or regulation.
6. Posting anonymous or forging electronic email messages or altering, deleting or copying another user's email.
7. Using the School System's computer hardware or network for any illegal activity, which includes but is not limited to, copying or downloading copyrighted software, music or images, or violation of copyright laws.
8. Downloading, installing, or playing any unauthorized program or content (including those created or downloaded at home) on any school's computer or network.
9. Purposely bringing any hardware on the premises or loading any software that is designed to damage, alter, destroy or provide access to unauthorized data.
10. Attempting to vandalize or disassemble any network or computer component, including but not limited to, any attempt to alter network or computer configuration.
11. Gaining access or attempting to access unauthorized or restricted network resources or the data and documents of another person.
12. Sending spam through email.
13. Electronically capturing or sharing any image or material from standardized assessments, or any other material that would be a violation of the Acceptable Use Policy or that would constitute academic dishonesty.
14. Using an artificial intelligence (AI) program to generate content for an assignment when outside resources are not permitted for the assignment, or, when permitted for an assignment, are not properly cited.
15. Using social media platforms, except as allowed by the Acceptable Use Policy and the Social Media Policy.

NOTE: This list is not exhaustive.

Violations of this rule may result in the electronic devices being held for a reasonable time for investigative purposes. At the principal's discretion, a student found to be in violation of this rule may receive disciplinary action as warranted upon the circumstances, which may include, but is not limited to, the revocation of the student's privilege to have electronic devices at school.

Additionally, where there is reasonable suspicion that a phone or other communication device has been used in the violation of school rules or regulations, the school official can review the contents of the phone or device to the extent necessary to demonstrate evidence of a violation.

(s) Incite, advise, urge, encourage, or counsel other students or persons to violate any of the preceding paragraphs of this rule or any other rule of this Code of Conduct.

(t) Cheat, alter records, plagiarize, falsify, receive unauthorized assistance or assist another in any type of academic dishonesty. (Note: The unauthorized or improper use of an artificial intelligence (AI) program constitutes academic dishonesty.)

(u) Engage in public display of affection, which shall include but not be limited to: kissing, hugging, inappropriate touching or other actions which may be disruptive but do not rise to the level of Rule 8(A) or Rule 8(B).

(v) Threaten to commit any crime of violence, release any hazardous substance or burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another, of causing the evacuation of a building, place of assembly or facility, or of otherwise causing serious public inconvenience.

***FOR DISCIPLINE OPTIONS FOR RULE 1(a) THROUGH RULE 1(v), REFER TO RULES 20, 23, 24, 27 & 28(A)(B).**

DISCIPLINE FOR BOMB THREAT, FALSE FIRE ALARM OR OTHER FALSE REPORTS OR THREATS THAT RESULT IN MAJOR DISRUPTION

Notwithstanding any provision of this Code of Conduct, the mandatory minimum discipline for students who make, cause or attempt to cause a bomb threat, false fire alarm or other false reports or threats that result in a major disruption at any school or school function shall be a one year expulsion from the School System followed by one year attendance at the Alternative Education Center.

In addition, students who cause or attempt to cause a bomb threat, false fire alarm or other false reports or threats that result in a major disruption will not be allowed to attend evening school or summer school for the period of time for which they are expelled or assigned to the Alternative Education Center.

Rule 2 [State 11, 12, 20]

Damage, Destruction or Theft of School Property

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school, steal or attempt to steal school property, or use any school property without authorization. In addition, a student shall not mark, deface or destroy school property.

The following disciplinary procedures will be followed for a violation of this rule:

(a) **First Offense:** The first offense will require out of school suspension of up to ten (10) days. (If the act is severe enough, in the judgment of the appropriate school official, more severe discipline may be given on the first offense.) The student shall be required to have the parent or guardian come with the student to school for a conference. At this meeting with the parent or guardian, the Principal will give a written notice to the parent or guardian stating that the next offense will result in expulsion from school for the remainder of the school year.

(b) **Second Offense:** The second offense will result in expulsion for the remainder of the school year, upon a finding of violation by the Tribunal, after impartially hearing the evidence.

A student, to the extent allowed by law, must make restitution for damages to property before the end of the school year. Extreme cases will be referred to proper authorities.

Rule 3 [State 11, 12, 20]

Damage, Destruction or Theft of Private Property

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private personal property or steal or attempt to steal personal property of persons.

The following disciplinary procedures will be followed for damaging or stealing private property:

(a) **First Offense:** The first offense will require out of school suspension of up to ten (10) days. (If the act is severe enough, in the judgment of the appropriate school official, more severe discipline may be given on the first offense.) The student shall be required to have a parent or guardian come with the student to school for a conference. At this meeting with the parent or guardian, the Principal will give written notification that the next offense will result in expulsion from school for the remainder of the school year.

(b) **Second Offense:** The second offense will result in expulsion for the remainder of the school year, upon a finding of violation by the Tribunal, after impartially hearing the evidence.

A student, to the extent allowed by law, must make restitution for damages to property before the end of the school year. Extreme cases will be referred to proper authorities.

Rule 4(A) [State 3]

Physical Assault on an Employee of the School System; Verbal Assault and Disruptive Conduct

A student shall not cause, threaten, or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to a school employee; nor shall a student verbally or in writing assault or verbally or in writing threaten violence toward a school employee; nor shall a student exhibit rude, boorish or disrespectful conduct to a school employee.

***FOR 6 – 12 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULE 27**

***FOR PRE-K - 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24**

Rule 4(B) [State 3]

Physical Violence Against Teachers, School Bus Driver, or Other School Official or Employee

In addition to the requirements for Rule 4(A) for physical assault, a student shall not commit acts of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver or other school official or employee.

As used in this Code of Student Conduct, the term “physical violence” means

- (a) Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting and provoking nature with the person of another; or,
- (b) Intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another, unless such physical contacts or physical harms were in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Georgia law. (O.C.G.A. §16-3-21)

Any student alleged to have committed an act of physical violence, shall be suspended pending a disciplinary hearing by a Tribunal. The Tribunal shall be appointed by the local school board in accordance with O.C.G.A. §20-2-752. The decision of the Tribunal may be appealed to the local school board pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-2-754. If appropriate, based on the facts and circumstances, the Tribunal shall include a recommendation as to whether a student may return to public school, and if return is recommended, a recommended time for the student's return to public school. However, the Local Board may impose penalties not recommended by the Tribunal.

A student found by the Tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence as defined herein against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee shall be expelled from the public school system. The expulsion shall be for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-2-150. The Local Board at its discretion may permit the student to attend an alternative education program for the period of the student's expulsion. If the student who commits an act of physical violence is in kindergarten through grade eight, then the local school board, at its discretion and on the recommendation of tribunal, may permit such a student to reenroll in the regular public school program for grades 9 through 12. If the local school board does not operate an alternative education program for students in kindergarten through grade six, the local school

board, at its discretion, may permit a student in kindergarten through grade six who has committed an act of physical violence as defined in paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of this Code section to reenroll in the public school system.

Any student who is found by a Tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence, as defined herein, in addition to all other discipline and sanctions, shall be referred to Juvenile Court with a request for a petition alleging delinquent behavior.

Any student who is found by a Tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence, as defined herein against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee, may be disciplined by expulsion, long term suspension, or short term suspension.

***FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24**

Nothing in this rule shall be construed to infringe on any right provided the students with individualized education plans pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

**Rule 4(C)
Reporting False Information of Alleged Inappropriate Behavior**

A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.

If the Superintendent, with approval of the Local Board submits a complaint by a student against an educator alleging a sexual offense, investigation by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) may begin immediately without prior notification and prior approval of the Commission members.

**Rule 5(A) [State 3, 8]
Physical Assault and/or Fighting with Another Person**

A student shall not enter into a fight or intentionally touch or strike another person with the intent to cause bodily harm. A fight is defined as "mutual participation involving physical violence with intent to harm where there is no one main offender." Battery is defined as "intentional touching or striking of another person with the intent to cause bodily harm." (Note: The difference between **battery** and **fighting** is that fighting involves mutual participation.)

This may also include **assault**, which for purposes of this Rule, is defined as: "to attempt, or threaten to do bodily injury to any person; or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person."

DISCIPLINE

Acts of physical assault and/or fighting shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Any student determined to be in violation of **Rule 5(A) for Physical Assault and/or Fighting with Another Person** shall be subject to the following discipline, including but not limited to:

First Offense: The first offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for up to four (4) days.

Second Offense: The second offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for up to seven (7) days.

Third Offense: The third offense will result in the student suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for ten (10) days and the student having his or her case referred to the Tribunal for a hearing.

NOTE: Nothing herein shall prohibit the administrator from assigning more than the recommended number of suspension days or referring the student's case to the Tribunal for a hearing before a third offense of physical assault and/or fighting should the circumstances warrant.

Upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer or Tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of physical assault and/or fighting for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to the Alternative Education Center.

NOTE: Nothing herein shall prohibit the Tribunal from assigning the student to the Alternative Education Center before a third offense of physical assault and/or fighting should the circumstances warrant.

**Rule 5(B) [State 29]
Bullying: No Bullying, It's the Law**

A student shall not bully, attempt to bully or threaten to bully any person, including students and employees.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act that is:

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

The term applies to acts which occur in school, on school property, on school vehicles, at school bus stops, en route to and from school, or at school related functions or activities, including, but not limited to, extracurricular activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of this School System.

The term also applies to acts of **cyberbullying** that originate on school property or involve the use of school equipment, including, but not limited to acts that occur within a school sponsored online activity.

“Cyberbullying” means bullying that involves the use of electronic communication, including, but not limited to, communication devices and services, including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, cameras, computers, social media platforms, text messages, chat platforms, and internet sites.

“Electronic communication” means, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system. Such term shall include photographs and video and audio recordings.

“School equipment” means any computer or computer networking equipment, technology or technology related device or service, or communication system or service that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by a local board of education, local school system, or public school and that is used for transmitting, receiving, accessing, viewing, hearing, downloading, recording, or storing electronic communication.

Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to manipulate media to create inappropriate material of any kind and/or to impersonate others (e.g., name, image or likenesses) for the purpose of or having the effect of bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation is strictly prohibited. All users are expected to employ these tools solely for educational purposes, upholding values of respect, inclusivity, and academic integrity at all times.

Reporting

Students are encouraged either anonymously or in person to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity to the school Principal or designee.

Any such report of bullying to the Principal or designee should be investigated by the administration in a timely manner based on the nature of the complaint to determine the following:

- a. whether bullying has occurred;
- b. whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented; and
- c. what other steps should be taken.

DISCIPLINE

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling, as appropriate under the circumstances. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer or Tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to the Alternative Education Center. Nothing herein shall prohibit the Tribunal from assigning the student to the Alternative Education Center before a third offense of bullying should the circumstances warrant.

Retaliation Prohibited

Under O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.4, retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will

be investigated and addressed as called for in the Board's policy and in accordance with School System procedures.

False Reporting

Any student who knowingly files a false report of bullying, harassment or intimidation shall be punished under existing disciplinary provisions.

The Board's Policy (JCDAG) on bullying is posted on the website of the School System and is also included as an attachment to this Code of Conduct.

Note: Incidents or behaviors that implicate potential Title IX violations will be reviewed and evaluated according to the Title IX Regulations. For more information, please see the [RCSS Title IX Webpage](#).

Rule 6 [State 22, 23, 25, 26, 28]

Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit the following: a razor, razor blade, ice pick, explosive, loaded cane, sword cane, machete, knife, pistol, rifle, shotgun, pellet gun, bullets, laser devices, chemical agents or other liquids, all or any part, portion, or attachment of a firearm, whether operable or inoperable, or other objects that can reasonably be considered a weapon or instrument that can reasonably pose a danger to the health and safety of students, teachers, or any other person.

[Note: "Firearm" includes, but is not limited to, any handgun, rifle, shotgun, stun gun, taser or other weapon which will or can be converted to expel a projectile.]

Every Principal shall report to the Superintendent and Department of School Safety, all persons, including students, who possesses a firearm, incendiary device or other dangerous weapon; or if the student is involved in an assault using a "hazardous object," as defined in O.C.G.A. §20-2-751 of the education code or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus. The Superintendent shall investigate thoroughly all such reports and consult with the Board Attorney, where necessary, to determine whether, under the facts, a warrant should be sworn out against said persons or students for violation of any criminal laws or criminal statutes.

Furthermore, In the case of juveniles, said juvenile shall be reported to the proper juvenile and law enforcement authorities, as required by law.

There will be three categories of Rule 6 violations:

- A. Simple Possession:** A situation in which a student has in his/her possession a weapon which, in the opinion of the Principal, is not inherently an offensive weapon (example: fingernail file or clippers, scissors or pocket knife), where there is no threat of or actual confrontations; and where it is the student's first offense of a weapon Rule 6 policy violation. Offenses in this category the Principal may handle internally upon the following express conditions and procedures. The Principal shall consult with the Superintendent or designee, inform the Superintendent or designee of the facts, receive permission to handle the matter internally and immediately complete and forward to the Superintendent, the Principal's Incident Report detailing all the facts and circumstances.

- B. Hazardous Object:** Includes but is not limited to, any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, black jack, any bat, club or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or taser and any other weapon not set forth herein. Such term shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

DISCIPLINE: Any student in possession of any hazardous object shall in accordance with Board policy, be forwarded to the student Tribunal for appropriate action. Upon a finding of a violation by the Tribunal of any student found in possession of items listed, the student shall be subject to the following range of discipline by the Tribunal depending on the evidence, facts, and past record of the student:

1. Probation;
2. In-school suspension (if recommended by Principal at the Tribunal hearing);
3. Referral for testing, evaluation or other similar handling;
4. Alternative educational setting;
5. Long-term suspension (beyond 10 days); expulsion for a specified time commensurate with the offense; or
6. Any combination of the above, consistent with the facts, circumstances and evidence of each individual case.

Any student suspended for the semester or expelled shall receive no credit for the period of suspension or expulsion.

The Superintendent or designee, after consultation with the Board Attorney, shall have the discretion to determine whether the weapon or instrument, other than those enumerated above, is in fact a dangerous weapon in accordance with the terms of the policy or appropriate statutes.

Where exceptions are made by the Principal, Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent, as authorized herein, a written Principal's Incident Report shall be made to the Superintendent and kept on file for review by Board of Education members.

- C. Dangerous Weapon:** Includes but is not limited to any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. §16-11-121, including but not limited to, a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.

DISCIPLINE:

- Upon a finding of a violation by the Tribunal of any student found in possession of items listed in this subsection (*i.e.*, firearm and/or dangerous weapon), the student shall be expelled from school for a period of not less than one calendar year, pursuant to Georgia law.

- The Tribunal shall be authorized to place a student determined to have brought a firearm, dangerous weapon, or hazardous object to school in an alternative educational setting (*i.e.*, Alternative Education Center).
- Before any student who is expelled and/or assigned to the Alternative Education Center pursuant to a violation of this subsection seeks readmission to the student's zoned school or other placement, a placement conference shall be held. The school to which the student is to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or first-class mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference with the principal or his/her designee to devise a readmission and behavioral support plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the principal, a teacher, counselor, or other person may attend the conference.

It is recognized that on very rare occasions, a student may unknowingly, unwittingly, involuntarily or unsuspectingly be involved in the presence of or briefly in possession of a firearm. On these rare occasions, the Principal, the Tribunal Chairperson, the Superintendent, or designee, and the Board Attorney, shall have the discretion to determine whether such student was in fact unknowingly, unwittingly, involuntarily or unsuspectingly, in the presence or briefly in possession of such firearm and in certain cases, if all concur, may recommend a different disposition than is required by this policy. Where exceptions are made for firearm possession under these circumstances, a written report shall be made by the Superintendent and distributed to Board of Education Members.

D. In addition, students shall follow O.C.G.A. §16-11-127.1, which reads in part as follows:

- a. "School safety zone" means in or on any real property or building owned by or leased to: (A) Any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or Local Board of Education and used for elementary or secondary education; and (B) Any public or private technical school, vocational school, college, university, or other institution of postsecondary education.
- b. "Weapon" means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, and any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of O.C.G.A. §16-11-106. This paragraph excludes any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

- c. Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of O.C.G.A. §16-11-127.1, it shall be unlawful for any person to carry or to possess or have under such person's control while within a school safety zone or at a school function or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound, other than fireworks the possession of which is regulated by Chapter 10 of Title 25.

***FOR DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULE 33.**
***FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24**

Rule 7(A) [State 1] **Alcoholic Beverages**

A student shall not possess, sell or attempt to sell, use, transmit or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell or transmit any substance under the pretenses that it is, in fact, a prohibited substance as described in this rule.

Any student determined to be in violation of Rule 7(A) may upon the first offense, be suspended for ten (10) days. The student shall have the opportunity of having five (5) days of suspension waived, provided the parent provides proof the student has completed an alcohol and drug awareness and prevention program. This opportunity may be extended upon the first offense. Notwithstanding these guidelines, the school administration shall have the discretion to recommend more stringent discipline in serious cases even if such case involves a first offense. Any student who violates this policy more than once shall be subject to more stringent disciplinary action, including long term suspension or expulsion.

Rule 7(B) [State 7] **Narcotics, Drugs and Controlled Substances**

(1) Use, Possession, Sale and Transmission: The illegal or improper use of drugs and controlled substances is prohibited and harmful. A student shall not possess, sell or attempt to sell, use, transmit any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana (broadly defined to include any product that contains cannabidiol (CBD), whether hemp or cannabis and regardless of the amount of THC in the product or the extent to which it is legal or illegal under state law), or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell or transmit any substance under the pretenses that it is, in fact, a prohibited substance as described in this Rule.

A student shall not possess or use any equipment or paraphernalia which could be used in connection with any of the drugs, substances or intoxicants prohibited by this rule. Use of any drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

DISCIPLINE

Any student determined to be in violation of **Rule 7(B)(1)** for any prohibited substance other than alcohol, shall have his or her case referred to the Tribunal for a hearing. The Tribunal shall provide the student due process in accordance with all appropriate laws and policies and upon a finding of a violation, as a minimum, will issue the following discipline:

- (I) **First Offense:** The student shall be suspended out of school for ten (10) days and shall be required to attend

a drug education program selected and specified by the Superintendent, or designee. If the parent/guardian and student accept the offer to attend the drug education program, 5 days of the 10-day suspension shall be waived upon successful completion of the drug education program. If the drug education program is not successfully completed, the full 10-day suspension will be imposed.

- (II) **Second Offense:** The student shall be suspended out of school for ten (10) days and shall be required to attend a drug education program selected and specified by the Superintendent, or designee. The student shall be placed on probation for the remainder of the current school year and may be brought back before the tribunal for any serious disciplinary offense. The school administration may refer the student for additional counseling, as appropriate.
- (III) **Subsequent Offense:** For subsequent offenses and/or where the evidence establishes that the student was distributing, selling, attempting to sell, transmit to another person, or was in possession of a large amount of any prohibited substance, or packaged in such a manner that the evidence indicates it to be for sale or distribution, the matter shall be referred to the Tribunal for discipline, which may include, but shall not be limited to, assignment to the Alternative Education Center, long-term suspension, or expulsion, depending upon the individual circumstances, facts, and evidence of the case.
- (IV) Furthermore, there may be occasions where the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the violation of this rule may indicate that the student, regardless of whether or not it is a first offense, shall receive a greater or lesser discipline than recommended by the Principal, Principal's designee, or the Tribunal. The Superintendent or designee after consultation with the Board Attorney shall have the discretion to modify the discipline. Provided, however, a written summary of the reasons for the modification shall be prepared and distributed in accordance with the Tribunal law and Board procedures.
- (V) Students charged with any prohibited substance violation shall be referred to the appropriate court or arrested and charged with appropriate criminal statutes.
- (VI) Principals will address this policy with the student body and faculty during the first month of each school year to explain the policy and the penalties for violations.

Furthermore, it is the policy of the Board of Education that each school will make available to students, upon request, information about drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation and re-entry programs.

(2) Under the Influence: The illegal or improper use of drugs and controlled substances is prohibited and harmful. A student shall not be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana (broadly defined to include any product that contains cannabidiol (CBD), whether hemp or cannabis and regardless of the amount of THC in the product or the extent to which it is legal or illegal under state law), or intoxicant of any kind.

Use of any drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

DISCIPLINE

Any student determined to be in violation of **Rule 7(B)(2)** for being **under the influence** of any prohibited substance other than alcohol, shall be subject to the following discipline, including but not limited to:

First Offense: The first offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for three (3) to five (5) days. The student shall be provided the opportunity to participate in one of the approved drug education programs selected and specified by the Superintendent, or designee.

Second Offense: The second offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for five (5) to ten (10) days. If the student has not already completed an approved drug education program selected and specified by the Superintendent, or designee, the student will be required to participate in the program.

Third Offense: The third offense will result in the student having his or her case referred to the Tribunal for a hearing. The Tribunal shall provide the student due process in accordance with all appropriate laws and policies, and upon a finding of a violation, as a minimum, will issue discipline, as outlined above for violations of **Rule 7(B)(1)**.

Notwithstanding these guidelines, the school administration shall have the discretion to recommend more stringent discipline in serious cases even if such case involves a first offense.

Rule 8(A) [State 14, 16]

Illicit or Immoral Activities by a Student

- A. 1. A student shall not commit or engage in or attempt to commit or engage in any immoral or illicit acts including but not limited to sexual contact, sexual conduct or sexual harassment as defined in Rule 8(B) either by himself/herself or in consent with others.
2. Possess vulgar or obscene materials, magazines, books, pictures, or any other vulgar or obscene materials. This rule shall not include magazines, books, pictures, or literature which are part of the library inventory of the school or which are a part of any prescribed assignment.

Rule 8(B) [State 15]

Sexual Harassment -- Of and By Students

- B. The School System includes the facilities, the School System premises and non-school property if the employee and/or student are at any school sponsored, school approved or school related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the control of the School System or where the employee is engaged in school business.

Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's academic status, success or progress;
- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic, benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the school, decisions affecting such individual's education; or

- (3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's learning atmosphere, educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- d. Unwelcome leering, staring, sexual flirtations or propositions.
- e. Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions.
- f. Unwelcome graphic verbal comments about an individual's body, or overly personal conversation.
- g. Unwelcome sexual jokes, stories, drawings, pictures, gestures, or the display of sexually suggestive objects.
- h. Unwelcome spreading of sexual rumors.
- i. Unwelcome teasing or sexual remarks about student enrolled in a predominantly single-sex class.
- j. Unwelcome touching of an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way.
- k. Verbal assault, including threatened violence or sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments as of 1972.
- l. Physical assault or battery of other students, including sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
- m. Use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, technology of a lab or other electronic technology of this School System.
- n. Use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to manipulate media to create inappropriate material of any kind and/or to impersonate others (e.g., name, image or likenesses) for the purpose of or having the effect of bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation.

Sexual harassment may occur: student to student, staff to student, student to staff, male to male, female to female, male to female and female to male.

Report Procedure and Investigation:

The Board encourages and expects students to immediately report incidents of sexual harassment to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at the school site.

Any teacher, counselor, or administrator who has received a report, verbally or in writing, from any student regarding sexual harassment of that student or another student by a student or adult in the educational setting must promptly forward that report to the building Principal or designee. All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated and promptly resolved.

Note: Incidents or behaviors that implicate potential Title IX violations will be reviewed and evaluated according to the Title IX Regulations. For more information, please see the [RCSS Title IX Webpage](#).

***FOR DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23, 24 & 27.**

Rule 9 [State 6, 33]

Disregard of Directions or Commands

A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable direction or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher assistants, principals, school bus drivers, clerical, custodial, food service, or other authorized school personnel.

Rule 10 [State 30]

Attendance Policy: INTRODUCTION

An absence is either excused or unexcused. Absences which are lawful and therefore excusable shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia and the rules and regulations of the State Department of Education and Local Board policy. School System officials participate in the Richmond County Attendance Protocol Committee to establish guidelines and interventions for student attendance, including the review of school climate issues.

ABSENCE(S): DEFINITIONS

Excused Absence

An absence shall be declared excused for:

1. Personal illness or when attendance in school endangers the student's health or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours.
4. Attendance of non-school activities or functions authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
5. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
6. Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day.
7. Mandate or order of government agency.
8. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.
9. Students in a foster home or otherwise in the foster care system under the Department of Family and Children Services when attending Court proceedings relating to the student's foster care.
10. A student who participates in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H.
11. Full-time students participating in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program, not to exceed two days per year.
12. Students when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
13. A student taking tests and physical exams for military service in the armed forces of the United States and the National Guard.
14. Extreme circumstances that cannot be resolved outside school hours; parent or guardian must request and receive approval from the Principal or designated representative.

15. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein, but deemed by the Local Board to have merit based on the circumstances.

Unexcused Absence

Any absence not covered in (1)-(15) above, shall be declared unexcused. It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education that no unexcused absences are allowed. If parents keep their child out for other reasons, such absence shall be deemed unlawful and therefore unexcused. **Students who are absent from school are required to bring a written excuse for the absence their first day back at school.** For any absence beyond five (5), the parent shall be required to provide a physician's note or other excuse from an acceptable or official third party justifying the absence.

Prearranged Absence

Parents are encouraged not to take their child out of school for vacation. If parents find it necessary for students to miss school due to an out of town trip or college visit (limit 5 days per year), the parents should discuss the matter with the administrator to make necessary arrangements and submit a completed Prearranged Absence Form to the school administration. Requests for prearranged absences must be completed and submitted to the administration at least one week prior to the dates of absence. Approved prearranged absences are designated as excused. The student will be allowed to make up his/her academic work without penalty. When considering whether to approve or disapprove the request, such factors that may be taken into consideration include but are not limited to: the educational value of the proposed experience, the resulting personal or family benefit, and the impact of the absence on the student's academic progress.

Procedures for Prearranged Absence:

1. Submit a completed Prearranged Absence Form to the school office at least one week prior to the absence.
2. After reviewing the request, the school administrator will make the decision whether to approve or disapprove the request.

Truant

For the purposes of this protocol, truant is defined as any child who is subject to compulsory attendance during the current school calendar who has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences.

Extracurricular Activities

The school shall not allow a student to participate in any extracurricular, co-curricular activities or cooperative work experience, if the student was not counted present for the school day. For absences subsequent to the fifth (5th) unexcused absence, the student shall not be allowed extracurricular participation without a physician's note or other excuse from an acceptable or official third party justifying the absence.

Full School Day

For a student to be marked present for a full school day, a student must be in attendance for one-half or more of the school day. However, a student will not be recognized for perfect attendance after ten (10) tardies.

Full Day Attendance Required and Early Checkouts

- Early checkouts occur when a student is removed from class and leaves school prior to the official end of the school day with a parent or legal guardian.
- A student who wishes to leave school early must bring a written request to school stating the reason for early dismissal.
- Students should not leave before the end of the school day except where there is a legitimate need.
- To be considered in attendance for a school day, the student must be present one-half of the school day.
- At the time the student is released from school, the parent or legal guardian may be required to bring appropriate documentation showing the reason for an early checkout.
- Leaving school for unauthorized purposes before the end of the instructional day will be counted as tardy.

Make-Up Work

- (a) Upon returning to school following an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher(s) to request makeup work. The teacher shall promptly and courteously allow students the opportunity to make up missed assignments and tests. The contact should be made on the day the student returns to school unless the teacher allows a longer time. Makeup work must be completed by the student within the time specified by the teacher. In the event of an extended absence, student work may be requested by calling the school. The parent will be able to pick up the work at the end of the day following the request.
- (b) **Suspensions:** For purposes of the Richmond County Attendance Protocol, short-term suspensions shall not be considered unexcused absences. Any student who serves a short-term suspension out of school shall be allowed to make up missed assignments and tests. It shall be the student's responsibility to obtain the missed work from the teacher(s) and complete the work within one week of returning to school. It shall be the teacher's duty to promptly and courteously allow these students the opportunity to make up missed assignments and tests.

Other consequences:

- (1) **Compliance with State Compulsory Law.** By Georgia Law, it is mandatory for children between ages 6 and 16 to attend school. Therefore, in addition to all other provisions of this policy, failure of a parent, guardian or other person residing within the state having control or charge of any child or children between their 6th and 16th birthdays, to enroll and send such child or children to school as defined in O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1 shall be a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline. [Note: It is the policy of this state that families are encouraged to have their children attend school beginning at age five.]
- (2) **Notification of Parents.** Schools will notify parents by certified mail when a student has his or her fifth unexcused absence that each unexcused absence thereafter is a separate offense, is a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, provides for a fine of not less than \$25.00 and not more than \$100.00; imprisonment not to exceed thirty (30) days, community service or any combination of such penalties. In addition, parents will also be notified that the Juvenile Court has the authority to incarcerate truant juveniles for up to thirty (30) days.

- (3) **Notification of Juvenile Court.** The Juvenile Court and the School System will cooperate when school interventions have not been effective, to refer students and their parents or guardian for a hearing.
- (4) **Notification of Students.** By September 1 of each school year, parents and students over 10 years of age on September 1 of that school year will receive a copy of Georgia's compulsory school attendance law. They will also sign a receipt of written notice of consequences and penalties for violating attendance laws as a part of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline Acknowledgment. Schools will keep these signatures on file for the entire school year.

Note: Failure to comply with compulsory attendance laws may result in possible denial of a driver's license.

Cutting School and/or Classes

Students and parents should understand that cutting a class or a full school day is an unexcused absence and a serious breach of the rules of the School System.

DISCIPLINE FOR CUTTING SCHOOL AND/OR CLASS:

Accumulation of incidents of cutting school and/or class will warrant disciplinary action. The school site administrator may utilize discretion and issue up to ten (10) days of out of school suspension for an accumulation of incidents of cutting school and/or class. This offense also carries with it the possible recommendation for long-term suspension, a referral to Juvenile Court, or other appropriate interventions.

Rule 11 [State 30]

Unexcused Absence from Detention Class

Unexcused absence from detention class will warrant disciplinary action. The following discipline will be administered each school year to those students cutting or absent without authority from detention class.

- (a) **First Offense:** The first offense will result in out of school suspension for **one (1) day**.
- (b) **Second Offense:** The second offense will result in out of school suspension for **three (3) days**.
- (c) **Third Offense:** The third offense will result in out of school suspension for **five (5) days**.

*****FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24.***

Rule 12 [State 30]

Tardiness (Grades PreK - 12)

A student is considered tardy when he or she enters the classroom or homeroom after the ringing of the tardy bell.

The accumulation of unexcused tardies will warrant disciplinary action. The accumulation of excused tardies will not warrant disciplinary action; however, there are very few excuses for tardiness which will be accepted as a valid reason for tardiness. Leaving school for unauthorized purposes before the end of the instructional day will be counted as a tardy. Parents should not pick their students up before the end of the school day except where there is a legitimate emergency. The lawful excuses for tardiness are as follows:

- A. Instances where the student has a medical or dental appointment, which cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of the school day. A signed written statement from the appropriate physician shall be required to validate a tardy for a medical or dental reason.

- B. Appearances before a court when required by subpoena. A copy of said subpoena is to be furnished to the school to validate a tardiness caused by a court appearance.
- C. In special situations, which rarely happen, but are not likely to recur, such as when a parent brings a child to school, if the Principal concurs with the circumstances.
- D. Under unique and rare circumstances, not specifically covered by these exceptions, it would be inappropriate to punish the child for being tardy. Provided, however, that before a legal excuse for tardiness can be given in these circumstances, the Principal must review the matter with the Superintendent or designee and have the Superintendent or designee concur with the Principal's decision to grant an exception where circumstances and policy would warrant.

DISCIPLINE: Accumulation of unexcused tardies will warrant disciplinary action. The school site administrator may utilize discretion and issue up to ten (10) days of out of school suspension for an accumulation of tardies. This offense also carries with it the possible recommendation for long-term suspension and a referral to Juvenile Court.

NOTE: Before any student can receive a long-term suspension or be expelled from school, the Principal must follow procedural due process, by referring the student to the Tribunal panel for consideration of long-term suspension or expulsion.

***FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24**

Rule 13 [State 30]

Leaving Campus Without Permission

No student shall leave campus without permission of the Principal.

DISCIPLINE:

First Offense: The first offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for one (1) to three (3) days.

Second Offense: The second offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for three (3) to five (5) days.

Third Offense: The third offense will result in suspension from school or assignment to in-school suspension for five (5) to ten (10) days.

Fourth Offense: The fourth offense will result in suspension from school for ten (10) days and may warrant alternative education school assignment.

Rule 14 [State 21]

Dress and Grooming

A student shall not dress, groom, wear or use emblems, insignias, badges, or other symbols where the effect thereof is to distract unreasonably the attention of other students or otherwise to cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school. The Principal or other duly authorized school official shall determine whether any particular mode of dress, apparel, grooming, or use of emblems, insignias, badges, or other symbols result in such interference or disruption, as to violate this rule and shall give notice of such interference or disruption, and its cause, to all students by announcement or posting at the school. The Dress and Grooming policy must accommodate students whose religious beliefs are substantially burdened by this policy.

Students shall at all times adhere to the following guidelines:

- Rules governing body cleanliness, modesty, and neatness of appearance and good grooming. Under all circumstances, the attire must conform to the county dress and grooming policy.
- Extreme hair color and/or styles, body piercing, or style of dress that may cause a disruption to the learning environment or school program will not be allowed.
- **Coats and Jackets:** Coats and jackets shall be the appropriate size for the wearer, shall not be overly baggy so as to distract or otherwise cause disruption or interference with the operation or safe conduct of the school.
- **Shirts or Blouses:** Unacceptable attire includes clothing that exposes the torso such as see through garments, halters, spaghetti straps, backless dresses, tube tops, tank tops, muscle shirts, bare midriff outfits, shirts or blouses that are tied at, or may rise above the waist.
- **Skirts, Shorts, Dresses and Pants:** Skirts, shorts, and pants must be fitted at the waist and must be at a length at least equal to the longest part of the fingertip when hanging down by the side of the student, which should be at least the mid-thigh area. The Local Board deems miniskirts and short-shorts to be disruptive and they are not allowed. This includes skirts and dresses and includes any opening, such as a slit, that exposes the thigh above the fingertip/mid-thigh area previously described herein. All pants, including jeans, must be without cutouts or holes that expose the skin above the finger tip/mid thigh area previously described herein. They must be fitted at the waist and must not be baggy or oversized or undersized and not sagging. Pants must not drag the floor. Leggings are considered an accessory and are to be covered by the appropriate length skirt, dress or other garment. Unacceptable shorts include, but are not limited to, spandex-style "bicycle" shorts, short-shorts, running shorts, and boxer-type shorts or any see-through garment.
- **Belts and Straps:** Belts, if worn, must be secured at the waist and buckled. All straps must be fastened, and sashes must be tied. **Excessively large belt buckles are prohibited.**
- **Shoes:** Shoelaces should be tied. No house slippers, or altered shoes, such as shoes with wheels, are allowed. At all times student safety should be considered in shoe selection, particularly during athletic and physical education activities
- **Head Covers:** No hats, scarves, sweatbands, bandannas or other head covers may be worn in the building.
- Fraternity and sorority insignias on clothing are forbidden.
- Sunshade and/or dark glasses will not be worn inside the school building unless prescribed by a physician or another person who is professionally qualified to make such recommendations.
- Students shall not wear clothing (shirts, caps, etc.) that will in any way promote or advertise the use of narcotics, alcoholic beverages, tobacco or stimulant drugs which are illegal for any such student to use.
- Suggestive, vulgar, or obscene pictures and/or language on clothing are forbidden.
- Any symbol or article of clothing that is gang related as defined in Rule 22 is prohibited.
- "Grills" or metallic caps on the teeth are prohibited.
- **Uniforms:** Athletic, Jr. ROTC, and other school-approved uniforms must meet the guidelines of the County dress code.

- **Special Schools:** Magnet Schools and the Alternative Education Center may have additional guidelines as per their contract.

Nothing in this Code shall exclude provision for necessary reasonable dress and grooming regulations for special classrooms and extracurricular activities. This policy applies to all school activities. The Principal of each school shall be responsible for carefully monitoring these necessary modifications. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit any school official from making a decision in the interest of school, student or individual safety.

DRESS and GROOMING POLICY CONSEQUENCES FOR POLICY VIOLATIONS

Students who fail to follow the mandatory Rule 14 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline or to follow reasonable directions given by authorized school personnel in connection therewith shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

Grades 6-12

First Offense: The principal or designee will communicate the dress code policy to the parent or guardian and the student. The student will receive a dress code violation warning.

Second Offense: 1 Hour Detention

Third Offense: 1 Day In-School Suspension

Fourth Offense: Three Days In-School Suspension

Fifth and Subsequent Offense: One Day of Out-of-School Suspension. For chronic offenses, refer to Rules 17, 20, 23, 24, 25 & 27.

****Violations will accumulate throughout the entire school year.**

Grades K – 5

First Offense: An approved reminder form will be sent by the school to the parent reminding them of the Dress Code Policy.

Second Offense: Written notification to parent using an approved reminder form will be sent by the school and the parent will be required to sign such acknowledgment of the violation and promptly return the signed acknowledgment to the school.

Third Offense: The teacher will telephone the parent to discuss the matter and seek to resolve the failure of the student to follow the policy. In addition, a discipline referral form will be sent home, to be signed by the parent and promptly returned to the school.

Fourth Offense: There will be a parent conference required before the student may return to school, which shall be held within 2 school days. If the parent fails to respond and participate, the Principal may proceed to the discipline outlined for the fifth offense.

Fifth Offense: Student may receive discipline, up to and including a period of suspension. A parent conference will be required at which time a Social Worker and/or DFACS may be involved.

Nothing in this Code shall exclude provision for necessary reasonable dress and grooming regulations for special classrooms and extracurricular activities. This policy applies to all school activities. The Principal of each school shall be responsible for carefully monitor this necessary modification.

****FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24***

Rule 15 [State 18]

Smoking

A student shall not possess, transmit, or use tobacco, electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizers or electronic nicotine delivery systems of any kind.

DISCIPLINE: The offense of smoking will warrant disciplinary action. The school site administrator may utilize discretion and issue up to ten (10) days of out-of-school suspension for smoking. This offense also carries with it the possible recommendation for long-term suspension and a referral to Juvenile Court.

NOTE: Before any student can receive a long-term suspension or be expelled from school, the Principal must follow procedural due process, by referring the student to the Tribunal panel for consideration of long-term suspension or expulsion.

****FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24***

Rule 16 [State 45]

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

To promote the best possible learning and social environment in the classrooms and schools of Richmond County, students will adhere to the terms of this policy. The intent of the cell phone policy is to limit access to and use of cell phones and personal electronic devices in order to minimize distractions, improve academic outcomes, and increase meaningful interactions and focused learning experiences.

“Personal electronic device” means any portable electronic device capable of transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media. Such term includes but is not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, headphones, earbuds, smart glasses and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission.

“Access” means viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, listening to music, or any other function commonly associated with personal electronic devices.

Access to personal electronic devices and/or accessories is prohibited for all students at all times during the school day, which is defined as the bell-to-bell period for students receiving instruction on a school campus. The school day includes, but is not limited to, class periods, class changes, study halls, and any other structured or non-structured instructional activity that occurs during the normal school day. Students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices in the common areas, hallways, restrooms, locker rooms or any other areas during the school day. [Note: The school site administrator, or designee, may offer an incentive for high school students to utilize phones during lunch time, if certain criteria are met, as decided upon by the administration.]

The possession of personal electronic devices on school property is a privilege extended to students, and the School System is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal electronic devices or accessories, nor will the administration or school officials investigate missing or damaged personal electronic devices.

Students shall at all times follow the directives of school personnel regarding access to personal electronic devices during off-site events or activities, including all school sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events, and other instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds, including, but not limited to, participation in the dual enrollment program, work based learning programs, and apprenticeship programs.

If students choose to bring personal electronic devices to school, students are expected at all times to adhere to the following rules relative to personal electronic devices and/or accessories:

1. Regardless of whether student is accessing the School System's Technology Network while operating a personal electronic device, all applicable provisions of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline must be followed.
2. Personal electronic devices, and/or accessories must be turned completely off (not on silent or vibrate mode) and put away out of view (as directed by school administration) during the school day, as defined above.
3. No text messaging, application-based communication, or social media use is allowed during the school day.

Emergency calls may be made in the main office. Parents may contact their children by calling the school's main office. School office staff are able to relay emergency messages from parents to students. Miscellaneous messages cannot be delivered during the school day; students should discuss their appointments and other activities with parents/guardians outside of school instructional time.

A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan or medical plan explicitly mandates the use of a personal electronic device for medical or educational purposes shall be permitted to access the device as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the respective program or plan.

DISCIPLINE: Due to the potential disruption personal electronic devices may cause to the instructional environment and safety of the school, the disciplinary actions and consequences for violation of this rule are as follows:

First Offense: The first offense will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the student or parent at the end of the same school day. The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Second Offense: The second offense will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time designated by the school. The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Third Offense: The third offense will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time designated by the school. The student will receive one day of in-school suspension (ISS). The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Fourth Offense: The fourth offense and thereafter will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated for ten (10) school days, and the parent must schedule a conference with an administrator to retrieve the personal electronic device. The student will receive three days of in-school suspension (ISS). The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Further incidents may result in the student losing the privilege of bringing personal electronic devices on campus, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Noncompliance:

All administrators, teachers and/or staff members are authorized to confiscate personal electronic devices and/or accessories any time a student is in violation of the Personal Electronic Device policy. A student's refusal to surrender his/her personal electronic device(s) to school personnel will be considered noncompliance and insubordination, resulting in two (2) days of out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Note: These progressive discipline steps in no way diminish the discretion of the school administrator, who has the right to issue more severe discipline depending upon the facts and circumstances.

Furthermore, nothing in this Policy shall be construed to infringe on any right provided to students with Individualized Education Programs pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Rule 17 [State 6, 33]

Compliance with Rules and Regulations

A student shall not fail to comply with all laws, reasonable rules and regulations and/or directives governing the operation of the Richmond County School System when under school system jurisdiction as defined in the introduction to the code.

Rule 18 [State 24]

Falsified Addresses and Enrolling Out of Zone

In accordance with Board of Education policies and procedures, each student is expected to enroll in the school for which such student is zoned. **Those students who intentionally falsify or have falsified their addresses and who enroll in a school for which they are not zoned by Board of Education policies, upon being discovered, shall be withdrawn and shall be allowed to enroll in their zoned school.**

The Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent, upon the request of the Principal or the student and their parent or guardian, shall have the authority, where circumstances warrant, to make an exception to this policy upon such circumstances as when a child is so young that the parent or guardian have improperly done the enrolling and the child was not a knowing party to the falsification and out of zone attendance; where the child is classified as a homeless child in which case the regulations governing homeless enrollment shall apply; and in peculiar family situations on a case-by-case basis where the circumstances are legitimate and established through affidavits or other written documentation to the satisfaction of the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent and where necessary, with the advice from the Board Attorney. Refer to School Assignment in the introduction for related information.

Rule 19 [State 6]

School Bus Rules and Student Responsibilities

The driver is in charge of the bus and all students on the bus. Persons causing damage shall be expected to defray its full cost.

Students Must:

1. Obey and respect the orders of authorized persons.
2. Be courteous to the driver, to fellow students, and to passers-by.
3. Be on time. (The driver cannot wait beyond his or her regular schedule for those who are tardy.)
4. Wait in an orderly line off the street or road.
5. Ride only the bus assigned by school officials.
6. Cross in front of the bus only when the road is clear and at a safe distance in front of the bus in order to be seen by the driver. (Minimum: 10 feet)
7. Behave on the bus as students are expected to behave in the classroom. Insolence, disobedience, vulgarity, foul language, fighting, pushing, and similar offensive acts will not be tolerated.
8. Report promptly to the driver any damage done to the bus.
9. Wait until the bus has come to a full stop before getting on or off the bus. Do not move about within the bus while it is motion.
10. Occupy seats assigned by the bus driver or school officials and remain seated while the bus is moving.
11. Ride three in a seat if necessary and not exchange seats unless given permission by the driver.
12. When required to stand, stand to the rear of the white marker line when the bus in motion.
13. Follow the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Students Must Not:

14. Run toward a school bus while it is in motion.
15. **Possess, handle, transmit or use a weapon, as defined in Rule 6 of the Code of Student Conduct**
16. **Possess, sell or attempt to sell, use or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, narcotics or controlled substances as defined in Rule 7 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.**
17. Engage in any activity that might divert the driver's attention, such as:
 - (a.) Loud talking or laughing or unnecessary confusion.
 - (b.) Unnecessary conversation with the driver.
 - (c.) Extending any parts of the body out of the bus.
18. Open or close bus windows without permission of the driver.
19. Regulate or operate any part of the bus.

20. Engage in any activity which might damage, cause excessive wear or litter to the bus or other property.
21. Smoke or eat on the bus.
22. Spit or throw anything in or from the bus.
23. Bring animals on the bus.
24. Tamper with mechanical equipment, accessories, or controls of the bus.
25. Leave the bus on the way to school or home without permission of the driver. (Drivers may not give permission except in case of personal emergency or upon request of the Principal or student's parent or guardian).
26. Commit any acts of physical violence, bullying, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault or threatened violence toward other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus or other unruly behavior.

As used herein, the term "physical violence" means:

- (a.) Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting and provoking nature with the person of another; or,
 - (b.) Intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another, unless such physical contacts or physical harms were in defense of himself or herself, as provided in Georgia law.
 - (c.) Bullying as defined in Rule 5 of this Code of Student Conduct shall also apply to school bus behavior.
27. Commit any act of sexual harassment as defined in Title IX of the United States Educational Code, or Rule 8 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.
 28. Use electronic devices, mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with or distract the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
 29. Mark, deface or otherwise damage School System property (the school bus or any of its equipment) or another's personal property.
 30. Incite, advise or counsel others to engage in prohibited acts.
 31. Use or display any item, including but not limited to, athletic, musical, academic or extracurricular equipment, in a manner so as to cause a safety hazard to others, interfere with students entering and exiting the school bus, or in any way interfere with or distract the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

DISCIPLINE

Misconduct on the bus is subject to the same disciplinary measures as misconduct at school. **When necessary, the Administrator or the Director of Transportation may suspend or revoke riding privileges.**

General Consequences: In most situations, **the first offense** will result in a verbal warning; however, the school administrator has the discretion and right to take further action in serious cases. **The second offense** will result in written warning with a copy to the student's parent or guardian stating that further offenses will result in suspension or revocation of riding privileges for the remainder of the school year or for a longer period, if warranted. The **third and subsequent offenses** will result in further disciplinary action such as suspension from the bus, suspension from school, or other appropriate action.

The foregoing steps are not mandatory, and in appropriate cases, any one of or all steps mentioned above may be skipped and riding privileges may be revoked before the third offense. In addition, the school administrator in any case has the discretion and right to issue more severe discipline depending upon the facts and circumstances.

Physical Acts of Violence Toward Employees: If a student is found to engage in **physical acts of violence toward an employee** as defined herein, the student shall be subject to the penalties set forth in **Rules 4(A), 4(B)**, or any other appropriate rule of this Code of Student Conduct.

Bullying and/or Physical Assault or Battery of Another Person: If a student is found to have engaged in **bullying** as defined in this Code of Student Conduct, or in the **physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus**, in addition to all other discipline which may be allowed by this Code of Student Conduct or law, it shall be required that the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school officials meet to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such contract shall provide for progressive age-appropriate discipline, penalties and restrictions for student conduct on the bus.

Contract provisions may include, but shall not be limited to, assigned seating, on-going parental involvement and suspension from riding the bus. This rule shall not be construed to limit the instances when a school Code of Student Conduct or Local Board of Education may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

Rule 20 [State 36]

Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

Definitions: "Chronic disciplinary problem student" means a student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur, including but not limited to, willful and persistent violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Notification of Parent or Guardian of Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student

Any time a teacher or Principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the Principal, or designee, shall:

- A.** Notify by telephone call and by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or first-class mail the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem; **AND**

[Note: Notification by telephone includes but is not limited to:

- Leaving a message on voice mail at the telephone number(s) the school administration has for the parent or guardian.
- Leaving a message at the telephone number(s) the school administration has for the parent or guardian with the individual who answers the phone.
- Attempting to call the telephone number(s) the school administration has for the parent or guardian on at least three different occasions if there is no answer and no method to leave a message.

A telephone log documenting the phone number(s) called, the date called and the result of the call may be presented to a tribunal panel to consider as evidence of notification by telephone.]

- B.** Invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation; **AND**
- C.** Request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the Principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan; **AND**
- D.** Before a student may be charged with a violation of this Rule, the school must further document that the student has been warned of possible consequences of his/her chronic behavior, that a disciplinary and corrective action plan had been implemented prior to the violation (or documentation that the parent or guardian did not cooperate in the process), and support provided to the student by at least three separate referrals to three different resources: school counselors, social workers, mentors, MTSS, RTI, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, or other interventions in the student's disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS RETURNING FROM EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION

If it becomes necessary to suspend or expel a student who has been determined to be a chronic disciplinary problem student before that student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is to be readmitted shall:

- A.** Request by telephone call or by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or first-class mail that
- B.** At least one parent or guardian schedule and attend a conference with the Principal or his or her designee
- C.** To devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

Notification by telephone includes but is not limited to leaving a message on voice mail or with an individual that answers the phone and attempting to call on at least three occasions if there is no answer and no method to leave a message. A telephone log documenting the phone number called, the date called and the result of the call may be presented to a tribunal panel to consider as evidence of notification by telephone.

Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the Principal, a teacher, counselor, or other person may attend the conference.

The Principal shall ensure that a notation of the conference is placed in the student's permanent file. The Principal shall promptly and efficiently document and maintain records of all attempts to communicate with the parent or guardian, whether in writing or by telephone.

PROCEEDING AGAINST PARENTS FOR FAILURE TO COOPERATE IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS; PENALTY.

The Local Board may, by petition to the Juvenile Court, proceed against a parent or guardian as provided by law. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by a Principal pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-2-765 or §20-2-766, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court entered under this Code section. The court may use its contempt and other powers specified in O.C.G.A. §15-11-5 to enforce any order entered under this Code section. (Code 1981, §20-2-766.1, enacted by Ga. L. 2000, p. 618, § 68.)

Rule 21

Authority of Teacher Over Classroom

I. General Comments

- A. **A teacher** shall have the authority, consistent with Local Board policy, to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the Principal or the Principal's designee to maintain discipline in the classroom.
- B. **The Principal or the Principal's designee shall respond** when a student is referred by a teacher by employing appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with Local Board policy.

II. Specific Procedure for Teacher and Principal

- A. **A teacher** shall have the authority to remove from class a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn, where the student's behavior is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct, provided that
 - 1. The teacher has previously filed a report pursuant to this policy; or
 - 2. Determines that such behavior of the student poses an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher.
- B. **The teacher** shall file with the Principal or the Principal's designee a report describing the student's behavior, in one page or less, by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day.
- C. Each School Principal shall fully support the authority of every teacher in his or her school to remove a student from the classroom under this Code section. Each School Principal shall implement the policies and procedures of the Superintendent and the Local Board of Education relating to the authority of every teacher to remove a student from the classroom and shall disseminate such policies and procedures to faculty, staff, and parents or guardians of students.
- D. **The Principal or the Principal's designee** shall, within one school day after the student's removal from class,
 - 1. Send to the student's parents or guardians written notification that the student was removed from class,
 - 2. A copy of the report filed by the teacher, and
 - 3. Information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the Principal or the Principal's designee.
- E. If a teacher removes a student from class as described above, **the Principal or the Principal's designee** shall:
 - 1. Discuss the matter with the teacher and the student by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day;
 - 2. Give the student oral or written notice of the grounds for his or her removal from class; and,
 - 3. If the student denies engaging in such conduct, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall explain the evidence which supports his or her removal from class and give the student an opportunity to present his or her explanation of the situation.

- F. If, after such discussions, the Principal or the Principal's designee seeks to return the student to the teacher's class and **the teacher gives his or her consent**, the student shall be returned to the class, and the Principal or the Principal's designee may take action to discipline the student, as may be warranted, pursuant to section of this Policy.
- G. If, after such discussions, the Principal or the Principal's designee seeks to return the student to the teacher's class and **the teacher withholds** his or her consent to the student's return to his or her class, **the Principal or the Principal's designee shall**:
 - 1. Determine an appropriate temporary placement for the student by the end of the first school day following such removal; and
 - 2. Shall also take steps to convene a meeting of a placement review committee, which shall convene by the end of the second school day following such removal by the teacher and shall issue a decision by the end of the third school day following such removal by the teacher.

III. Temporary Placement

An appropriate temporary placement for the student shall be a placement that, in the judgment of the Principal or the Principal's designee, provides the least interruption to the student's education and reflects other relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the severity of the behavior that was the basis for the removal, the student's behavioral history, the student's need for support services, and the available education settings; provided, however, that the student shall not be returned to the class of the teacher who removed him or her, as an appropriate temporary placement, unless the teacher gives his or her consent. The temporary placement shall be in effect from the time of removal until the decision of the placement review committee is issued or, if applicable, a placement determination is made pursuant to this section.

IV. Placement Review Committee

- A. Each school shall form one or more placement review committees, each of which is to be composed of three members, to determine the placement of a student when a teacher withholds his or her consent to the return of a student to the teacher's class. For each committee established, the faculty shall choose two teachers to serve as members and one teacher to serve as an alternate member and the Principal shall choose one member of the professional staff of the school to serve as a member. The teacher withholding consent to readmit the student may not serve on the committee. The placement review committee shall have the authority to:
 - 1. Return the student to the teacher's class upon determining that such placement is the best alternative or the only available alternative; or
 - 2. Refer the student to the Principal or the Principal's designee for appropriate action consistent with section IV of this policy.
- B. The decision of the placement review committee shall be in writing and shall be made within three school days after the teacher withholds consent to the return of a student. Each member of a placement review committee shall receive training regarding the provisions of this policy, including procedural requirements; Local Board policies relating to student discipline; and the Student Code of Conduct

that is applicable to the school. Board counsel may be consulted and provide training and assistance as requested.

- C. If a placement review committee decides to return a student to a class from which he or she was removed, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall implement such decision of the placement review committee. In addition, the Principal or the Principal's designee may, consistent with any applicable procedural requirements of the Constitutions of the United States and this State and after considering the use of any appropriate student support services, take any of the following actions which are authorized as a response to the alleged violation of the student code of conduct by Local Board policies adopted pursuant to law.

1. Place the student in an alternative education program;
2. Impose out-of-school suspension for not more than ten school days, including any time during which the student was subject to out-of-school suspension after his or her removal from class pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section; or
3. Make another disciplinary decision or recommendation consistent with Local Board policy.

- D. **Actions Following Placement Review Decision to Not Return Student:** If a placement review committee decides not to return a student to a class from which he or she was removed, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall implement such decision of the placement review committee. In addition, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall determine an appropriate placement for the student and may take action to discipline the student, in a manner consistent with any applicable procedural requirements of the Constitutions of the United States and this State and after considering the use of any appropriate student support services, as follows, provided that the placement or disciplinary action is authorized as a response to the alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct by Local Board policies adopted pursuant to law:

1. Place the student into another appropriate classroom or an alternative education program;
2. Impose out-of-school suspension for not more than ten school days, including any time during which the student was subject to out-of-school suspension after his or her removal from class pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section;
3. Make another placement or disciplinary decision or recommendation consistent with Local Board policy; or
4. Implement or recommend any appropriate combination of the above and return the student to the class from which he or she was removed upon the completion of any disciplinary or placement action taken pursuant to this paragraph.
5. Within one school day of taking action pursuant to this policy, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall send written notification of such action to the teacher and the parents or guardians of the student and shall make a

reasonable attempt to confirm that such written notification has been received by the student's parents or guardians.

- E. Parents or guardians of a student who has been removed from class pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section may be required to participate in conferences that may be requested by the Principal or the Principal's designee; provided, however, that a student may not be penalized for the failure of his or her parent or guardian to attend such a conference.
- F. The procedures contained herein are minimum requirements. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to limit the authority of a Local Board of Education to establish additional requirements relating to student conferences, notification of parents or guardians, conferences with parents or guardians, or other procedures required by the Constitutions of the United States or this State.
- G. The Superintendent of Schools shall fully support the authority of Principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-2-738, provided they follow the requirements of this Rule 21.

Rule 22 [State 35]

Gang Membership and Activity

Gangs are herein described as clubs, groups, or organizations of limited membership, which are known to the Richmond County School System through its personal intelligence or through information furnished through local law enforcement officials, to advocate, practice, engage or participate in unlawful acts such as intimidation, violence, or destruction to property. Gangs shall not be permitted on school premises or in school facilities, or to conduct any activities, meetings, or gatherings on or about school facilities, premises, or property at any time. The presence of such gangs is a threat to the safety and well being of the students and school employees of the Richmond County School System, and disruptive to the education process.

1. Membership in or affiliation with gangs as defined above shall not be permitted. Membership will be determined, by whatever means, from the existence of objective criteria. While not intended to be an all-inclusive list, and in addition to those items set forth in subpart (2) immediately below, criteria which can serve to indicate membership or affiliation with gangs include the following:
 - (a) Direct admission of gang affiliation
 - (b) Documented information on gang membership
 - (c) Information from known gang affiliate
 - (d) Admission of former membership, with continued associations
 - (e) Photographs indicating gang association
 - (f) Association with gang members.
2. Wearing or possessing of any insignia, and/or uniforms, or other means of any gang identification, or using or making any signs, signals, other means of gang communication or identification by any student or non-student visiting on the premises of any school facility shall not be permitted. Also, refer to Rule 14. This prohibition also includes any symbol, hair extensions, extreme colors or accessories that may be construed as gang related.

3. Any attempt to gather or co-mingle on school premises, facilities, or property for any purpose by gang members shall be prohibited.
4. No student shall use, employ, or rely upon his or her gang membership or affiliation to threaten, to intimidate, or to harass verbally or physically other students or employees of the Richmond County School System.
5. All of the above prohibitions concerning gangs apply as well to any school functions or events conducted away from school facilities, property, or premises.

Any student who violates this rule shall be subject to discipline, including the sanction of expulsion, if warranted under the particular circumstances of the case.

PART II - PROCEDURAL RULES

Discipline, Suspension, and Expulsion of Students

A. Rationale

Each school shall strive to educate every student and provide for each individual student's needs. Students guilty of misconduct must be disciplined firmly while being assured of due process at all times.

B. Policy

Students are expected to adhere to Board of Education policies and school rules. A wholesome learning environment will be maintained. No student shall prevent other students from being educated in a wholesome learning environment. Students violating this policy and this code may be suspended or expelled in accordance with the procedures set forth herein.

C. Communication

The Principal and staff shall disseminate to students the general and specific policies of conduct of the Board of Education. Policies, rules, and regulations should be included in the student handbook, orientation assemblies, and/or homeroom orientations.

A copy of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline will be disseminated to each student and parent or guardian and shall be reviewed with the student in orientation meetings, classrooms and or assembly. Parents or students, depending upon the age of the student, will be required to sign for receipt of the Code.

Rule 23

Short-Term Suspension and Suspension of Pre-K through Third Grade Students

The Principal or acting Principal may suspend a student for a period not to exceed ten school days for violation of:

- (a) Any of these rules;
- (b) Any state or federal law;
- (c) Any rule or regulation of the Board of Education or school;
- (d) Any other act constituting misconduct similar to that enumerated in these rules.

Any such suspension shall not require a formal hearing but shall require that only an informal investigation be conducted prior to suspension whereby the Principal or acting Principal shall give the student oral notice of the accusation against such student, and if such student denies the charges, then give such student an explanation of the factual basis of said charges and an opportunity for the student to present any defensive matter in his or her behalf as may be reasonably available. There need be no delay between the time the student is notified of the charges and opportunity for the student to explain his or her side. The purpose of such informal investigation is simply to notify the student of the charges and to ensure fairmindedness and avoid unfair suspension. Students facing an immediate suspension shall be detained pending the arrival of their parent or guardian when practicable. School officials shall endeavor to notify in writing and/or by telephone the parent or guardian of students subject to suspension.

Students who are suspended from school shall not enter upon the campus of any school of the Richmond County Board of Education until the suspension has been completed. Violators will be subject to further disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

No student in Pre-K through 3rd Grade shall be expelled or suspended from school for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first receiving a multi-tiered system of supports, such as response to intervention, unless such student possessed a weapon, illegal drugs, or other dangerous instrument or such student's behavior endangers the physical safety of other students or school personnel. If such student is receiving or has received a multi-tiered system of supports, the school shall be deemed to have met the requirements of this section.

NOTE: The regulations under IDEA declare that a special education student suspended for less than a half day is deemed to have been suspended for the entire school day.

Rule 24

Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

A student shall be subject to expulsion or long-term suspension for any period in excess of ten school days, for any conduct referred to in this code only by action of the Tribunal or appropriate school official after the student has been afforded notice, opportunity for a hearing, and the other procedural rights hereinafter prescribed. Such expulsion or suspension may be administered notwithstanding that the student was previously suspended by other school officials under Rule 20 hereof. Where expulsion or suspension under this rule is proposed to be administered, the Superintendent or other authorized officials shall cause a notice to be given to the student and his or her parent or guardian in accordance with Rule 27 and conduct a hearing in accordance with Rule 27.

Students who are suspended from school or assigned to the Alternative Education Center shall not enter upon the campus of any school of the Richmond County Board of Education until the suspension has been completed. Violators will be subject to further disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

Rule 25

RESERVED

Rule 26

RESERVED

Rule 27

Student Disciplinary Hearing Procedures

[See BOARD POLICY JCEB]

A. The County Board of Education of Richmond County has appointed a disciplinary hearing Tribunal of school officials, to hold disciplinary hearings following an instance of:

1. An alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct where the recommendation of the school official is long-term suspension or expulsion; or
2. An alleged assault or battery by a student upon any teacher, other school official, or employee, if such teacher or other school official or employee so requests.

Examples of other instances of alleged violations for which a disciplinary hearing include, but are not limited to:

- An alleged act of physical violence resulting in substantial physical injury to a teacher, other school official, or employee.
- An alleged assault or battery by a student upon another student, if, in the discretion of the school site administrator, the alleged assault or battery could justify the expulsion or long-term suspension of the student.
- Substantial damage alleged to be intentionally caused by a student on school premises to personal property belonging to a teacher, other school official, employee, or student, if, in the discretion of the school site administrator, the alleged damage could justify the expulsion or long-term suspension of the student.
- Any weapons violation charges.
- Any other infractions where the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline requires referral to the tribunal.

[Note: Any teacher, school official, employee, or student who is subjected to the assault, battery, or damage described above shall file a complaint with the school administration and with the Local Board of Education, through leadership administration.]

B. The disciplinary Tribunal of school officials shall be composed as follows:

1. Each panel so appointed shall consist of a minimum of three members, made up of a combination of teachers, administrators and/or other school officials or personnel, as may be appropriate.
2. Annually, the Board of Education through the Superintendent, as necessary, shall appoint Tribunal panels to hear the cases described herein.

The specific persons who fit the categories mentioned above to serve on the alternate Tribunals shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board of Education. If at any time it becomes necessary to add new Tribunal members because of the case load or to substitute new members, the Board of Education has the authority to do so, although any substitution of new members shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board of Education.

The Board Attorney shall in all instances prepare such written charges and procedural notifications as are necessary. Additionally, in all instances, the Board Attorney shall, as required, act as legal advisor to the Tribunal. In the event that any student is represented by counsel, the Board Attorney shall be consulted and where, in his/her opinion, after consultation with the Superintendent it is appropriate, (s)he may act as prosecuting attorney or legal advisor. This decision must be made on a case by case basis, dependent on the circumstances.

When two or more students are charged with violating the same rule and have acted in concert and the facts are basically the same for all such students, a single hearing may be conducted for them if the presiding officer believes that the following conditions exist:

1. A single hearing will not likely result in confusion; and
2. No student will have his/her interest substantially prejudiced by a group hearing.

If during the hearing the presiding officer finds that a student's interest will be substantially prejudiced by the group hearing, the presiding officer may order a separate hearing for that student.

In addition to any other responsibility from time to time imposed upon such Tribunal, the Tribunal shall see that the following occurs:

1. All parties are afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice served personally or by mail and/or overnight delivery, when appropriate. This notice shall be given to all parties and to the parent or guardian of the student or students involved and shall include a statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing; a short and plain statement of the matters asserted; and statement as to the right of all parties to present evidence and to be represented by legal counsel.
2. This hearing will take place no more than ten (10) school days after the beginning of the suspension unless the school system and parents or guardians mutually agree to an extension, in which case the school system shall set a new date and time of the hearing that shall not occur more than fifteen (15) school days after the beginning of the suspension. The hearing may be held later than fifteen (15) school days after the beginning of the suspension upon a written request by a parent or guardian and agreement by the school system.
3. All parties are afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses on all issues unresolved;
4. All parties are afforded the right to subpoena witnesses who can testify as to the relevant matter. Any teacher called as a witness by the school system will be notified no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing;
5. A verbatim electronic (video/audio) or written record of the hearing shall be made and shall be available to all parties, as may be appropriate according to the law; and
6. The school system shall provide appropriate grade-level instructional materials to any student awaiting completion of the hearing provided for in this procedure.
7. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to infringe on any right provided to students with Individualized Education Programs pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Tribunal shall conduct the hearing and after receiving all evidence, render its decision, which decision shall be based solely on the evidence received at the hearing. The decision shall be in writing and shall be given to all parties within ten (10) days of the close of the record.

The Tribunal of school officials, once appointed, and following the evidence, shall determine what, if any, disciplinary action shall be taken. Such action may include, but is not limited to, assignment to an alternative setting, expulsion, long-term suspension, short-term suspension, and/or referral to appropriate testing or evaluation department of the School System. [Note: If the Tribunal determines, based on the evidence that a student has committed an act of physical violence resulting in substantial injury to a teacher, the student shall be suspended from all public school programs, including alternative education programs, for not less than the remainder of the school year.]

Any action taken by the Tribunal panel shall be subject to modification by the Local Board on appeal. The student's parent/guardian may appeal the Tribunal panel's decision to the Local Board of Education by submitting a written request to the Superintendent of the Richmond County School System, 864 Broad Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901. This request must be made within twenty (20) calendar days (including weekends, public and legal holidays) from the date the Tribunal decision is rendered by the panel. The written notice of appeal should set forth the reasons, together with any supporting arguments, as to why the Tribunal's decision is alleged to be incorrect. The notice should further specify what portion(s) of the record support the appellant's contentions. No new evidence will be allowed.

Any disciplinary action imposed by such officer, panel, or Tribunal may be suspended by the Superintendent of Schools pending the outcome of the appeal. In addition, at the request of the Deputy Superintendent, or designee, the Superintendent will review certain tribunal decisions on a case-by-case basis.

In the event of an appeal, the Local Board shall review the record and shall render a decision in writing. The decision shall be based solely on the record and shall be given to all parties within ten (10) days, excluding weekends and holidays, from the date the Local Board receives the request for an appeal. The decision of the Local Board will be based solely on the record created during the Tribunal due process hearing. The Local Board will not consider any new evidence. The Local Board has the power to affirm, reverse, or modify the Tribunal's decision. The Local Board's decision will be final, unless an appeal is made to the State Board of Education by filing a notice of appeal in writing with the Richmond County School System Superintendent within thirty (30) calendar days of the Local Board's decision. The appeal shall set forth: the question in dispute; the decision of the Local Board; and a concise statement of the reasons why the decision is being appealed. The contents of this notice of appeal and the procedure to be followed before the State Board of Education of Georgia are specified in O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160 and State Board Rule 160-1-3-.04, School Law Tribunals and Appeals.

The Tribunal of school officials or the Local Board of Education may report the incident giving rise to the hearing to the appropriate law enforcement agency or officer for investigation to determine if criminal charges or delinquent proceedings shall be initiated.

Students in grades Pre-K through 5 are generally excluded from the terms of this policy; however, in special circumstances, the tribunal may hear such cases. The Board also adopts as policy those provisions of O.C.G.A. §20-2-756 and §20-2-757 relating to the Open Meeting Law. To comply with O.C.G.A. §20-2-757(b), the Board of Education, after review of a case, shall prepare a written summary of any proceeding under this subpart which summary shall include a description of the incident and the disposition thereof, but shall not contain the names or personally identifiable information of any party to the incident, although the summary shall be a public record. The Board also adopts the provisions of §20-2-758 of the Official Code of Georgia.

***FOR PRE-K thru 5 DISCIPLINE OPTIONS, REFER TO RULES 23 AND 24**

Rule 28(A)

Use of Reasonable Physical Contact, Seclusion and Restraint

The Richmond County School prohibits the use of corporal punishment by its employees. Teachers and principals have the authority to take customary and reasonable measures to maintain proper control and discipline among students placed under their care and supervision. In accordance with **Board Policy JGF(2) and Procedure JGF(2)-R(1)**, there are instances where the use of reasonable physical force or physical contact is necessary and appropriate in a school system. The prohibition of corporal punishment should not be construed to eliminate or restrict the ability of a School System employee to use his/her professional discretion in the use of reasonable physical contact to protect students, themselves, or others from imminent harm or bodily injury. Nothing in that policy shall be construed to prohibit an employee of the School System from taking appropriate action to diffuse a student fight or altercation. Physical restraint is allowed only in limited circumstances as governed by **Board Policy JGF(2) and Procedure JGF(2)-R(1)**.

Rule 28(B)

Alternative Disciplinary Consequences

A student subject to short-term suspension may be provided with the opportunity to reduce the period of suspension by completing alternative disciplinary consequences. The decision to allow a student the opportunity to reduce the period of suspension shall be at the discretion of the Principal or assigned administrator, determining the consequence imposed as a result of the student's misconduct. If allowed by the administrator, the student shall have the option to complete the alternative disciplinary consequences or to serve the full term of his or her suspension. The following alternative disciplinary consequences are currently authorized: perform school site based community service, and if available and appropriate, suspension recovery programs offered by the School System.

Rule 29

Emergency Suspensions

Notwithstanding the provisions of Rules 24 and 27, students may be suspended for periods in excess of ten days without notice, hearing, and the other rights provided by Rules 24 and 27 being first given where the school is undergoing a violent upheaval or where orderly educational processes have otherwise been substantially disrupted. In all such cases, notice, hearing, and the other rights shall be provided in accordance with Rule 27 at the earliest practicable date that the restoration of order permits. Nothing in this Rule is intended to modify procedures to be followed for special education or other appropriate special needs students, as well as provisions relative to Pre-K through Third Grade students.

Rule 30

Alternative Educational Setting An alternative to suspension from school may be assignment to the Alternative Education Center subject to the Principal's recommendation and the approval of a screening committee. Students assigned to the Alternative Education Center will adhere to all rules and regulations of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline for the Richmond County School System, as well as all rules and regulations in the handbook for the Richmond County Alternative Education Center.

It is the policy of the State of Georgia that it is preferable to reassign disruptive students to alternative educational settings rather than to suspend or expel such students from school. O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.5(d). The compulsory attendance policy of the State of Georgia applies to the Alternative Education Center and the students assigned thereto.

Rule 31

Threat to Health or Safety

Any student who has a dangerous communicable disease that poses a substantial threat to the health or safety of the school community may be removed from the school. The Richmond County Board of Health and the Georgia Department of Human Resources are agencies which determine the disease(s) which are considered communicable.

Reentry of a student who has been excluded for protective reasons from the school community may be initiated upon the receipt of a signed affidavit from a licensed physician and/or the Richmond County Board of Health.

Rule 32

Designated Felony Status, Off-Campus Conduct, and Return from Incarceration

(A) Designated Felony Status

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-768, in the event a student has been convicted of, adjudicated to have committed, indicted for, or had information filed regarding the commission of any felony, or any delinquent act under Code Sections 15-11-602 and 15-11-707 which would be a felony if committed by an adult, the School System is authorized to refuse to readmit or enroll the student. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Superintendent, or his designee, in his discretion, shall be authorized to assign the student to an alternative education setting, as appropriate, and in the best interest of the student and the education of other students within the school system.

In the event the student is refused readmittance or enrollment into the school system, or the student is assigned to the alternative education setting, the student and parent shall be promptly notified of the student's designated felony status and its effects on the student's educational setting. Such notice shall provide the student or parent the right to request a due process hearing concerning the student's designated felony status as provided under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-768 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-754. In the event a student or parent requests such a hearing, the hearing will concern solely the existence of the charge creating the designated felony status and the adjudicative status of the charge, not the facts of the underlying offense.

Upon notification that the felony charge has been dropped, dismissed or modified, or that the student has been found innocent, the matter shall be reviewed to determine if the alternative education setting should or may be terminated.

Nothing herein shall prevent the System from providing a free and appropriate public education to students served or otherwise entitled to receive educational services under IDEA or Section 504.

(B) Off-Campus Conduct

In addition to the foregoing, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(c), in the event a student engages in off-campus conduct which could be charged as a felony if committed by an adult, and which conduct makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the education process, the student may be subject to a disciplinary hearing pursuant to Rule 27 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, at which hearing, the school administration has the burden to prove both the off-campus conduct and that the student's continued presence would create a potential danger or disruption to school environment.

(C) Return from Incarceration

Students returning from boot camps, RYDC, the YDC, or a period of incarceration must report to the Superintendent, or designee, for appropriate transition before enrolling in the Alternative Education Center.

Rule 33

Discretionary Authority

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Code of Student Conduct and Discipline to the contrary, after hearing and weighing all of the evidence presented, the Tribunal may determine that it is appropriate, based on the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the violation of the Rule(s) involved, that the student should receive a greater or lesser discipline than is set forth herein for specific rule violations. The Tribunal, after consultation with the Board Attorney, shall have the discretion to modify the discipline set forth herein for specific rule violations according to the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the violation of the rules involved except when prohibited by state or federal law. Provided, however, a written summary of the reasons for the modification shall be included in the Student Tribunal Hearing Report and a copy of the same will be sent to the Superintendent.

Furthermore, the Superintendent shall have the authority (either before or after the student is referred for a Tribunal hearing) to modify the discipline set forth in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline where the discipline contained therein appears excessive in light of the circumstances. In any Tribunal decision appealed to the Board of Education, the Board may modify the mandated discipline, but shall consider whether the Superintendent and/or the Tribunal considered a reduction and the rationale in denying such a reduction.

PART III - SEARCHES

Searches of Students, Students' Lockers and Desks; Video Surveillance and Operation of Motor Vehicles on Campus

Rule 34

A. Searches of Students

Any student may be searched with a duly issued warrant. Any student may be searched by school officials (defined as the Principal or designee) without a warrant where there is reasonable suspicion.

Other conditions under which school authorities would be acting properly in searching a student or his or her possessions without a warrant are:

- A. If the student has consented;
- B. If a contraband item is in plain view;
- C. If the evidence or contraband is discovered while responding to an emergency;
- D. If the official has reasonable suspicion to believe the individual is armed and dangerous; and
- E. In all other circumstances where the school official acts to protect the life and property and health of students, teachers, or other individuals.
- F. As part of the suspicionless inspection program of lockers and vehicles, searches of the person are to be directed primarily to individual students and not to groups. (Strip searches should be conducted only in very limited circumstances where there is probable cause and only after consultation with the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent or, where necessary, the Board Attorney.) (See Rule 35, for similar provisions for motor vehicles on campus.)

B. Searches of Students' Lockers and Desks

Students' lockers and desks are school property, which are made available for students' use upon their option. By exercising their option to use such lockers and desks, students agree and consent that said lockers and desks shall be subject to reasonable searches by school officials in particular circumstances, as well as routine periodic random searches by school officials. Such routine suspicionless inspections of said lockers and desks may be held without the student being present. Where the school official has a reasonable suspicion or reliable information that a particular student's locker or desk should be searched, said search shall be conducted by the school official, where the student is available, in the presence of the student. Non-suspicionless random locker inspections shall be held no less than twice annually.

C. Video Surveillance

The Richmond County Board of Education recognizes the School System's responsibility to maintain order and discipline on School System property and in its vehicles. The Board recognizes the value of electronic surveillance systems for monitoring activity on System property and in School System vehicles in protecting the health, welfare, and safety of its students and staff. Having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against the System's duty to maintain order and discipline, the Board authorizes the use of video camera and/or electronic surveillance on School System property (including school sites) and in its vehicles.

Any person present at a School System facility, on school or Board-owned property, at a school or System function, or riding a school bus or other System vehicle is subject to video surveillance. There should be no expectation of privacy from surveillance in most School System settings. The presence of a video camera indicates that there is no expectation of privacy in that location. Video surveillance should not be used in areas of heightened privacy (e.g., restrooms or locker rooms) unless determined necessary by the Superintendent.

Rule 35 [State 24]

Operation of Motor Vehicles On Campus

Any student who drives or parks a motor vehicle on property of the Richmond County Board of Education must first apply for and obtain or purchase, as the case may be, a permit and display same, as required, on such motor vehicle and obey all rules and regulations of the Board of Education pertaining to the operation and parking of motor vehicles on school property. Proof of insurance is required if a student operates a vehicle on campus.

In addition, the student and the parent or guardian in making the parking permit application must agree and affirm in writing to the following:

- A. That school authorities (Principals and their designees) may search a vehicle:
 - i. Where there is consent of the student, contraband in plain view, if evidence or contraband is discovered while responding to an emergency or during the handling of a traffic violation.
 - ii. Where the student is in the parking lot without written permission or during non-authorized hours.
 - iii. In all circumstances where the school official acts to protect the life, property and health of students, teachers or other individuals.
- B. Further, the student and parent or guardian recognize that the Board of Education has the responsibility to ensure the safety of all students and provide a wholesome learning environment.
- C. Thus, school authorities are to be given permission to conduct random suspicionless searches of the parking lot and all vehicles without warrants; and, in the discretion of school officials to utilize the assistance of canines trained to detect drugs, explosives or weapons.

PART IV - ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF DISCIPLINE

Rule 36

Positive School Climate

The Richmond County School System provides various resources to help schools establish a positive school climate for staff and students and to help address student behavioral problems. The discipline framework at each school may include Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, student services support (i.e., school counselors, school social workers, peer mediation, peer tutoring, conflict resolution programs, anger management courses), and other interventions that support the social-emotional needs of students.

Consistent with the requirements of this Code, as an additional component of progressive discipline, each school in the System may develop and implement a schoolwide system of monitoring student behavior and intervening appropriately. This system identifies and defines the major behavioral infractions that will be addressed by school administration, such as those outlined in the Code of Conduct, and the minor behaviors that can be addressed at the classroom level. School teams can work to develop proactive practices that model behavior expectations for students, support their progress, and acknowledge their success in adhering to established rules and routines. Promoting positive behavior choices allows for instructional time to be maximized and promotes a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. School teams can also use discipline data to track behavior patterns throughout the school year and determine what additional steps may be taken, with the goal of continuously reinforcing a positive learning climate for all students and staff.

Parents play an important role in the process of establishing a schoolwide behavior management system. At the start of the school year, administrators and teachers will communicate schoolwide rules and expectations to all parents so that they can work with schools to support the positive behaviors expected from all students. Parents can also participate in classroom or schoolwide events that celebrate students' success in achieving behavioral milestones.

Rule 37

Policy and Guidelines for In-School Suspension

In-School Suspension is provided for High and Middle School Students. Alternative educational settings such as PASS, Time Out and other interventions may be provided for elementary students. The In-School Suspension program is a means of working with students who are a discipline problem by removing them from their regular classroom setting without removing them from the school.

This program is not to replace any of the workable means of school discipline by the teacher, nor is it to be considered a final solution to the most critical discipline problems, but is explored to enhance the overall school discipline and to keep students in school.

The purposes of the In-School Suspension program are:

1. Provide alternatives for dealing with student misconduct other than removal from the academic setting (*i.e.*, out of school suspension).
2. Reduce the number of suspensions by providing assistance to the student through positive modification of behavior that otherwise would usually lead to suspension.
3. Allow a student to continue his/her academic process while preventing the student from being in contact with peers until his behavior improves.
4. Provide opportunities for the in-school suspension student to examine his/her system of values in relationship to the values of the school and society-at-large and reconcile existing conflicts.

The following requirements must be adhered to by all In-School Suspension programs in the system.

1. Students assigned to the program must be isolated from all activities which include:
 - a. Homeroom (optional to individual school).
 - b. Lunchroom (to eat at a time or place separate from the regular program).
 - c. Restroom (at a time when other students are not on break).
 - d. Extracurricular activities including practice (band, music, football, etc.).
 - e. Physical education classes (students assigned to in-school suspension may participate in physical education separate from the regular P.E. classes).
 - f. All regular class activities including laboratory work.
2. Teachers are to provide students with assignments for the number of days a student is in the program.
3. Assignments are to be graded by the classroom teachers and the same credit given to the in-school suspension student as is given to any other student for the same assignments.
4. In-school suspension students are to complete the assignments during the same period as any other student. If a student in the In-School Suspension program does not complete the assignment for the day, he does not get credit for that day in in-school suspension.
5. Students are to follow their daily schedule of subjects while studying in the in-school program.
6. If a student gets sick while in the in-school suspension classroom, the nurse is to come to the in-school suspension classroom, or the in-school suspension teacher is to take all students in the room as a group to the clinic.
7. The Principal or Assistant Principal makes the decision of whether a student is assigned to the In-school Suspension Program. Parents are notified about in-school suspension assignments in the same manner as they are when students are suspended out of school. This can be done by conference, telephone, or electronic communication. The Principal or Assistant Principal makes the decision regarding a parent's objection to their child being put in the program with the usual option being that the student can be suspended out of school.
8. If the student is absent from school, he/she must make up the day missed.
9. Any test a student needs to take while in the program will be given by the in-school suspension teacher or as determined by the individual school plan.
10. Major student offenses, including but not limited to Rules 4, 5 and 6, or their counterparts, shall be dealt with in accordance to the regulations outlined by the Richmond County Board of Education and the Student Tribunal Act.

Grades 9 - 12:

The number of days assigned a student in the program shall not exceed fifteen (15) per school year for high school students.

Grades 6 - 8:

The number of days assigned to middle school students shall be left to the discretion of Principal or Assistant Principal.

APPENDIX:

Required Notices and Helpful Information



2026-2027

Richmond County School System School Calendar

July '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Jul 04	Independence Day Holiday
July 29-Aug 4	Preplanning Days
Aug 03	Elementary Open House (noon-6:00pm)
Aug 04	K-8, Magnet, Middle, High Open House (noon-6:00pm)
Aug 05	First Day of School Elementary
Aug 06	First Day of School K-8, Magnet, Middle, High School
Sep 07	Labor Day Holiday
Sep 11	Fall Semester Progress Report #1
Sep 14-Oct 09	Fall Parent Conference Window
Oct 08	PowerUp Asynchronous Learning Day
Oct 09	Student Holiday/Professional Learning Day
Oct 12-13	Student/Teacher Fall Break
Oct 30	Fall Semester Progress Report #2
Nov 11	Veterans Day Holiday
Nov 23-27	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 14-18	Semester Exams
Dec 22	End of 1st Semester/Early Release (all grades)
Dec 23-Jan 05	Christmas/Winter Break
Jan 06	Student Holiday/Professional Learning Day
Jan 07	Beginning of Second Semester
Jan 13	Report Cards
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
Feb 10	Spring Semester Progress Report #1
Feb 11	PowerUp Asynchronous Learning Day
Feb 12	Student Holiday/Professional Learning Day
Feb 15	Student/Teacher Holiday
Feb 16-Mar 15	Spring Parent Conference Window
Mar 25	Spring Semester Progress Report #2
Mar 26	Student/Teacher Holiday
Apr 05-12	Spring Break
May 17-21	Semester Exams
May 26	Last Day of School/Early Release (all grades)
May 27-28	Post Planning Days
May 26-28	Graduation
May 28	Report Cards
May 31	Memorial Day Holiday
Jun 2-30	Summer School (5 days a week)
Jun 18	Juneteenth Holiday

Teacher Planning Days	Early Release Days
Holidays	PowerUp Asynchronous Learning Days
First Day of School	Progress Reports
Report Cards	

Weather-Related School Closings

For inclement weather, please tune to WJBF-TV, WAGT-TV, WRDW-TV, or WGAC Radio for up-to-date information on school closings. Also, you can view the school system's website at www.rcboe.org. In the event of inclement weather or school closure, the school system will use PowerUp Asynchronous Learning Days.

Note: The Richmond County School System will operate 5 days a week throughout the summer.

January '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

FIRST Semester			
<i>*High School EOC Mid-Month, SAT, and ACT Dates listed below this table.</i>			
Administration Dates	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Aug. 5 – Sept. 17	GKIDS Kindergarten Readiness		
Aug. 10 – Aug. 28	BOY: i-Ready Screener (K-5) Dyslexia Screener (K-3)	BOY: i-Ready Screener (6-8)	BOY: NWEA Map Screener (9-10)
Sept. 2 – Sept. 18	Panorama Student Competencies Screener (Benchmark 1)		
Sept. 21 – Oct. 2		YouScience (6-8)	YouScience (9-12)
Oct. 1 – Oct. 30		PSAT/NMSQT - (10 Required & 11 Optional) PSAT 8/9 - (8 Required & 9 Optional)	
Nov. 11 – Dec. 11	MOY: i-Ready Screener (K-5) Dyslexia Screener (K-3)	MOY: i-Ready Screener (6-8)	MOY: NWEA Map Screener (9-10)
Nov. 16 – Jan. 8			Georgia Milestones (EOC) Winter MAIN Administration
Dec. 7 – Dec. 11			End-of-Pathway (EOPA) Assessments
Dec. 15 – Dec. 19			Semester Exams
High School EOC Mid-Month Opportunities			
Aug. 3 – Aug. 21	Sept. 14 – Sep. 25	Oct. 5 – Oct. 16	Nov. 2 – Nov. 15
*SAT Test Date (Registration Deadline) – CLICK Test Date to Register			
Aug. 22 (Aug. 7)	Sep. 12 (Aug. 28)	Oct. 3 (Sept. 18)	Nov. 7 (Oct. 23)
*ACT Test Date (Registration Deadline) – CLICK Test Date to Register			
Sept. 19 (Aug. 14)	Oct. 17 (Sept. 11)	Dec. 12 (Nov. 6)	

*Dates are subject to change. *SAT and ACT are optional *DRC Beacon Testlets are optional and available to schools year-round. *iReady Growth Monitoring is optional for schools. (v. 7/1/26)

SECOND Semester			
*High School EOC Mid-Month, SAT, and ACT Dates listed below this table.			
Administration Dates	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Jan. 6 – Feb. 26	WIDA ACCESS & WIDA Alternate ACCESS		
Jan. 11 – Feb. 26		Gifted Testing	
Jan. 25 – Feb. 5	DRC BEACON Mock GMAS Administration (3-8, Algebra Concepts and Connections)		
Jan. 25 – March 19	NAEP – Selected Schools Only		
Jan. 27 & Jan. 30	Magnet Schools Specialized Program Testing (K-11)		
Feb. 2 – Feb. 10	CogAT (2)		
Mar. 1 – Apr. 23	Gifted Testing		
Mar. 8 – Mar. 19	Panorama Student Competencies Screener (Benchmark 2)		
Mar. 15 – Mar. 25	Kindergarten Roundup		
Mar. 22 - Apr. 30	Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) 2.0		
Mar. 29 – Apr. 2			End-of-Pathway (EOPA) Assessments
Apr. 13 – Apr. 16			EOPA Makeups
Apr. 21 – Apr. 29	GMAS EOG (3-5) ELA – Apr. 21 & 22 Math – Apr. 27 Science – Apr. 28 (5)	GMAS EOG (6-8) EOC (8) ELA – Apr. 21 & 22 Social Studies – Apr. 23 (8) Math – Apr. 27 (all 8) Science – Apr. 28 (8) Alg. C&C – Apr. 29 (8 only)	GMAS EOC (9-12) ELA (Lit & Comp. II) – Apr. 21 & 22 Social Studies (US History) – Apr. 23 Science (Biology) – Apr. 28 Math (Alg. C&C) – Apr. 29
Apr. 26 – May 14	EOY: i-Ready Screener (K-5) Dyslexia Screener (K-3)	EOY: i-Ready Screener (6-8)	
May 3 – May 14			Advanced Placement (AP) & International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams
May 11 – May 14	GMAS Retest ELA & Math (5)	GMAS Retest ELA & Math (8)	
May 15	Magnet Schools Specialized Program Testing (K-11)		
May 18 – May 22			Semester Exams
High School EOC Mid-Month Opportunities			
Jan. 18 – Jan. 29	Feb. 8 – Feb. 19		Mar. 1 – Mar. 12
*SAT Test Date (Registration Deadline) – CLICK Test Date to Register			
Mar. 6 (Feb. 19)	May 1 (Apr. 16)		Jun. 5 (May 21)
*ACT Test Date (Registration Deadline) – CLICK Test Date to Register			
Feb. 27 (Jan. 22)	Apr. 10 (Mar. 5)	Jun. 12 (May 7)	Jul. 10 (Jun. 4)

*Dates are subject to change. *SAT and ACT are optional *DRC Beacon Testlets are optional and available to schools year-round. *iReady Growth Monitoring is optional for schools. (v. 7/1/26)

Bell Schedules

First Tier Schools	7:25 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Elementary, K8 Schools	Bayvale, Copeland, Deer Chase, Diamond Lakes, Freedom Park K-8, Garrett, Hains, Lake Forest Hills, Lamar-Milledge, Meadowbrook, Monte Sano, and Wheelless Road
High Schools	G. P. Butler, Cross Creek, Glenn Hills High, Hephzibah High, T.W. Josey, and Westside.
Second Tier Schools	8:20 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.
Elementary Schools	Belair, Blythe, Glenn Hills, Goshen, Gracewood, Hephzibah, Jamestown, McBean, Meadowbrook, Richmond Hill, Sue Reynolds, Tobacco Road, Warren Road, W.S. Hornsby, and Wilkinson Gardens
High Schools	Academy of Richmond County and Lucy C. Laney
Third Tier Schools	9:15 a.m. - 4:20 p.m. *
Middle Schools	Belair Middle, Glenn Hills Middle, Hephzibah Middle, Langford-Tutt, Pine Hill, Richmond Hill Middle, and W.S. Hornsby Middle
Magnet Schools	8:30 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.
	A.R. Johnson Health Science & Engineering Magnet School, C. T. Walker Traditional Magnet School, John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School, RCTCM
Special Schools & Programs	
Cyber Academy, PLC	8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Marion Barnes Career Center	7:25 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
GNETS	7:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
RPM	8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Alternative School at Morgan Road	9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Early Release Times

Regular Dismissal Time	Early Release Time
2:15 p.m. Schools: Elementary -Bayvale, Copeland, Deer Chase, Diamond Lakes, Garrett, Hains, Lake Forest Hills, Lamar-Milledge, Meadowbrook, Monte Sano, and Wheelless Road. K-8 -Freedom Park K-8 High Schools -Butler High, Cross Creek, Glenn Hills, Hephzibah, T.W. Josey, and Westside.	12:00 p.m.
3:10 p.m. Schools: Elementary - Blythe, Goshen, Gracewood, Hephzibah, Jamestown, McBean, Meadowbrook, Sue Reynolds, Tobacco Road, Warren Road, W.S. Hornsby and Wilkinson Gardens High Schools -Academy of Richmond County and Lucy C. Laney	12:45 p.m.
3:25 p.m. Schools Elementary -C.T. Walker Elementary High Schools -Davidson Fine Arts Magnet, A.R. Johnson Magnet, and RCTCM	12:55 p.m.
4:20 p.m. Schools K-8 -Belair and Richmond Hill Middle Schools -Glenn Hills, Hephzibah, Hornsby, Langford-Tutt, and Pine Hill	1:30 p.m.
5:00 p.m. School Alternative School at Morgan Road	2:45 p.m.

* Updated for 2025-2026 school year.

RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM 2025-2030 Strategy Map



Mission Statement:

Empowering Every Learner Every Day.

Vision Statement:

To prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world.

Belief Statements:

- Success is attainable for everyone.
- All students deserve a quality educational experience.
- Education is a shared responsibility.
- Transparency is a foundation of trust.
- Safety for all is a priority.

Profile of a Graduate



Critical Thinker

- Demonstrates openness to new and diverse perspectives.
- Analyzes and interprets situations, patterns, and data.
- Weighs evidence to make complex decisions.



Effective Communicator

- Demonstrates ability to engage others in productive interactions.
- Listens attentively and asks questions to clarify understanding.
- Conveys ideas clearly in verbal, written, visual and digital formats.



Responsible Citizen

- Demonstrates personal integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior.
- Exhibits pride in producing quality work and fulfilling requirements.
- Shows respect toward people, property and the use of resources.



Continuous Learner

- Demonstrates a growth mindset and ability to persevere.
- Shows motivation, initiative, and effort to achieve academic and career goals.
- Engages in reflection and accepts feedback for individual improvement and self-advocacy.



Productive Collaborator

- Demonstrates empathy, cooperation, and flexibility.
- Resolves conflicts appropriately.
- Actively participates in team activities to achieve common goals.



Innovative Problem-Solver

- Displays curiosity, inventiveness, and originality.
- Creates products and shares ideas to solve challenging tasks.
- Uses information from a variety of sources to develop unique solutions.

RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM VISITOR GUIDELINES AND NOTICE OF VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

WELCOME! The Richmond County School System values the participation of parents and community in the activities of the schools and encourages adults to serve as role models for students. The School System welcomes visitors to the campuses of the schools and provides for opportunities to observe and learn about the educational programs, to volunteer and to attend events such as sporting events as well as musical and dramatic presentations offered to the public.

While visitors are welcome on campus, the paramount concern of the School System is to provide a safe and orderly educational atmosphere in which disruptions and distractions are minimized. Any visitor to a school or school event who violates these guidelines will be asked to leave and may lose the privilege of coming on campus and/or attending school events in the future.

To that end, the following guidelines apply.

- **SIGN IN:** Upon arrival, all school visitors must report immediately to the administrative office of the school in order to sign-in and obtain permission to be on campus.
- **RESPECT:** Visitors are considered role models and are expected to be appropriately and modestly dressed and to display respect for activities in progress at the school. Visitors shall conduct themselves in a manner that is not disruptive to the educational environment.
- **ABIDE:** All visitors are expected to abide by the general rules of the school, any applicable provisions of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline and shall comply at all times while on Board property with Board of Education policies and procedures.
- **MAINTAIN:** Visitors shall maintain the integrity of student confidentiality policies. Any confidential school matters overheard or observed shall remain in the school, and any concerns should be discussed with the site administrator. In addition, all visitors are expected to follow the terms of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures. Visitors are not permitted to photograph or make video or audio recordings without express permission from the site administrator.
- **KEEP THEM PUT:** Visitors are not permitted to remove students from the classrooms or other school activities without direct permission of the legal guardian of the student and/or the site administrator.
- **SIGN OUT:** Parents/guardians visiting or volunteering in the school shall sign their children out using proper procedures established at the school. Visitors shall sign out or follow approved procedures for notifying the administrative office that the visit is concluded.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AND EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

The Richmond County Board of Education recognizes the School System's responsibility to maintain order and discipline on School System property and in its vehicles. The Board recognizes the value of electronic surveillance systems for monitoring activity on System property and in School System vehicles in protecting the health, welfare, and safety of its students and staff. Having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against the System's duty to maintain order and discipline, the Board authorizes the use of video camera and/or electronic surveillance on School System property (including school sites) and in its vehicles.

Any person present at a School System facility, on school or Board-owned property, at a school or System function, or riding a school bus or other System vehicle is subject to video surveillance. There should be no expectation of privacy from surveillance in most School System settings. The presence of a video camera indicates that there is no expectation of privacy in that location. Video surveillance should not be used in areas of heightened privacy (e.g., restrooms or locker rooms) unless determined necessary by the Superintendent.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Why do we have a Student Code of Conduct and Discipline?

We have a Student Code of Conduct and Discipline to help everyone understand what is expected of students concerning their behavior. This document also explains what happens if these expectations are not met and if rules are not followed.

Does the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline apply to students when they are off-campus?

Yes, there are particular circumstances in which the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline may apply to off-campus behavior; therefore, the expectations and rules should be followed when students are off-campus.

Can serious violations result in serious consequences?

Yes, the consequences can be serious, and may include detention, suspension, expulsion, assignment to the Alternative Education Center and/or a referral to court.

My child was in a fight at school. How can I find out what actions were taken against the other student(s)?

The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) does not allow staff to discuss discipline actions taken against other students.

Does the School System have the right to conduct searches?

Yes, we want to make sure our schools are safe and secure places. We may have unannounced weapon and drug searches during which lockers, desks, cabinets, and other school property may be searched. Searches of students and their belongings may occur any time when there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that the student has violated a law or school policy. For more information, please see Rules 34 and 35 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

If a student brings a weapon to school, will the student get in trouble with the school or police?

Bringing a weapon to school is a felony. Therefore, this behavior subjects students to the possibility of discipline within the School System as well as potential criminal charges.

Can students with disabilities be disciplined?

Yes, students with disabilities may be disciplined for not following the rules the same as students without disabilities; however, specific steps must be followed. For more information, please see *Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities*, included in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

My child was detained by the Department of Juvenile Justice at RYDC/YDC. Can he/she return to the zoned school upon completing the time at the Department of Juvenile Justice facility?

No, students returning from boot camps, incarceration, RYDC or YDC must report to the Deputy Superintendent, or designee, for appropriate transition before enrolling in the Richmond County School System. Note: The compulsory attendance policy of the State of Georgia applies to the Alternative Education Center and the students assigned thereto. For more information, please see Rules 30 and 32 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Can my child return to school after conviction of a crime or pleading guilty to a crime committed in the community and/or incarceration?

A student who has pled guilty to or been convicted of an offense and has therefore served a sentence in a correctional or juvenile detention facility and who wishes to return to school is required to report with his/her parents/guardians to the Office of School Climate/Deputy Superintendent prior to returning to school. These students may be referred to the Student Discipline Tribunal when the behavior could have or did result in the student being charged with a felony and/or where that behavior makes the student's presence at a school potential danger to persons or property or which disrupts the education process. For more information, please see Rules 30 and 32 of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

CONNECT WITH US



The Infinite Campus Parent Portal

Your one-stop shop for staying informed about your child's education. View real-time updates on grades, attendance, assignments, and classroom behavior. We also send important messages through email, voicemail, and text. Download the Campus Parent app on the Apple App Store or Google Play store.



Visit rcboe.org/parentportal or contact your child(ren)'s school for setup and login assistance.



Canvas

Our online learning platform where teachers post lessons, assignments, and helpful resources to support classroom learning. Canvas is available on all school-issued devices, and parents can download the Canvas Parent app on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



Learn more and take the free online orientation for parents/guardians at rcboe.org/canvas.



Sprigeo

Our secure, anonymous reporting system that empowers students, parents, and community members to speak up about bullying, threats, mental health concerns, or other safety issues. Reports are immediately routed to school or district staff, ensuring the right people are notified quickly to respond and support those involved.



Submit a report online at rcboe.info/safetytip or by downloading the Sprigeo app from the Apple App or Google Play Store.



Community One Newsletter

Our monthly community newsletter is designed to keep you connected to the heart of our school system. Each edition features uplifting stories, important updates, and behind-the-scenes highlights that showcase the achievements of our students, educators, and staff.



Visit Community One Newsletter at rcboe.org/communityone or Scan our QR code to sign up for the Newsletter.



Onflo (formerly Let's Talk)

Our two-way communication tool to connect with the Richmond County School System. Whether you have a question, concern, or suggestion, Let's Talk makes it easy to reach the right person and get a response.



Visit www.rcboe.org/letstalk to start a conversation.



Peachjar

Our digital flyer system. Instead of sending paper flyers home in backpacks, we can deliver district and community flyers straight to your email. It's a simple, eco-friendly way to stay informed about events, programs, and resources for your child.



Visit your school's website and click on the [Peachjar](#) button to access it today.



Policy BULLYING

Descriptor Code: JCDAG

The County Board of Education of Richmond County believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline for all schools within the School System.

A student shall not bully, attempt to bully, or threaten to bully any person, including students and employees.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act that is:

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

The term applies to acts which occur in school, on school property, on school vehicles, at school bus stops, en route to and from school, or at school-related functions or activities, including but not limited to, extracurricular activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of this School System.

The term also applies to acts of **cyberbullying** that originate on school property or involve the use of school equipment, including, but not limited to, acts that occur within a school-sponsored online activity.

“Cyberbullying” means bullying that involves the use of electronic communication, including, but not limited to, communication devices and services, including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, cameras, computers, social media platforms, text messages, chat platforms, and internet sites.

“Electronic communication” means, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system. Such term shall include photographs and video and audio recordings.

“School equipment” means any computer or computer networking equipment, technology or technology related device or service, or communication system or service that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by a local board of education, local school system, or public school and that is used for transmitting, receiving, accessing, viewing, hearing, downloading, recording, or storing electronic communication.

Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to manipulate media to create inappropriate material of any kind and/or to impersonate others (*e.g.*, name, image or likenesses of others) for the purpose of or having the effect of bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation is strictly prohibited. All users are expected to employ these tools solely for educational purposes, upholding values of respect, inclusivity and academic integrity at all times.

Reporting

Students, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in person, are encouraged to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity to the school principal or designee. Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying should immediately report it to the school principal.

Any such report of bullying to the principal or designee should be investigated by the administration in a timely manner based on the nature of the complaint to determine the following:

- a. whether bullying has occurred;
- b. whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented; and
- c. what other steps should be taken.

Discipline

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling, as appropriate under the circumstances. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to the Alternative Education Center. Nothing herein shall prohibit the tribunal panel from assigning the student to the Alternative Education Center before a third offense of bullying should the circumstances warrant.

Notification of Bullying Offense

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically. Such notice shall, as appropriate under the circumstances, include referrals to resources for counseling and other appropriate services for students who have been found to have committed an offense of bullying or are targets or suspected victims of bullying.

General Notification of Bullying Prohibition

Students and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting such information at school and by way of the inclusion of such information in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Retaliation Prohibited

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with School System procedures.

False Reporting

Any student who knowingly files a false report of bullying, harassment or intimidation shall be punished under existing disciplinary provisions.

Immunity

Any person who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, shall be immune from civil liability for any damages caused by such reporting.

In determining when and how to implement this policy and any procedures related to it, educators exercise their professional judgment and discretion. Therefore, the policy is not to be construed as imposing ministerial duties on individual employees. Further, it is not intended to interfere with the duties of law enforcement.

Policy

Internet Acceptable Use

Descriptor Code: IFBG

It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education (“RCBOE”) that employees and students should be furnished educational opportunities and resources to have access to Internet-based instructional programs and administrative services. The primary purpose and mission of the RCBOE is to empower every learner every day. The vision of the School System is to prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world. Technology plays a role in this mission by providing quality programs, information and learning activities along with support and services to improve student learning and enhance instructional and administrative effectiveness. The instructional use of interactive computer and web-based technology will prepare students for the future. Technology includes computer hardware, software, local and wide area networks and access to the Internet. Due to the complex nature of these systems and the magnitude of information available via the Internet, the RCBOE has adopted procedures regarding acceptable use to ensure that the technology users share in the technology resources in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that students are not granted access to anything other than educational and instructional materials and resources.

The RCBOE is committed to: (a) preventing user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) preventing unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) preventing unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) complying with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. Each user must follow the **Richmond County School System Internet Acceptable Use Procedures [Procedures IFBG-R(1) and IFBG-R(2) (Social Media)]**, found in the RCBOE Code of Student Conduct and Discipline and the School System website, www.rcboe.org.

Procedures have been adopted to address Internet safety, which include:

- (a) Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web
- (b) Safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, instant messaging, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications
- (c) Unauthorized access, including so-called “hacking,” and other unlawful activities by minors online
- (d) Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information of minors
- (e) Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them

The Superintendent is authorized to designate certain persons in the School System who will be allowed to disable the blocking or filtering measure placed on the computer system during the use by an adult to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Procedures - Internet Acceptable Use

Descriptor Code: IFBG

Internet Acceptable Use Procedures

The Internet Acceptable Use Procedures apply to all students, faculty, staff, employees and visitors (both adults and minors) of the Richmond County School System ("RCSS"). All users of the RCSS network and/or other electronic informational services must maintain strict compliance with all applicable ethical and legal rules and regulations regarding access. The School System reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose the contents of any user's files, activities, or communications.

Availability of Access:

The Internet will be available to users for instructional and administrative purposes. The electronic information available to users does not imply endorsement by the Richmond County Board of Education.

Applicability of Procedures and Consequences:

The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and misuse will result in disciplinary actions, including restriction and/or cancellation of those privileges.

These procedures apply to, and the School System will take appropriate measures, including disciplinary measures, in response to:

- (1) Students and school employees who intentionally violate this acceptable use policy, whether or not such student or school employee was, at the time of such violation, on school property, on a school bus or other school vehicle, at a school-related function, or elsewhere;
- (2) Any person who is not a student or school employee who violates the acceptable use policy and procedures, whether or not such person was, at the time of such violation, on school property, on a school bus or other school vehicle, at a school related function, or elsewhere.

Security:

Users must maintain appropriate passwords to obtain access to the network. Login information, usernames, and passwords are confidential. It is the responsibility of the user to safeguard that information. Passwords should be at least 8 characters and should contain a number and a capital letter. No user should login with another user's information.

While the Internet is an extremely valuable tool for educational research, information is accessible that may not be appropriate according to community, school, or family standards. The RCBOE provides an Internet filtering system which blocks access to a large percentage of inappropriate sites. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or any material deemed to be harmful to minors will be blocked by the web filtering system.

Internet Safety and School System Responsibilities:

Internet safety is a great concern of the RCBOE. It shall be the responsibility of all educators of the Richmond County School System, including administrators, instructional supervisors, principals, teachers, media specialists, technology specialists, guidance counselors, instructional paraprofessionals and any other personnel having access to the online computer network for instructional purposes, to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), as much as is practical.

The School System and the Superintendent, or designee, shall take such steps as are necessary and appropriate to implement and enforce the acceptable use policy, which shall include, but shall not be limited to: providing for the adoption, use and routine upgrading of technology protection measures which meet or exceed compliance standards and specifications established by the Georgia Department of Education.

The School System shall provide reasonable opportunities and procedures for parents/guardians of current students to confer and collaborate with school administrators and teachers regarding appropriate internet access for such students.

The School System shall provide, upon written request of a parent/guardian a copy of the Acceptable Use Policy and the Procedures in effect to enforce such policy. Please note that the Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures are contained within the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and are found online at www.rcboe.org.

A series of age-appropriate Internet Safety and digital citizenship¹ courses will be taught to all RCSS students to provide education on appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, safety and privacy, as well as cyberbullying awareness and response. School personnel have the discretion to provide such other training or to implement such other curricula, provided that such training or curricula meet the requirements of CIPA, as may be amended from time to time. Any suggested topics or proposed curricula are intended as a guideline and in no way replace or diminish the professional judgment and discretion of the administrators or school personnel implementing this policy.

The following will be considered inappropriate uses of the Richmond County School System Technology Network, which list is not exhaustive and includes but is not limited to:

1. Posting, publishing, sending or creating materials or communications that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal, or engage in any other type of behavior that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind, or is in violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, State law or federal law NOTE: Students who engage in such activity off-campus and create a material disruption of school operations shall be subject to penalties for bullying and harassment contained in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline as well as criminal charges, if applicable.
2. Electronically capturing the image of others without express permission.
3. Utilizing content produced by artificial intelligence (AI) platforms such as Chat GPT, Google Bard, or Bing Co-Pilot to compromise the security of the RCSS's systems or services, or to infringe upon the privacy rights and safety of others, or to misrepresent the integrity and authenticity of academic assignments.
4. Misrepresenting content (e.g., text, images) generated by AI platforms such as Chat GPT, Google Bard, or Bing Co-Pilot as student's own work or using an AI program to generate content for an assignment when outside resources are not permitted for the assignment, or, when permitted for an assignment, are not properly cited.
5. Accessing, sending, creating or posting materials or communications that could be inconsistent with the district's educational needs and goals.
6. Using the network for financial gain, advertising or commercial activity.
7. Transmitting any material in violation of any United States or State law or regulation.
8. Engaging in malicious activities such as sending unsolicited spam emails, conducting phishing or hacking attempts, or seeking, obtaining, or disclosing passwords or information of others.
9. Posting anonymously or forging electronic mail messages or altering, deleting or copying another user's email.
10. Using the school's computer hardware or network for any illegal activity such as copying or downloading copyrighted software, music or images, or violation of copyright laws.
11. Downloading, installing, accessing, or playing any unauthorized program or content (even that created at home) on any school's computer or network.

¹ "Digital citizenship" means being an active member in a society full of technology, knowing what is considered appropriate technology use, and behaving responsibly with electronic resources.

12. Purposely bringing any hardware onto the premises or loading any software that is designed to damage, alter, destroy or provide access to unauthorized data.
13. Attempting to vandalize or disassemble any network or computer component including the attempt to alter network or computer configuration.
14. Gaining access or attempting to access unauthorized or restricted network resources or the data and documents of another person.
15. Sending spam through email.
16. Using the network while access privileges have been suspended.
17. Bypassing or attempting to circumvent network security, virus protection, network filtering, or policies.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Employees must use good judgment and keep all passwords protected. Do not post a list of usernames and passwords where they may be seen by students or others. Never email usernames and passwords to unknown sources. The RCSS Information Technology Department will never ask for passwords by email.
- When leaving a computer, always log off to prevent unauthorized access to files or email.
- Students should always be supervised while using the Internet, computers, handheld devices or electronic resources.
- Email accounts are provided for professional use only. Email accounts should not be used for personal gain or personal business-related activities. Broadcasting of unsolicited messages is prohibited. All employees must request permission from the building administrator before sending any messages to an entire building's staff. Permission has to be granted from the Superintendent or designee to send messages to "All Users" in the system.
- Employees are prohibited from utilizing Richmond County School System account profile information, such as usernames, passwords, or email addresses, to register for web applications or services not approved by the School System. An employee profile contains private data, and by law, the RCSS must ensure that the vendor it shares information with has adequate policies and procedures to safeguard data privacy and uphold network security.
- If an employee brings a personal computer or handheld device, to use on the RCSS network, it must be virus free and must not contain any unauthorized or inappropriate files. Employees must follow School System procedures for utilizing personal devices.
- Employees may not download any unauthorized software onto Richmond County School System computers.
- Employees will use system-supported technology for educational use only and will refrain from accessing inappropriate information, unauthorized sites or content.
- Employees will provide instruction and guidance to students on the parameters and proper uses of an artificial intelligence (AI) program to generate content for any assignment. [For more information, please see ***Guiding Principles and Procedures for AI Use in the Richmond County School System.***]
- Employees must follow the Code of Ethics for Educators, as well as any other applicable laws or regulations.
- Employees shall act in good faith to enforce the operation of technology protection measures while school computers with Internet access are being used.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Parents should read through the entire Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures and discuss Internet safety and digital citizenship with their child.
- Parents of students shall sign and return to their child's school a form to give or deny permission for their child to utilize the Richmond County School System Technology Network and for their child's picture, video clip or name to be featured on Richmond County School System websites.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students should not use the Internet for purposes other than instructional assignments related to the curriculum.
- Students will use system-supported technology for educational use only and will refrain from accessing inappropriate information.
- Students are prohibited from utilizing Richmond County School System account profile information, such as usernames, passwords, or email addresses, to register for web applications or services not approved by the School System. A student profile contains private data, and by law, the RCSS must ensure that the vendor it shares information with has adequate policies and procedures to safeguard data privacy and uphold network security.
- Students must follow teacher directions for Internet related assignments, including whether the use of an approved artificial intelligence (AI) program is permissible for the assignment, and if so, students must properly cite the source of the content. [For more information, please see ***Guiding Principles and Procedures for AI Use in the Richmond County School System.***]
- Students must heed prohibitions and Internet Safety rules and should take precautions when using the network.
- Students should participate in any and all training as instructed by school personnel.
- Students will follow all applicable rules related to Internet, computer or digital device use contained within the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and sign that they have read the policy and procedures of the Richmond County School System and agree to abide by the same.

For Internet Safety, Students Are Reminded They Should:

- Never provide last name, address, telephone number, or school name online to someone they do not know.
- Never respond to and always report any messages that make the student feel uncomfortable or that are from an unknown origin.
- Never send a photo of themselves or anyone else without the permission of a parent.
- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met online.
- Never open attachments or files from unknown senders.
- Always report any inappropriate sites observed.

Usage of Cell Phones, Personal Electronic Devices and Personal Technology Devices

The use of cell phones and personal technology devices (e.g., laptops, tablets) on campus is a privilege that the school grants to students and employees who are willing to assume the responsibilities outlined in the Richmond County Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures and all applicable provisions of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. All guidelines in the RCBOE Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures continue to apply when a student or employee brings a personal technology device for use on campus. For additional information, please see **Rule 1(r) and Rule 16 in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.**

Administrative Review of Concerns

Administrative procedures to enforce the Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures are contained within the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline (as to students) and the Employee Handbook and Code of Ethics for Educators (as to employees).

Complaints regarding possible violations of the Acceptable Use Policy should be initially directed the applicable school site administrator or department supervisor. Whenever possible, complaints should be made in writing, providing sufficient details of the nature of the concern so that school personnel can properly investigate and resolve the complaint. School System personnel will respond in writing within a reasonable time.

The Superintendent is authorized to designate certain persons in the School System who will be allowed to disable the blocking or filtering measure placed on the computer system during the use by an adult to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Complaints regarding operation of the acceptable use policy denying a student or school employee access to material that is not within the prohibitions of the acceptable use policy should be initially directed the applicable school site administrator or department supervisor. Whenever possible, complaints should be made in writing, providing sufficient details of the nature of the concern so that school personnel can properly investigate and resolve the complaint. School System personnel will attempt to expeditiously review and resolve all such claims.

CIPA DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Technology Protection Measure. The term "technology protection measure" means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

1. **OBSCENE**, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;
2. **CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code; or
3. **HARMFUL TO MINORS**. The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:
 - a. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
 - b. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
 - c. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

Minor: Under Federal law, the term "minor" is defined as "an individual who has not attained the age of 17 years" (pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)) and "any person under the age of eighteen years" (pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2256). For purposes of this policy, however, the term "minor" shall apply to any student properly attending a school within the Richmond County School System.

Sexual Act; Sexual Contact. The terms "sexual act" and "sexual contact" have the meanings given such terms in 18 U.S.C. § 2246.

Failure to follow the Acceptable Use Policy violates the requirements as set forth by the Official Code of Georgia and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

Regulation IFBG-R(2): Internet Acceptable Use - Social Media

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/22/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 07/22/2025

Purpose: To provide additional guidance pursuant to the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures regarding social media platform access by minors and to promote appropriate use of technology and responsible digital citizenship within the Richmond County School System.

Social Media Use By Students :

Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms through the use of computer equipment, communications services, or internet access that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by the Richmond County School System.

Students shall be permitted to access social media platforms only:

1. As directed by school personnel;
2. For the exclusive purpose of accessing and utilizing age-appropriate educational resources;
3. Under the supervision of such school personnel; and
4. During the course of a school related activity.

While using social media platforms with permission, students will follow all provisions of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy IFBG and Procedures IFBG-R(1), as well as the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

School System Responsibilities:

The School System will establish appropriate measures to be taken when a student violates such policy.

The School System will establish procedures for parents/guardians to:

1. Request information from school personnel about what social media platforms have been or are intended to be accessed with permission as described above; and
2. Prohibit their child(ren) from accessing one or more social media platforms as provided as described above.

The School System will take appropriate steps to implement and enforce the Social Media Policy, which shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Use of software programs and other technologies reasonably designed and intended to block and monitor access to social media platforms; and
2. Selection of online servers that block and monitor access to social media platforms.

A copy of this Social Media Policy can be found on the School System's website, as well as within the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Definitions:

"Social Media Platform": "Social media platform" has the same meaning as defined in Code Section 39-6-1, and means an online forum that allows an account holder to create a profile, upload posts, view and listen to posts, form mutual connections, and interact publicly and privately with other account holders and users.

Such term shall not include an online service, website, or application where the predominant or exclusive function is any of the following:

- (A) Email;
- (B) A service that, pursuant to its terms of use, does not permit minors to use the platform and utilizes commercially reasonable age assurance mechanisms to deter minors from becoming account holders;
- (C) A streaming service that provides only licensed media that is not user-generated in a continuous flow from the service, website, or application to the end user and does not obtain a license to the media from a user or account holder by agreement to its terms of service;
- (D) News, sports, entertainment, or other content that is preselected by the provider and not user-generated, and any chat, comment, or interactive functionality that is provided incidental to or directly or indirectly related to such content;
- (E) Online shopping or e-commerce, if the interaction with other users or account holders is generally limited

to the ability to upload a post and comment on reviews, the ability to display lists or collections of goods for sale or wish lists, and other functions that are focused on online shopping or e-commerce rather than interaction between users or account holders;

(F) Interactive gaming, virtual gaming, or an online service, website, or application that allows the creation and uploading of content for the purpose of interactive gaming, educational entertainment, or associated entertainment, and communications related to that content;

(G) Photograph editing that has an associated photograph hosting service if the interaction with other users or account holders is generally limited to liking or commenting;

(H) Single-purpose community groups for public safety if the interaction with other users or account holders is limited to that single purpose and the community group has guidelines or policies against illegal content;

(I) Business-to-business software;

(J) Teleconferencing or videoconferencing services that allow reception and transmission of audio and video signals for real-time communication;

(K) Cloud storage;

(L) Shared document collaboration;

(M) Cloud computing services, which may include cloud storage and shared document collaboration;

(N) Providing access to or interacting with data visualization platforms, libraries, or hubs;

(O) Permitting comments on a digital news website if the news content is posted only by the provider of the digital news website;

(P) Providing or obtaining technical support for a platform, product, or service;

(Q) Academic, scholarly, or genealogical research where the majority of the content is created or posted by the provider of the online service, website, or application and the ability to chat, comment, or interact with other users is directly related to the provider's content;

(R) Internet access and broadband service;

(S) A classified advertising service in which the provider of the online service, website, or application is limited to all of the following: (i) Permitting only the sale of goods; (ii) Prohibiting the solicitation of personal services; (iii) Posting or creating a substantial amount of the content; and (iv) Providing the ability to chat, comment, or interact with other users only if it is directly related to the provider's content;

(T) An online service, website, or application that is used by or under the direction of an educational entity, including a learning management system, student engagement program, or subject- or skill-specific program, where the majority of the content is created or posted by the provider of the online service, website, or application and the ability to chat, comment, or interact with other users is directly related to the provider's content;

(U) Peer-to-peer payments, provided that interactions among users or account holders are generally limited to the ability to send, receive, or request funds; like or comment on such transactions; or other functions related to sending, receiving, requesting, or settling payments among users or account holders; or

(V) Career development opportunities, including professional networking, job skills, learning certifications, and job posting and application services.

RCSS STUDENT TECHNOLOGY LOAN AGREEMENT

The Richmond County School System's (RCSS) vision is to prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world. Students are provided the opportunity to take home or use, while in the classroom, a Windows or Chrome laptop or a Chrome tablet that is the property of RCSS for educational purposes.

All students and parents/guardians will be required to sign this form acknowledging that they have read and agree with the School System's device procedures.

Please read each statement below, and by signing, you are agreeing to the RCSS Expectations of Responsible Device Use:

- I understand that all use of the School System's laptops/tablets must be for educational purposes, and students are not to use the device for personal, commercial, or business use.
- I understand that I am accountable for and assume full responsibility for the care of the device on and off school premises.
- I understand that I assume full responsibility for the security of the device on and off school premises.
- I understand that all activity conducted on RCSS devices and accounts may be monitored and is subject to RCSS technology policies and procedures.
- I understand that I assume full responsibility for reporting to the teacher, media specialist, or school administrator if a device is lost, stolen, or damaged.
- I understand that students will be offered an optional insurance plan to cover accidental damage, loss, or stolen devices.
- I understand the optional insurance plan covers two devices per year, and if a third device is damaged, lost, or stolen, the student will become a "day-user" and will be provided a device at school, but will not be allowed to take the device off-campus.
- I understand that a student without optional insurance will be assessed a fee to cover a damaged, lost, or stolen device.
- I understand that the student may be assessed a fee if the assigned device and any assigned accessories are not returned upon withdrawal, graduation, transfer, or upon request by the School System.
- See RCSS Policy JS and Procedure JS-R (1) regarding Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

Please review the entirety of the One-to-One Handbook, located on the RCSS Website. Sign below to acknowledge that you have read and support the expectations outlined in this agreement.

Check: if the student will be a Day-User _____ Check: if the student will be a Take-Home User _____

Note: While the School System will attempt to honor the preference selected for Day-User or Take-Home User, please note that there may be times when a Day-User's device may need to be sent home for at-home learning or other activities (e.g., inclement weather). The student is responsible for the care of the device at all times, whether on or off school premises.

Student's Name (print first and last name): _____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Home Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

RCSS Use Only:

Date of Issue: _____ Device Type: _____ Serial #: _____

Asset Tag #: _____ SID#_300: _____

BOARD POLICY JS: STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES

The Board of Education is required by law to provide a free public education for students enrolled in the Richmond County School System. Therefore, basic instructional materials will be provided as required to complete each course of study funded for credit according to the Quality Basic Education Act.

Students enrolled in the Richmond County School System will be required to supply materials basic to all courses, such as paper, pencils, crayons, and pens. No specific types or brands of materials may be required. Any required materials above and beyond these shall be provided by the Richmond County Board of Education.

Schools may require students to provide clothing appropriate for each course, such as comfortable clothing or athletic shoes for physical education. A definition of such clothing may be generic but not specific to color or brand. Special safety equipment or clothing for any basic course shall be provided by the school.

A basic list of instruments and/or equipment for instrumental music programs shall be developed for each school that will be provided equitably to all students. However, students may rent or purchase their own instruments.

Fees may be charged for extracurricular activities as long as charges are not made a condition of attendance or credit within the normal day academic program. Fees may also be charged for a course-related enhancement or enrichment activity provided the activity is outside the school day and does not affect credit in the course.

Examples of legitimate fees that may be charges include, but are not limited to, gate admissions, student publications, graduation accessories, activity fees, parking privileges, summer school, on-line courses, the after-school program, and cafeteria fees.

Students and their parents shall be accountable for all books, equipment and technology devices assigned to a student and shall return such items in good condition, normal wear and tear excepted.

Students and their parents may be charged a reasonable fee for restitution of lost, damaged or abused School System property, in accordance with the **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION OWNED MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT**. (See JS-R(1): Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

REGULATION JS-R(1): STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION OWNED MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The Board of Education is required by law to provide a free public education for students enrolled in the Richmond County School System ("RCSS"). Therefore, basic instructional materials will be provided as required to complete each course of study funded for credit according to the Quality Basic Education Act. These materials may include textbooks, library books, media materials and equipment, such as technology devices and the like.

The mission of the Richmond County School System is to empower every learner every day, and its vision is to prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world. In this spirit, students are provided the opportunity to take home or use, while in the classroom, a Windows or Chrome laptop or a Chrome tablet that is the property of RCSS for educational purposes.

Students and their parents are responsible to care for and maintain in good condition all textbooks, library books, media center materials, equipment and electronic devices assigned to a student. Students shall return such items in good condition, normal wear and tear excepted. Students and their parents may be charged a reasonable fee for restitution of lost or damaged School System property, in accordance with these Guidelines.

I. School System Responsibility and Accountability

A. Textbooks and Library Media Materials:

1. Each school within the School System will utilize the School System's Online Public Access Catalog ("OPAC" or "Follett Destiny") to maintain, accurate records of textbooks, library media materials, equipment and other items issued to students. Textbooks are issued to the students with a record kept by utilizing the OPAC. These records are updated as books are returned and additional books are checked out.
2. Consumable materials will be transferred within the system with the student.
3. Library and media center materials shall be controlled by standard circulation procedures. Library and media center equipment management, distribution and accountability shall be managed in the OPAC.
4. Semester scheduling in the secondary schools may require that textbooks be collected at the end of each semester. A verification check should precede the ending of a semester.
5. At the end of a school year, all textbooks are to be returned to a central location-within each school.
6. After textbooks and equipment are inventoried, students with fines for lost or damaged textbooks, library books or equipment will be issued a payment notice as described below.

B. Technology Devices and Equipment

1. Each school within the School System will utilize the Incident IQ Inventory system to maintain accurate records of technology devices and equipment issued to students.
2. Technology devices and equipment (i.e., laptops/tablets and accessories) are distributed by the school's Device Distribution Team.
3. Before devices are distributed, the RCSS Student Technology Loan Agreement must be signed by the Parent and Student.
4. Before devices are distributed, students must complete the Digital Citizenship lessons and receive Device Care instruction.
5. All use of RCSS laptops/tablets must be for educational purposes and students are not to use the device for personal, commercial, or business use.
6. Student is accountable for and assumes full responsibility for the care and security of the device, both on and off school premises.
7. Student assumes full responsibility for reporting to the teacher, media specialist, or school administrator if a device is lost, stolen, or damaged.
8. Students will be offered an optional insurance plan to cover accidental damage, loss, or stolen devices. The optional insurance plan covers two devices per year, and if a third device is stolen, lost or damaged, the student will become a "day-user" and will be provided a device at school, but may not take a device off-campus. (Note: An exception may occur for PowerUp Asynchronous Learning Days or System Inclement Weather Days or similar events.)
9. A student without optional insurance will be assessed a fee to cover a damaged, lost or stolen device.

II. Student Responsibility and Accountability

When textbooks, library media materials, and equipment are issued to students, the return of these items to the school for further use shall be the sole responsibility of students and their parents or guardians. If these items are not returned to the school in usable condition, it shall be the responsibility of the students and their parents/ guardians to reimburse the Richmond County Board of Education for the cost of repair or replacement.

Replacement costs for lost or unusable textbooks, library books and media materials shall be calculated according to the price listed in the OPAC. The repair or replacement cost for school-issued technology equipment shall be determined by whether the student has purchased the optional insurance plan or did not purchase the optional insurance plan.

Fines will be satisfied no later than the end of each school year. Potential consequences for lost or damaged items are outlined below.

III. Compensation Notice

Students and their parents/guardians will be notified of the policy and procedures regarding fees, fines and charges each school year. New students and their parents/guardians shall be introduced to the policy and procedures at the time of enrollment. A notice shall be sent to parents/guardians when students owe a fee (or fees) for lost or damaged textbooks, library media materials, and/or equipment. Students and Parents/Guardians will acknowledge receipt of ***Guidelines for Student Responsibility and Accountability for Board of Education Owned Materials and Equipment***.

If a student owes money for lost or damaged books, materials or equipment, the parents are to be notified by written notification and/or telephone communication of the nature and amount of charges, with instructions on how to make arrangements to pay the financial obligation of the student.

IV. Potential Consequences

Failure to reimburse the School System for the cost of repair or replacement may lead to any of the following potential consequences. Opportunity shall be given for students and/or parents to meet with school administrators to discuss any fines levied against them. At the discretion of the School System, a prorated installment plan may be developed to satisfy the debt when a single payment is not possible.

A. Textbook Replacement: When a textbook is lost or damaged, the school will provide another copy of the textbook to the student, if available. If the same textbook is lost again by the same student, the student must have paid for at least one copy of the book before receiving a third copy of the textbook. Textbooks in the same subject area may be made available for the student's use in the classroom, per availability. Similarly, library media materials and equipment may be used by the student within the confines of the library media center or the classroom.

B. Electronic Device and Equipment Use: Students will be offered an optional insurance plan to cover accidental damage, loss, or stolen devices. The optional insurance plan covers two devices per year, and if a third device is stolen, lost or damaged, the student will become a "day-user" and will be provided a device at school, but may not take a device off-campus, except during PowerUp Asynchronous Learning Days, System inclement weather days or similar events. A student without optional insurance will be assessed a fee to cover a damaged, lost or stolen device. If the Principal or school staff designee determines an item malfunctioned with no fault or negligence on the part of the student, the associated fee(s) may be waived, and the student may be issued a replacement device.

C. Promotions, Transfers, and Withdrawals: Students who are promoted or who transfer to another school within the System and have not compensated the System (or the school) for the lost or damaged items will have a record of their financial obligations recorded and maintained in the online asset catalog ("OPAC").

D. Graduation: Students shall not be eligible to participate in graduation exercises and/or school-related activities of the Richmond County School System if debts related to lost or damaged textbooks, library media materials, or equipment remain unpaid. Students who meet graduation requirements but are ineligible for graduation exercises and related activities due to indebtedness shall receive their official high school diploma by mail along with an official transcript; however, no request for the forwarding of transcripts to another source shall be honored: transcripts will only be issued to the student of record.

E. Student Records: Student records may not be held because of nonpayment of fees. However, schools may withhold diplomas or certificates until fees are paid. It is expected that all textbooks, library books, and/or materials/items issued to the student will be returned and/or all fees paid at the conclusion of the course(s) or at the time of the student's withdrawal/transfer to another course/school.

F. Exemption of Exams: Qualified students who wish to exempt any exams must clear all fines. All textbooks, library books, and/or materials assigned to the student must be turned in and/or all fees paid before permission to exempt is granted.

V. Refunds

If lost items are returned to the school in acceptable condition prior to the end of the fiscal year (i.e., June 30), the student shall be issued a refund for the full amount paid for the lost textbook(s), library books, media material(s), or equipment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT OF THE RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

To promote the best possible learning and social environment in the classrooms and schools of Richmond County, students will adhere to the terms of this policy. The intent of the cell phone policy is to limit access to and use of cell phones and personal electronic devices in order to minimize distractions, improve academic outcomes, and increase meaningful interactions and focused learning experiences. .

“Personal electronic device” means any portable electronic device capable of transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media. Such term includes but is not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, headphones, earbuds, smart glasses and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission.

“Access” means viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, listening to music, or any other function commonly associated with personal electronic devices.

Access to personal electronic devices and/or accessories is prohibited for all students at all times during the school day, which is defined as the bell-to-bell period for students receiving instruction on a school campus. The school day includes, but is not limited to, class periods, class changes, study halls, and any other structured or non-structured instructional activity that occurs during the normal school day. Students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices in the common areas, hallways, restrooms, locker rooms or any other areas during the school day. [Note: The school site administrator, or designee, may offer an incentive for high school students to utilize phones during lunch time, if certain criteria are met, as decided upon by the administration.]

The possession of personal electronic devices on school property is a privilege extended to students, and the School System is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal electronic devices or accessories, nor will the administration or school officials investigate missing or damaged personal electronic devices.

Students shall at all times follow the directives of school personnel regarding access to personal electronic devices during off-site events or activities, including all school sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events, and other instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds, including, but not limited to, participation in the dual enrollment program, work based learning programs, and apprenticeship programs.

If students choose to bring personal electronic devices to school, students are expected at all times to adhere to the following rules relative to personal electronic devices and/or accessories:

4. Regardless of whether student is accessing the School System’s Technology Network while operating a personal electronic device, all applicable provisions of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline must be followed.
5. Personal electronic devices, and/or accessories must be turned completely off (not on silent or vibrate mode) and put away out of view (as directed by school administration) during the school day, as defined above.
6. No text messaging, application-based communication, or social media use is allowed during the school day.

Emergency calls may be made in the main office. Parents may contact their children by calling the school’s main office. School office staff are able to relay emergency messages from parents to students. Miscellaneous messages cannot be delivered during the school day; students should discuss their appointments and other activities with parents/guardians outside of school instructional time.

A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan or medical plan explicitly mandates the use of a personal electronic device for medical or educational purposes shall be permitted to access the device as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the respective program or plan.

DISCIPLINE: Due to the potential disruption personal electronic devices may cause to the instructional environment and safety of the school, the disciplinary actions and consequences for violation of this rule are as follows:

First Offense: The first offense will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the student or parent at the end of the same school day. The incident will be recorded in the student’s discipline record within the student database (*e.g.*, Infinite Campus).

Second Offense: The second offense will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time designated by the school. The incident will be recorded in the student’s discipline record within the student database (*e.g.*, Infinite Campus).

Third Offense: The third offense will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time designated by the school. The student will receive one day of in-school suspension (ISS). The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Fourth Offense: The fourth offense and thereafter will result in the personal electronic device being confiscated for ten (10) school days, and the parent must schedule a conference with an administrator to retrieve the personal electronic device. The student will receive three days of in-school suspension (ISS). The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Further incidents may result in the student losing the privilege of bringing personal electronic devices on campus, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Noncompliance:

All administrators, teachers and/or staff members are authorized to confiscate personal electronic devices and/or accessories any time a student is in violation of the Personal Electronic Device policy. A student's refusal to surrender his/her personal electronic device(s) to school personnel will be considered noncompliance and insubordination, resulting in two (2) days of out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Note: These progressive discipline steps in no way diminish the discretion of the school administrator, who has the right to issue more severe discipline depending upon the facts and circumstances.

Furthermore, nothing in this Policy shall be construed to infringe on any right provided to students with Individualized Education Programs pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The following provides a graphic organizer to show the times and locations that electronic communications devices can be used during the school day.

Area of Device Use	Appropriate Use?
Before/After School	YES
In Classroom	NO
Class Change / Hallway During School Day	NO
Restrooms / Locker Room During School Day	NO
Cafeteria During Lunch	NO (However, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MAY , at times, utilize personal electronic devices during lunch, but ONLY with Principal's discretion and permission.)

By signing below, the Student and the Student's Parent/Guardian acknowledge that they have read and understand the policy regarding cell phones and personal electronic devices.

I hereby acknowledge complete understanding of the terms of this policy and agree to abide by the requirements of the Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy.

Student Name (Print First and Last Name): _____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Homeroom: _____

Student Signature Date

Parent Signature Date

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that the Richmond County School System (School System), with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of a student's personally identifiable information. However, the School System may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless a parent has advised the School System to the contrary. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School System to include information from a student's education records in certain school publications, **including, but not limited to, the following:**

- A playbill, showing a student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity rosters showing weight and height of athletes.

Directory information, which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, to provide military recruiters, upon request, names, addresses and telephone listings unless parents have advised the LEA that their student's information should not be disclosed without prior written consent. **20 U.S.C. § 7908; 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).**

If you do **not** want the Richmond County School System to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School System in writing within **twenty (20) days** of the first day of school. The Richmond County School System has designated the following information as directory information:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Student's name | • Participation in official activities |
| • Address | • Weight and height of athletes |
| • Telephone listing | • Degrees, honors and awards received |
| • Electronic mail address | • Most recent educational institution |
| • Photograph | • Student ID number, user ID, or other |
| • Date and place of birth | personal identifier, but only if the |
| • Dates of attendance | identifier alone cannot be used to gain |
| • Grade level | access to education records |

**RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
PHOTO AND VIDEO RELEASE FORM
FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL USE
OPT OUT FORM**

NOTE: IF YOU CHOOSE FOR YOUR STUDENT NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROMOTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM YOU MUST SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AS SET FORTH HEREIN.

From time to time the Richmond County Board of Education allows news and publications entities as well as itself to take, use and/or produce photographs, videos, movies, recordings, likenesses and/or the voice of students for the internal and external promotional and informational activities of the Richmond County Schools. Further, student work and/or photographs are published on the Richmond County School System Internet website, RCBOE publications and on television, radio and media outlets (including billboards and outdoor advertisement).

To “opt out” means a parent or guardian **CHOOSSES NOT** to permit the Richmond County School System to publish photographs, videos, movies, recordings, likenesses and/or the voice of his/her child. If you wish to opt out, you must sign this form below and return it to the school administration within twenty (20) days of the first day of school.

By not signing and returning this form to the school administration, you are giving the Richmond County School System your permission to make and share photographs and recordings of your child as contained herein and you understand that you have waived any and all present or future compensation rights for the use of the above stated materials.

School Name: _____

Student’s Name : _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Address: _____

Please Note: At registration and/or enrollment, parents and guardians will be provided with appropriate notice and information regarding the ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***. FERPA is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children’s education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records. When a student turns 18 years old, or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student (“eligible student”). The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g) and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

GEORGIA “SAFE SCHOOLS ACT” NOTIFICATION

During the 2023 Legislative Session, the Georgia Legislature passed the “Safe Schools Act” which requires the following relating to school safety plans and drills:

Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb the growing incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia’s children, teachers, and other school personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. School safety plans of public schools shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, community leaders, other school employees and school district employees, and local law enforcement, juvenile court, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. As part of such plans, public schools shall provide for the coordination with local law enforcement agencies and the local juvenile court system.

School safety plans shall include, at a minimum, the following strategy areas: (1) Training school administrators, teachers, and support staff, including, but not limited to, school resource officers, security officers, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers, on school violence prevention, school security, school threat assessment, mental health awareness, and school emergency planning best practices; (2) Evaluating and refining school security measures; (3) Updating and exercising school emergency preparedness plans; (4) Strengthening partnerships with public safety officials; and (5) Creating enhanced crisis communications plans and social media strategies.

Such plans shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated annually. Such plans of public schools shall be submitted to the local emergency management agency, the local law enforcement agency, and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency for approval. Every public school shall conduct drills with students, school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel on the execution of school safety plans in such form and at intervals based upon guidance from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.

By October 1 of each school year, every public school shall conduct an intruder alert drill for students, school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel based upon guidance from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. Each local school system or public school governing body shall promptly report to the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency the completion of such drills.

All students shall participate in intruder alert drills provided for in this paragraph. As used in this paragraph, the term ‘intruder alert drill’ means a set of procedures designed to familiarize the occupants of a building with ways to protect themselves against potential threats posed by an intruder who possesses or is suspected of possessing a weapon, as defined in Code Section 20-2-742. O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-1185(a)(1)-(5); (e)(1)-(2), in pertinent part, emphasis added.

WATER SAFETY EDUCATION INFORMATION

[EDNA MAE MCGOVERN ACT]

During the 2023 Legislative Session, the Georgia Legislature passed the “Edna Mae McGovern Act” [O.C.G.A. §20-2-779.3] which requires the following relating to water safety education information:

“At the beginning of each school year, each public school or local school system shall provide the parents and guardians of each child enrolled in such school or school system with information on the important role water safety education courses and swimming lessons play in saving lives. Such information shall be provided in electronic or hard copy format. Such information shall include options, if available within the vicinity of the public school or local school system, for age appropriate water safety education courses and swimming lessons that can result in a certificate indicating successful completion, including courses and lessons offered for free or at a reduced price; provided however that such information shall be provided directly to students who are 18 years of age or older.”

“Water safety education” is defined as “education intended to promote safety in, on, and around bodies of water and reduce the risk of injury or drowning.”

According to this law, school systems are not required to (1) provide water safety education courses or swimming lessons to students; or (2) excuse students from all or part of any school day to attend water safety education courses or swimming lessons.

In order to comply with the law, the following are several resources for information regarding water safety education. This list is not exhaustive but merely includes options that may be available within the vicinity. The Richmond County School System does not endorse any particular water safety course or organization but offers the following as resources through which parents and guardians may conduct their own research and learn more about water safety education.

Family YMCA of Greater Augusta
Safety Around Water (S.A.W. Program)
<https://thefamilyy.org/saw-classes>
706.922.9622
Various Locations Around the C.S.R.A.

The Salvation Army Kroc Center of Augusta
Aquatics and Learn to Swim Programs
<https://augustakroc.org/krocaugusta/aquatics>
1833 Broad Street, Augusta, GA 30904
706.364.5762

The American Red Cross
Swimming and Water Safety Training
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety.html>
1322 Ellis Street, Augusta, GA 30901
706.724.8481 or 1-800-RED-CROSS

Dolphin Academy Swim School
<https://iswimdolphin.com/>
706.922.4530

Child Find Notification

Richmond County School System Child Find Procedures

One in ten of Georgia's children have a sensory, emotional, physical, intellectual, or language disability that may inhibit learning. Many of these disabilities are so subtle that they go unnoticed. As a result, children may have trouble in school, at home, and with other children. The earlier these disabilities are discovered and identified, the more effectively they can be managed, giving the child every chance to be successful in life.

The Richmond County School System has a mission, mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to locate, identify, and evaluate each child from 3 through 21 years of age with a suspected disability, and to provide appropriate educational services to these children. This mandate applies to all children who reside in Richmond County, Georgia, whether children are currently attending public school, private school, home school or are incarcerated, homeless, migrant, etc. We need your assistance to find these children so they can receive the help they need to enjoy a more successful life experience.

Many children are born with or acquire physical and/or mental conditions which handicap their normal growth and development. Fortunately, many of these conditions can be helped or completely corrected if parents and others recognize the problem early and seek help. You can prevent an unnecessary life-long handicap by recognizing and dealing with a child's problem as early as possible. Anyone can help us identify children with special needs, including parents, foster parents, grandparents, teachers, doctors, nurses, counselors, social workers, day care providers, and community members. If you know of a child in Richmond County from birth through age 21 who has special needs, please let us know so we can get them the help they need to enjoy a brighter future. Contact Richmond County School System's Department of Student Services for students ages 6-21 (706-826-1131) or the Richmond County School System's Department of Special Education and Support Services for children ages 3-5 (706-826-1132).

Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. BCW is established by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which guarantees all eligible children, regardless of their disability, access to services that will enhance their development. This program serves children from birth to age 3. For more information, visit the following site: <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>.

For more information and assistance about free educational services that are available for children with disabilities, simply call the toll-free number for CHILD FIND, 800-282-7552 (V/TDD) or <http://www.childfindidea.org/>. **Refer to State Board Rule Child Find 160-4-7-.03.*

Overview of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Congress prohibited discrimination against persons with disabilities in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, in a segment most often referred to simply as “Section 504.” This is a broadly worded prohibition that covers both children and adults. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a federal civil rights law and prohibits discrimination by programs that receive any federal financial assistance, such as school systems. The principles enumerated in Section 504 were later expanded and served as the basis for the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Included in the U.S. Department of Education regulations for Section 504 is the requirement that students with disabilities be provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE). These regulations require identification, evaluation, provision of appropriate services and procedural safeguards in every public school system in the United States.

For more information regarding student and parent rights under Section 504, please refer to the following documents:

- ***Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504***
- ***Section 504 Procedural Safeguards***

Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that students with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to students without disabilities.

Child Find Notice

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the School System has a duty to identify, refer, evaluate and, if eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to disabled students. For additional information about the rights of parents of eligible children, or for answers to any questions you might have about identification, evaluation and placement into Section 504 programs, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact the Richmond County School System’s Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Dr. Tommy Welch, Deputy Superintendent of School Improvement and Strategic Initiatives
Richmond County School System
864 Broad Street
Augusta, Georgia 30901
(706) 826-1000
WelchTo@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on students without disabilities or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not

operated by or provided by the School System are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a student with disabilities. 34 CFR 104.33.

3. Your child has the right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for students without disabilities. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to refuse consent to the School System's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the School System will consider information about the student from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, adaptive behavior, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that decisions regarding eligibility and placement are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data and the placement options. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change in placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the School System regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the School System's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this Notice and a copy of the School System's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36. [SEE SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS.]
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (Local Board of Education members and other School System employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the School System's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36. [SEE SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS.]
16. You have the right, at any time, to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Section 504 Procedural Safeguards

1. **Overview:** Any student, parent or guardian may request an impartial hearing due to a School System's alleged actions or inactions regarding their child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the School System's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a parent or guardian's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the School System's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the parent/guardian orally requests an impartial hearing through the School System's Section 504 Coordinator. As needed, the School System's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the parent/guardian in completing the written Request for Hearing, but may not provide legal advice to the Parent/Guardian.

To request an impartial hearing or for more information regarding Section 504, please contact the School System's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Dr. Tommy Welch, Deputy Superintendent of School Improvement and Strategic Initiatives
Richmond County School System
864 Broad Street
Augusta, Georgia 30901
(706) 826-1000
WelchTo@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

2. **Hearing Request:** The Request for the Hearing must include the following:

- a. The name of the student.
- b. The address of the residence of the student.
- c. The name of the school the student is attending.
- d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
- e. The requested reasons for review.
- f. The proposed remedy sought by the parent/guardian.
- g. The name and contact information of the parent/guardian.

Within 10 business days from receiving the parent/guardian's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the parent/guardian of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

3. **Mediation:** The School System may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the parent/guardian in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary, and both the parent/guardian and School System must agree to participate. Either party may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the School System will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

4. **Hearing Procedures:**

- a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise or unless a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
- b. Upon a showing of good cause by either party, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
- c. The parent/guardian will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.

- d. The parent/guardian will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the parent/guardian is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
- e. The parent/guardian will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by law, the impartial hearing officer may require either party to defend its position/decision regarding the claims. One or more representatives of the School System, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the parent/guardian testimony and answer questions posed by the impartial review official.
- f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and to provide the names of witnesses each party expects to appear at the hearing.
- g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its credibility, reliability and probative value, according to applicable legal standards.
- h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written request for the hearing.
- j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
- k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the School System. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the School System.
- l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of the School System unless the parent/guardian can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim. A "preponderance of evidence," while determined by the impartial review official, has been described as just enough evidence to make it more likely than not that the fact that the parent/guardian seeks to prove is true.
- m. Failure of the parent/guardian to appear at a scheduled hearing (unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or unless just cause is shown) shall constitute a waiver of the parent/guardian's right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

5. **Decision:** The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorneys' fees.

6. **Review:** If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

What Parents and Staff Need to Know About Resolving Disputes and Requesting a Due Process Hearing

This document is designed to provide information regarding dispute resolution, including due process procedures for matters regarding students eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Richmond County School System. Copies of all information may be mailed to you upon request by calling 706-826-1132 and may also be accessed on the System website, www.rcboe.org.

What can a parent/guardian do to resolve a concern regarding his/her child's education (identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of free appropriate public education-FAPE)?

The following options are available to all parents and guardians. [NOTE: Any of the below options may be pursued at any time and are not required to be utilized in the following sequence.]

- Contact your child's teacher.
 - Contact the school principal. See list of "Our Schools" on RCSS website for contact information: <https://www.rcboe.org/>
- Contact one of the Special Education Coordinators:
 - Ms. Tamecha O'Bannon: obannta@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us or 706-826-1132
 - Dr. Karyn Warren: warreka@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us or 706-826-1132
 - Dr. Courtney Flournoy, flourco@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us or 706-826-1132
- Request a System Level Resolution Meeting (See form attached to this document.)
- Contact the Director of Special Education: Dr. Larina Thomas, thomala@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us or 706-826-1132.
- You may file a Formal Complaint with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE).
 - <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Formal-Complaints.aspx>
 - The complaint may be in the form of a written letter or the form found on the GADOE website for a Formal Complaint. You do not need an attorney to file a complaint. **You do not need permission or a signature from anyone in the School System to file your complaint, but you do need to provide a copy of your complaint to School System personnel.**
 - Your written complaint must include:
 - A statement that the System has violated a requirement of IDEA within the past year.
 - The facts on which this statement is based. (A description of the problem.)
 - A description of the solution or action you feel would solve the problem.
 - Indication of whether you would agree to participate in mediation.

- You may file for a Due Process Hearing with the Georgia Department of Education.
 - <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Due-Process-Hearing-Requests.aspx>
 - Within 15 days of notice that you have filed for a Due Process Hearing, GADOE will offer a resolution meeting and/or mediation scheduled by the System. If either party rejects the resolution or mediation meeting, or if an agreement cannot be reached within 30 days, the Due Process Hearing will proceed. Families usually want an attorney present, but an attorney is not required.
- You may request mediation from the Georgia Department of Education.
 - <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Mediation-Requests.aspx>
 - You do not need an attorney and there is no cost for mediation. Mediators are trained in conflict resolution and work with both parties for collaborative problem solving. Once you request mediation from GADOE, a mediator will be assigned to work with you and the System to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

How to Request a System Level Resolution Meeting:

1. Complete the attached form *System Resolution Meeting Request*.
2. Submit the form to RCSS Special Education Staff by one of the methods listed on the Request form.
3. System staff will contact you in a timely manner to arrange a meeting for involved parties to reach an agreeable resolution.
4. ***[Note: The System Resolution Meeting is one option for dispute resolution and is NOT required to be pursued prior to utilizing any of the other dispute resolution methods.]***

How to File for a Due Process Hearing:

1. Complete the Due Process Hearing Request found on the GADOE site:
<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Documents/Dispute%20Resolution/Due%20Process%20Hearing%20Request%20Form.pdf>
2. Send a copy to the Georgia Department of Education (instructions on the last page of the GADOE form) AND to the Richmond County School System by any of the following methods:
 - a. Fax to (706) 826-4649
 - b. Email to thomala@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
 - c. Hand deliver to the Special Education Department on the 3rd floor at 864 Broad Street, Augusta, GA 30901. ***(NOTE: The copy does NOT have to be hand delivered to the System and does NOT have to be signed by System personnel prior to submission to GADOE.)***

Please call 706-826-1132 if you need clarification regarding dispute resolution procedures and options.

The Richmond County School System will not engage in any retaliatory practices against any person (parent, student or staff) who participates in or initiates a due process complaint against the System. The School System will not interfere with an individual's right to request a due process hearing or pursue any other applicable dispute resolution options.



Request for System Resolution Meeting

Name of Person filing complaint _____
Home Phone # _____
Street Address _____
Fax number _____
City, State, Zip _____
Work Phone # _____
Email _____
Cell Phone # _____

Parent (if other than party filing complaint) _____
Home Phone # _____
Street Address _____
Fax number _____
City, State, Zip _____
Work Phone # _____
Email _____
Cell Phone # _____

Full Name of Child _____ Date of Birth _____
Current School _____

What Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) regulation(s) or Special Education Rule(s) do you feel have been violated?

Please describe the problem. Use additional pages if more space is needed.

Describe the solution or action you feel would resolve this problem.
Use additional pages if more space is needed.

When are you available to meet with System and/or school staff to share your concern and discuss mutually agreeable resolutions?

Best Days _____

Best times _____

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Date _____

Please submit this form to RCSS Special Education staff in any one of the following ways:

- a. Fax: (706) 826-4649
- b. Email options: Director, Dr. Larina Thomas, thomala@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
- c. Hand deliver to the Special Education Department on the 3rd floor at 864 Broad Street, Augusta, GA 30901.

Please call 706-826-1132 if you need clarification regarding dispute resolution procedures and options.

The Richmond County School System will not engage in any retaliatory practices against any person (parent, student or staff) who participates in or initiates a due process complaint against the System. The School System will not interfere with an individual's right to request a due process hearing or pursue any other applicable dispute resolution options.

Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities:

The discipline of students with disabilities is subject to applicable State and Federal laws, in addition to the Richmond County Board of Education Student Code of Conduct and Discipline ("Code of Conduct"). To the extent any conflict exists, State and/or Federal law will prevail. In accordance with Georgia law, the Code of Conduct shall apply to all students unless a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) specifically states otherwise. The System will ensure that the parents and the students with a disability receive notice of the rules and regulations applicable to students with disabilities with respect to discipline and suspension/expulsion upon the child's entry into a special education program, at the Annual IEP review, upon request by the parent or student and when a due process hearing has been initiated, in accordance with the discipline requirements of State and Federal law.

- If a student with a disability (as defined by Federal and State laws and regulations) is recommended for removal from school for more than ten (10) school days, either consecutively or cumulatively, in any one school year, or if expulsion is being recommended, a meeting of the student's IEP team must be conducted.
- The student's IEP team will consider whether the offense was a manifestation of the student's disability.
- If the IEP team determines the offense was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student must be returned to the placement from which the student was removed, except in cases involving weapons, serious bodily injury as defined by State law, or illegal drugs or controlled substances, unless the parent **and** the System agree to a change in placement.
- If the IEP team determines that the offense is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will be subject to the provisions of the System's Code of Conduct and will be disciplined accordingly. For disciplinary removals exceeding 10 school days, System personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures in the same manner and for the same duration. However, the following must be provided:
 - The student must continue to receive educational services that will enable continued progress and participation in the general education setting and to progress toward meeting IEP goals, although in another setting; and
 - The student should receive, as appropriate, a Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plan, as well as services and modifications that are designed to address the violation so that it does not recur.
- In instances where the student with a disability presents a danger to self or others, or is so disruptive to the educational environment as to interfere with the rights of other students, emergency placement and/or removal may be sought by the System, including home-based instruction.
- Students with disabilities and their parents and/or guardian should also refer to the *Special Education Rules Implementation Manual* available through the Georgia Department of Education and/or the local System Special Education Implementation Manual/Guide. <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Implementation-Manual.aspx>.
- **A student with a disability may not be placed in an alternative education program solely for educational purposes if the student does not meet the criteria for placement under the Code of Conduct.**
- **NOTE:** A student who is enrolled in any special education program may not be removed for disciplinary reasons past ten (10) days without a manifestation determination review meeting in order to review the conduct in question prior to being taken to a tribunal hearing.
- Following a manifestation determination, students with a disability who commit serious offenses which could otherwise result in removal, suspension or expulsion may be brought before the Tribunal for a determination as to whether the student is guilty of the offense charged.

Manifestation Determination:

Students with a disability who are accused of any misconduct warranting disciplinary consequences which may constitute a change in placement (e.g., long-term suspension greater than 10 days, consecutive or cumulative, or expulsion) shall be afforded a manifestation determination meeting. The purpose of the manifestation determination meeting is to determine whether or not the student's misconduct was directly and substantially related to his/her disability. The meeting is not designed to determine guilt or innocence.

The educational placement of a student with a disability may be changed for disciplinary reasons if a placement

committee determines the misbehavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, in which case regular disciplinary consequences (including long-term removal to a disciplinary setting or expulsion) may be applied through the student tribunal hearing process.

- If a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is not in place:
 - The IEP team must conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), unless the System had conducted one prior to the behavior; and
 - A Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) should be developed and implemented.
- If a BIP is already in place:
 - The IEP team must review the existing BIP; and
 - The IEP team must make changes needed in the BIP/IEP to address the behavior.

Section 504 Plans:

Students with disabilities served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act will be disciplined in accordance with Federal and State law. The Code of Conduct applies to all students, including Section 504 students. Students identified under Section 504 may be subject to a series of removals for disciplinary reasons, for different acts of misconduct. However, the disciplinary removals may not constitute a change of placement, and the disciplinary consequences are those applicable to students without disabilities. Once the student exceeds 10 days out of school suspension (OSS) for the year, the Section 504 committee should meet to conduct a manifestation determination.

A Section 504 student shall not be subject to disciplinary removal for more than ten (10) days, consecutive or cumulative, or expelled unless the System first determines that the misbehavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability.

When Parents Challenge the Disciplinary Decision and/or Manifestation Determination Review:

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement or the manifestation determination, or if the System believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or others, may appeal the decision by requesting a hearing. *34 C.F.R.300.532(a)*.

- *The Director must be notified immediately when a parent of a child with a disability disagrees with the placement or manifestation determination proposed by the System so that due process procedures may be followed.*
- Parents may file a request for an expedited due process hearing to challenge the disciplinary action and/or results of the Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) by filing a due process hearing, parents may challenge one or all of the following:
 - The MDR team's determination that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability;
 - The proposed Interim Alternate Educational Services (IAES) (including the type of services to be provided to the student, the amount of services to be provided, the setting in which the services are to be provided); or
 - Any procedural failings of the disciplinary process (e.g., parents may claim that a "change of placement" occurred and that the System failed to conduct an MDR).
- Parents must file a request for a due process hearing (or due process complaint) with Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and provide at the same time a copy of the request/complaint to the System. GaDOE is responsible for arranging for the appointment of a special education due process hearing officer, who must handle the case in an expedited manner.
- IDEA 2004 eliminated the "stay-put" rule in the context of disciplinary matters. When parents challenge the results of the MDR and/or placement decision, the student must remain in the IAES pending the decision of the special education due process hearing officer or until the expiration of the disciplinary removal, whichever occurs first. The only exception to this provision is when the parents and System agree that the student's placement during the hearing process may be something other than IAES. If the System and parents enter into such an agreement, the terms of the agreement should be reduced to writing and included in the student's IEP (such an agreement results in a placement decision and is thus required to be part of a student's IEP).

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY: Nothing prohibits the System from reporting a criminal act committed by a student with or without a disability to the appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement authorities from exercising their responsibilities concerning Federal and State law for crimes committed by a student with a disability.

Richmond County School System

Title IX Notice and Complaint Procedures

Non-Discrimination/ Sexual Harassment

The Richmond County School System (RCSS) is committed to maintaining an educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Accordingly, RCSS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its educational programs and activities and provides equitable access to all educational programs, activities, sports and facilities.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance. RCSS prohibits discrimination based on sex, including sex-based harassment.

Sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (1) *Quid Pro Quo Harassment*: When an employee of the School System conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
- (2) *Hostile Environment Harassment*: Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive, that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the School System's education programs or activities; or
- (3) *Specific Offenses*: "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a) (10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30).

Any student or employee who believes themselves to be discriminated against on the basis of sex should make a report to an administrator, the School Title IX Contact, or the System Title IX Coordinator. **To access the [Complaint Form, please visit the following link: RCSS Title IX Information.](#)**

Alleged violations will be investigated, and, when it is determined that a violation has occurred, prompt appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against persons found to be in violation. These actions include sanctions authorized by law, Board policy, and the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

RCSS also prohibits retaliatory behavior or action against persons who complain, testify, assist, or otherwise participate in the complaint process as established by Board policy and the administrative regulations.

RCSS has designated a System Title IX Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating efforts to comply with and carry out the School System's responsibilities under Title IX. Individuals with a question on Title IX or who would like to file a formal Title IX Complaint should contact:

System Title IX Coordinator
Dr. Titania Singh
864 Broad Street
Augusta, GA 30901
(706) 826-1000
singhti@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

Each RCSS school site has a designated Title IX Contact for handling complaints of sex-based discrimination, including sex-based harassment. Deputy Title IX Coordinators have been designated to handle employee complaints and discrimination complaints related to athletics. A complete listing of Title IX Coordinators is available on the RCSS website, [RCSS Title IX Information](#).

For additional information, please refer to the discriminatory complaint procedures relative to the following Richmond County School System Policies: **Policy GAAA (Equal Opportunity Employment)**, **Policy GAEB (Harassment)**, **Policy IDFA (Gender Equity in Sports)** or **JCDAG Bullying**, which are located in the School System policy manual that is available on the System website, www.rcboe.org.

Note: Nothing herein is designed to create rights where not otherwise provided by law. This policy or procedure is not intended to limit the discretionary authority of, or to create any liability for, or create a cause of action against, the Board of Education, or its officers, employees, volunteers or other designated individuals for any act or omission to act related to this policy or procedure. Georgia's Constitution provides that School System employees are immune from liability when they are performing discretionary functions and they act without malice or intent to cause injury.

School Clubs and Organizations

The following list represents clubs and organizations that may be offered in Richmond County schools by school levels. More information regarding these extracurricular opportunities, including the purpose or mission, school sponsor and planned or past activities, may be obtained from each school. Inclusion of a club on this list does not imply that it is available in all schools. By signing the Receipt Form included in the code of conduct, the parent or legal guardian gives permission for his or her child to participate in any or all of these organizations. Any parent or legal guardian, who wishes to decline permission, shall sign and return the appropriate form to the school principal. For all student initiated clubs or for any club or organization added during the school year, parent permission will be obtained by the faculty supervisor.

Elementary Schools

Sponsored Clubs and Organizations	Purpose/Mission
4-H Club	
ACE (Academic and Creative Enrichment)	Promote additional gifted program activities. It is an extension of the gifted program.
Afternoon Art	
Beta Club, Junior Beta Club	
Black History Team	
Boost	5 th Graders reading to and boosting reading interest with Kindergarten students.
Broadcast Team	4 th & 5 th graders are recommended by teachers on the basis of good character and willingness to learn new skills in technology. This is sponsored through the MediaCenter for morning broadcast and afternoon dismissal.
Chorus	
Computer Technology Club	
Dance Team	
Drama Club	The purpose of the drama club is to give students the opportunity to express themselves creatively in a supportive environment while increasing their self esteem. Students also develop their interpersonal skills as they work with other students to produce successful performances. Concepts from across the curriculum are often relevant to our play.
Drumline	
Elk's Hoop Shoot	
Flag Core	
Jump for Heart	
Math Club/Math Team	
Math and Science Club	
Media/Technology Club	
(NAC) Nutrition Advisory Council	
National Junior Beta Honor Society	
Nature Squad	
Oratorical	
Orchestra	
Peer Mediators	
Peer Mediation Team/Peer Patrol	
Positive Girls/Positive Women	
Safety Patrol	Open to 5 th grade students with good character, determined by conduct grade.
School Council	
School Nutrition Council	
Science Club	The purpose of the Science Club is to promote student interest and enthusiasm for Science, provide enrichment and advanced studies for science-minded students in a social context and to contribute to the culture of thinking throughout the entire school.
Show Choir	
Sign Language	
Spanish Club	
SOS (Saving Our Students)	Mentoring Program
Step Club/Steppers	
Student Council	

Teacher Cadet/Teachers of Tomorrow	The teacher cadet program is to produce leaders within our school community that are responsible and dependable, along with developing a possible interest in the teaching profession. The teacher cadet program is to introduce students to the working of a school and the process in which teachers create learning environments for their students. The students will develop leadership, organizational and reliability characteristics.
Technology Club	
Writing Club/Author's Club	
Youth Violence Prevention Club	The purpose is to engage in age-appropriate awareness activities regarding youth violence prevention, suicide prevention, and social inclusion. Activities should foster opportunities for student leadership development.

Middle Schools

Sponsored Club or Organization	Purpose/Mission
4-H Club	
ACE (Academic and Creative Enrichment)	Promote additional gifted program activities. It is an extension of the gifted program.
Art Club	
Beta Club, Junior Beta Club	
Buddy Pals Club	
Builders Club	
Chess Club	
Crochet	
Drama Club	
FCCLA (Family, Career & Community Leaders of America)	
FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)	
FCS (Consumer Science)	
Guitar Club	
History & Civics Club/ History Day Club	
Just Say No Club	
Leo Club	
Male Mentoring	
Math Club/Math Team/Math Bowl	To challenge and enrich through mathematics and problem solving.
Media Bowl/Media Club	
Model UN	To educate students about the current state of world affairs and to broaden their understanding of diplomacy, international relations and debate.
National Junior Honor Society	To recognize and encourage academic achievement among middle level students while developing other characteristics essential to citizens in democracy.
Newspaper Club	
Orchestra	
Peer Mediators	
Pep Club	
Principal's Book Club	
Reading Club	
Science Club/Science Team/Science Bowl	To further provide learning opportunities of motivated students in science with continued exploration of various science concepts.
Social Studies Club	
Spanish Club	To further understand Hispanic culture.
SpectrumPlayersMiddle School Drama Club	To provide performance opportunities in theater beyond the classroom.
Step Team	
Stock Market (Social Studies)	
Student Council	To promote an environment of unity and support through civic responsibility.
Student Government Association	
Technology Club	
Wrestling Club	
Yearbook Club (Staff)	
Youth Violence Prevention Club	The purpose is to engage in age-appropriate awareness activities regarding youth violence prevention, suicide prevention, and social inclusion. Activities should foster opportunities for student leadership development.

High Schools

Sponsored Club or Organization	Purpose/Mission
Academic Decathlon/Academic Team	Local and State competition, Students prepare to compete academically with other high schools. Teams are made up of 3 “A” students, 3 “B” students and 3 “C” students.
ACE (Academic and Creative Enrichment)	Promote additional gifted program activities. It is an extension of the gifted program.
Art, Art Club, Art Honor Society	Promote art activities in the school and community
Band	
Beta Club	School and community service. Seeks to stimulate effort, reward achievement and to encourage and assist its members in continuing their education after high school. To be eligible for membership, students must have an overall average of 90% in full credit subjects taken.
Blue and Gold	Instill order and discipline within the corps of cadets
Book Club	
Chess Club	To develop effective methods for learning and mastering strategic and tactical themes, positions and ideals in chess.
Child Care	
Chorus	Promotes school spirit by singing at concerts in the school, in other schools, and in the community.
CIA (Communication in Action)	Concerned with how technology makes life easier. Open to juniors and seniors.
Creative Writing Club	Provide student an opportunity to write creatively and publish their work.
Culinary Arts Club	Participate in occupational food service training programs for their ability to work individually and as a member of a team to produce a quality meal using industrial culinary arts techniques and equipment.
Dance Team	
Door Engineers	
Drama Club	Provide students an opportunity to experience all facets of a theatrical production. Our mission is to help students develop strong work ethics, learn to work in all areas of theatre, with all kinds of people, while learning to prioritize their time, maintain their grades, problem solve and persevere until the job is completed in an excellent manner.
Drill Team	Represents the school in community parades, military parades and competes interscholastically with other drill teams throughout the Southeast. Limited to JROTC members.
Engineer & Math Club	Open to all grade levels. Will go over math sections for Graduation Exit Exam, which you need to get a diploma. Bring \$5 dues. To each meeting, bring a notebook to copy down examples.
Executive Council	Promotes many worthwhile activities for the student body, coordinates homecoming activities and serves as an aide to the faculty of the school. Council officers are elected during the spring.
FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)	Promote leadership and job skills and training through competitions and workshops. Its purpose is to develop competent and aggressive business leadership. Georgia FBLA is a nonprofit student organization committed to preparing today’s students for success in business leadership. With over 50 years of experience, Georgia FBLA is the premiere organization for student leaders. Georgia FBLA is an affiliate of Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda, Inc. The largest student business organization in the world with more than 250,000 members. Georgia is also the largest FBLA chapter in the nation with over 17, 500 members.
FCCLA (Family Career Community Leaders of America) & Conference	Promote family and consumer growth. Promotes a growing appreciation of the joys and satisfactions of homemaking; encourages democracy in the home and community life; works for good home and community life; and furthers interest in home economics. Any student who has had homemaking in either middle school or senior high school is eligible.

High School Club/Organizations – continued

FFA (Future Farmers of America)	FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.
Foreign Language Club	
Four-H Club	
French Club	To encourage and promote interest in the language and culture of France and other French speaking countries. Also to practice the French language and to familiarize its members with the customs, the literature, the arts and the French people and finally to provide fellowship for its members.
Freshman Council	It is composed of freshmen who are interested in promoting school spirit.
Future Georgia Educators	Promotes an interest in the field of teaching.
Generation X-treme	A Bible Club – gathers students of different backgrounds, cultures and races into a scholastic setting to be enlightened about strong life values through testimony, fellowship prayer and study of the Bible.
Happy Notes	
HOSA (Health Occupations of America)	HOSA is the only student organization that is 100% health care and is committed to building a pipeline of future health care professionals. Being a member of HOSA is an unforgettable experience and has an impact on the lives of the member and the advisors.
History Club	
Home Improvement	
Honor Guard	Ushers at football games and basketball games; represents the school at many civic functions with color guard; and ushers at events in the community.
Interact Club	Service organization associated/affiliated with Augusta West Rotary Club. A community service club which participates in activities and events that benefit the CSRA.
Japanese Club	
JROTC Officer's Club	
Junior Council	Plan and decorate for the Prom. Composed of juniors who are interested in promoting school spirit.
JETS (Junior Engineering Technical Society)	JETS is an organization established to increase awareness of and interest in engineering and technology based careers. Focused primarily on secondary schools, JETS seeks to increase college enrollment in these careers, with an emphasis on diversity to include women and minority students.
Key Club	Community Service
Latin Club	To enhance the study of the classical world. To enhance the learning of Latin and the Roman legacy.
Literary Club	To foster appreciation for literature, writing and academic development through discourse and participation in writing workshops and literary activities. The club also allows opportunities to further appreciate language through musical performances involving songwriting and other creative literary endeavors.
Literary Team	To enjoy literary competition against other high schools.
Math Olympiad	
Math Club, Math Team	Promote higher-level thinking skills in mathematics. To motivate and encourage excellence in mathematics through competition and fun.
Media Arts and Animation	Promote computer generated animation.
Medical Careers Club	
Mock Trial	
Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Society)	
National Art Honor Society	To inspire and recognize those students who have shown an outstanding ability in art. Also to aid members in working toward the attainment of their highest potential in art areas and to bring art education to the attention of the school and community.
National Honor Society	The mission of the National Honor Society is to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership and to develop character in the students.

High School Club/Organizations – continued

Nurses Club	Seeks to promote and stimulate the education and training of young people interested in health careers.
Orchestra	
Peer Mediator	
Pep Club	Promote school spirit among the student body.
Performing Arts Club	Open to students who are interested in acting. It offers students an excellent opportunity to gain stage presence, poise and self confidence.
Rifle Team	Represents ARC in all rifle marksmanship competitions and is affiliated with the National Rifle Association. It is not limited to JROTC members.
RVI (Related Vocational Instruction)	
Saber Club	Provides entertainment and recreation for the members of the club, betterment of the Military Department. Membership is limited to cadet officers in JROTC.
SADD Club (Students Against Drunk Drivers)	Promote awareness of the dangers associated with alcohol and drugs.
Safety Patrol	
School Newspaper	
School Postal Workers	
Science Club	Benefits its members by increasing their scientific knowledge, by learning to perfect their skills in science and by learning more about current scientific developments.
Science Olympiad	Promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Builds a competitive spirit through applying science in technology, engineering and lab events.
Senior Council	Celebration of the achievements of the Senior Class. Composed of seniors who are interested in promoting school spirit. Purpose of the Council is to involve 12 th graders in positive activities that promote better attendance at school and better attendance as well as school spirit.
Social Studies Club	
Sophomore Council	Composed of sophomores who are interested in promoting school spirit.
Spanish Club	To further understand Hispanic culture.
Student Council	Promote school spirit and citizenship
Student Leadership	
TSA (Technical Student Association) or (Technology Student Association)	Open to students in the Technology and Construction Classes. Promotes technological literacy, leadership, and problem solving, resulting in personal growth and opportunity.
Thespian Troupe	Our purpose is to be a part of the International Thespian Honor Society that recognizes those students who have excelled in the Theatre Arts and have demonstrated outstanding talents, high work ethics and have shown a desire to become citizens making a positive contribution to our society. Excellence becomes the standard in all endeavors.
TRI-M Music Honor Society	To recognize and encourage musical achievement among students while developing responsible young adults.
Ultima Thule	A club where students, teachers amateurs and professional are transformed together into adventurers, entrepreneurs, artisans, entertainers, etc.
USITT (United States Institute of Theatre Technology)	To train and involve with Theatre Technology at local, regional and national levels.
Video Team Club	The mission of the Video Team Club is to provide school news, sports news, community announcements and talent exhibitions to the school daily via the televised morning show.
VOCA (Vocational Opportunity Club of America)	Vocational Opportunities Club of America is designed for students enrolled in CVAE classes and at least one vocational class.
“Y” Club (One Light)	The purpose of One Light “Y” Club is to create, maintain and extend throughout the home and community high standards of Christian character. This club is affiliated with the State YMCA of Georgia, whose mission is to provide programs and opportunities for youth that promote self-esteem, leadership skills and moral and civic responsibilities.
Yearbook	The mission of the yearbook staff is to provide a resource to students, faculty and alumni which captures the most outstanding and memorable moments of the year and records the history of the school. Participation in the yearbook helps to prepare students for future careers in journalism, publishing and business fields and enhances their skills in writing and photography.
Youth Violence Prevention Club	The purpose is to engage in age-appropriate awareness activities regarding youth violence prevention, suicide prevention, and social inclusion. Activities should foster opportunities for student leadership development.

**Richmond County Board of Education
Clubs and Organizations
2026-2027**

I **do not** give my permission for my child, _____ ,
(Please Print Child's Name)

who attends _____ ,
(School Name)

to participate in any school sponsored club or organization listed in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline Handbook.

OR

I **specifically do not** give permission for my child to participate in

(Specify Club)

Parent/Legal Guardian Name: _____
(Please Print)

Signature or Parent or Legal Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Note: This form is for OPT OUT purposes only and is not required for your child to participate in a club or organization listed in this handbook.

(6/09)

***SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM
SAMPLE LETTER***

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

You child, _____, has been recommended for and has volunteered to perform ***SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE*** to fulfill discipline requirements. Please see the attached ***Rules for School Site Community Service Work*** and ***School Site Community Service Program Student Agreement and Parent/Guardian Agreement***. Below is the location where you child needs to be dropped off and the time s/he will need to arrive at the site. I have also listed the time when your child will be finished with the service work and you will need to pick up your child.

Your child will need to wear appropriate clothing and shoes for the service that s/he will be performing. In most cases, neat, clean shorts or pants and closed-toe shoes will be acceptable. The student will need to bring a lunch if scheduled to work through the lunch hour. Also, if your child has a cell phone, please remind him/her to turn it off during the time s/he is working and to follow the directives of the Site Supervisor, as required in Rule 16 in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

If you have any questions about the discipline charges, please contact the school principal or designee, at _____. If you have any questions about the ***SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM***, you may reach me at _____.

Thank you for your support of the students at [NAME OF SCHOOL]. We are working together to ensure success for the next generation.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

***SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM
STUDENT AGREEMENT***

I understand that as a participant in the _____ **SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**, I am expected to attend all scheduled educational sessions and community service activities, and I agree to cooperate with all applicable staff.

I further understand that my participation in this program is voluntary and will be under the supervision of the principal or the designee of the principal. I am required to adhere to the conditions of my suspension, as well as all rules and regulations of the **SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**, or I will be removed from this program and my original days of suspension will be enforced.

Signed this _____ day of _____, _____.

SCHOOL _____

STUDENT _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT

I agree to support my son/daughter in all activities related to the **SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**. I have received an explanation of the program's purpose and approve of the activities in which my son/daughter will be participating. I agree to cooperate with all persons providing my son/daughter with services that are related to this **SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**.

I release, covenant not to institute any suit or claim, waive and further agree to indemnify, hold harmless or reimburse the Board of Education, the individual members, agents, employees and representatives thereof, as well as supervisors, from and against, any claim which I, any other parent or guardian, my child, or any other person, firm or corporation may have or claim to have, known or unknown, directly or indirectly, for any losses, damages or injuries arising out of, during, or in connection with my child's participation in the community service activities or the rendering of emergency medical procedures or treatment, if any.

Signed this _____ day of _____, _____.

SCHOOL _____

PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN _____

RULES FOR SCHOOL SITE COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK

The following rules will be strictly enforced:

1. Arrive on time at the assigned location for all scheduled dates and leave work site on time at the conclusion of the work day from the assigned location.
2. Dress appropriately for work and wear appropriate shoes (no open toe shoes).
3. Safe work habits are very important and will be expected at all times.
4. Perform all tasks assigned by the supervisor.
5. Work must meet the standards of the supervisor or credit for the full day will not be received.
6. Remain within the sight of the supervisor at all times, unless given permission to be elsewhere.
7. No visiting or socializing while participating in the program.
8. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline will be followed during all activities.
9. Absolutely no shouting, whistling or horseplay while working.
10. Fellow members and supervisor(s) will be respected; therefore, harassment of any kind and profanity are prohibited.

NOTE: Failure to comply with all the above rules while under the ***SCHOOL SITE BASED COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM*** will result in the enforcement of original assigned suspension and parent contact will be made.

I have read and understand the above rules and agree to abide by them.

Signed this _____ day of _____, _____.

SCHOOL _____

STUDENT _____



864 Broad Street – 4th
Floor Augusta, Georgia
30901-1215
(706) 826-1124 – Fax: (706) 826-4613

MS. SHAWNDA STOVALL
President

DR. MALINDA B. COBB
Superintendent of Schools

MR. EDWARD D. LOWERY
Vice-President

Dear Parents,

The Georgia Department of Education's Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Program is designed to provide accurate health information in a structured manner to all students. Mandated by Georgia law, health and physical education programs must include topics such as family living, peer pressure, abstinence, nutrition, the dangers of alcohol and illegal drug use, personal safety, mental health, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

Comprehensive health education is not new to the Richmond County instructional program and has been offered for a number of years. Topics such as decision-making, positive self-concept, substance abuse prevention, stranger danger, peer pressure, communication and sex education emphasizing abstinence have long been components of the curriculum. A recent state mandate also requires that all students in grades kindergarten through 9 have annual age-appropriate education on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention. This education will be provided through health education and/or the school counseling curriculum.

The state law regarding sex education requires local Boards of Education to appoint a committee of citizens (Sex Education Review Committee) to review the existing sex education program and to make recommendations to the Board of Education. Our committee is comprised of parents, students, educators, and community leaders, who expressed an interest in sex education and were invited to participate. The law allows parents to preview all sex education curriculum materials, both print and non-print, before the materials are used for instructing students.

If you do not want your child to participate in the sex education and AIDS prevention components of the health education program, you have the option of teaching your child at home. If you choose to do so, you may either opt out using the attached sample opt-out form, which will be sent to all parents at a later date, or you may write a letter to your child's principal expressing a desire to teach this curriculum at home. If you do choose to opt out, please call the school for a conference to review what you will be responsible for teaching; your child will be evaluated on this information. If the school office does not receive the opt-out form or a letter from you as described above, your child will participate with all students in this program.

Information regarding the unit to be studied in the grade level in which your child is enrolled is available at your child's school. Please contact your child's school for further information or if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Malinda B. Cobb,
Superintendent of Schools

SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTION – STUDENT EXEMPTION



Dear Parents:

The GA DOE regulations require that each local board of education develop and implement a comprehensive health and physical education program that includes sex education and AIDS prevention education. Regulations allow parents/guardians to exercise the option of excluding their child from sex education and AIDS prevention instructional programs.

The state law regarding sex education requires local Boards of Education to appoint a committee of citizens (Sex Education Review Committee) to review the existing sex education program and to make recommendations to the Board of Education. Our committee is comprised of parents, students, educators, and community leaders, who expressed an interest in sex education and were invited to participate. The law allows parents to preview all sex education curriculum materials, both print and non-print, before the materials are used for instructing students. The committee approved of the implementation of the ***Choosing the Best (CTB)*** curricula with middle and high school students.

The ***Choosing the Best*** curricula is an abstinence-centered, sexual risk avoidance and relationship education program. It is research-based, medically accurate, and universally applicable and inclusive. It supports the **CDC** stance that the **most reliable way to avoid the risk** of STD is to be abstinent until you enter into a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner. This type of relationship is most commonly referred to as marriage and may be referenced as such.

The program focuses on the reasons and methods to avoid at-risk behaviors. It includes lessons on making decisions, understanding healthy relationships, identifying risks, understanding consequences, knowing facts and statistics regarding STD's, and dealing with peer pressure.

The Richmond County School District has chosen to participate in a Federal Title V grant opportunity that maximizes the resources available with the ***Choosing the Best*** curricula. Participation in this grant requires students to complete a Pre- and a Post- Survey that does include questions regarding previous decisions as well as future intent in regards to at-risk sexual behaviors. These results do not include student names but are used to determine if the implementation of the program is linked to improved student (collective) choices (and hopefully outcomes). Data for the results of the surveys are aggregated and are not specific to any individual participant.

Parents may preview all materials, including the survey. See a list of standards on the following page. For more information on *Choosing The Best* go to www.choosingthebest.com or contact the Health and PE Program Specialist at 706-826-1102 ext. 5189.

No action is required at this time if you permit your child to participate. Please look for your child to bring home his/her student workbook at the completion of the unit.

ONLY complete this form if your child will **NOT** be allowed to participate. Return to your child's Health/PE teacher.

☐

NO (my child may **not** participate in the *Choosing the Best*, sex education instructional unit of study)

STUDENT'S NAME (print)

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE



864 Broad Street – 4th Floor
Augusta, Georgia 30901-1215
(706) 826-1124 – Fax: (706) 826-4613

MS. SHAWNDA STOVALL
Board President

DR. MALINDA B. COBB
Superintendent of Schools

MR. EDWARD D. LOWERY
Board Vice-President

Complaint Procedures Prohibiting Fraud, Waste, Mismanagement, Corruption or Misuse of Funds Purpose

In compliance with White House Executive Order 12731, the Richmond County School System provides all employees, clients, vendors, and individuals with confidential channels to report suspicious activities. The Richmond County School System shall not tolerate fraud, waste, abuse or corruption of any kind and has an established system for the reporting and investigating of suspicious activities.

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any employee, individual, organization or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Richmond County Board of Education if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a violation of a Federal or State statute or regulation has occurred that applies to a program operated by the School System and supported by Federal or State funds including: **Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part, D; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title VI, Part B; the McKinney-Vento Act; School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g) (SIG); and IDEA.** The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered to be systemic or ongoing.

Definitions

“Fraud” means the intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals, or an organization or organizations, either internal or external to Richmond County Schools that could result in a tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others, or the locality or could cause detriment to others or the locality. Fraud includes a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive.

“Waste” means the intentional or unintentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use or squandering of resources owned or operated by the locality to the detriment or potential detriment of the locality. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

“Abuse” means the excessive or improper use of something, or the employment of something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use; the intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources owned or operated by the locality: or extravagant or excessive use so as to abuse one’s position or authority.

“**Corruption**” includes dishonest proceedings, bribery, debasement, alteration, or perversion of integrity. Corruption threatens equal access, quantity and quality of education.

Examples of Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption (Not all-inclusive)

- Personal use of district-owned vehicles
- Long distance personal phone calls
- Personal use of district owned supplies or equipment
- Violations of system and/or state procurement policy
- Excessive or unnecessary purchases
- Falsification of official documents (timesheets, leave reports, travel vouchers, etc.)
- Contract fraud
- Serious abuse of time
- Inappropriate expenditures
- Embezzlement
- Theft or misuse of school funds or property
- Neglect of duty
- Bribery

Statement of Administrative Regulations:

- Any and all reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption, shall be investigated. The Richmond County School System shall not tolerate fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption of any kind, and any reported cases of suspected fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption will be thoroughly investigated to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery, and or criminal action should be taken.

Confidentiality

- All reports of suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption must be handled under the strictest confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be given information. Informants may remain anonymous but should be encouraged to cooperate with the investigators and should provide as much detail and evidence of alleged fraudulent act as possible.

B. Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

A Complaint may be filed regarding any alleged incident of fraud, waste, mismanagement and misuse of funds designated for any program operated by the School System, including, but not limited to, all programs operated or supported by Federal or State funds: **Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part, D; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title VI, Part B; the McKinney-Vento Act; School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g) (SIG); and IDEA.**

C. Filing a Complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Richmond County School System Superintendent or his/her designee.

The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that the LEA has violated a requirement of a Federal or State statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal or State statute or regulation);
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position; and
6. The name, address and contact information of the complainant.
7. The formal complaint shall be sent to:

**Richmond County School System
Superintendent of Schools
864 Broad Street
Augusta, GA 30901-1215**

D. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent or his/ her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the Superintendent's office received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;
3. A statement of the ways in which the Superintendent's office may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.

If the Superintendent has sufficient information from which to make a determination, he/she shall enter a Letter of Findings with thirty (30) days from receipt of the complaint. If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the Superintendent shall have (60) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings. If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion will be included. Either the 30-day or the 60- day timelines outlined above may be extended, in the sole discretion of the Superintendent or his designee, if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant.

E. Right of Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Superintendent's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

COMPLAINT FORM

To Report Fraud, Waste, Mismanagement, Corruption or Misuse of State or Federal Funds for Programs Operated by the School System

ALLEGATION

Please provide as much information as possible. Detailed, complete and accurate information will improve the Superintendent's ability to respond to your allegation. If you do not know the answer to a question, you can leave the space blank.

STATEMENT REGARDING ALLEGED VIOLATION

Please provide a statement regarding the alleged violation of a requirement of a federal or state statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program. Please provide details of the alleged fraud, waste, mismanagement, corruption or misuse. Examples of facts and circumstances may include items such as: (1) a description of the misconduct; (2) how you know about the allegation; (3) how and when the misconduct was discovered; (4) where the misconduct occurred; (5) the amount of money involved; (6) how long the alleged misconduct occurred; (8) attempts by the alleged violator(s) to hide the misconduct; and (9) any other information you believe may be relevant.

DATE ON WHICH VIOLATION OCCURRED

When did the misconduct occur? If the misconduct occurred over time or is currently ongoing, enter the actual or approximate start date.

**ADDITIONAL FACTS ON WHICH THE STATEMENT IS BASED
AND THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE ALLEGED FRAUD,
WASTE, MISMANAGEMENT, CORRUPTION OR MISUSE OF FUNDS**

How do you know the complaint involves the misuse of or fraud regarding federal or state funds?

Federal or State Agency that awarded, distributed or administered the funds in question:

Description of Grant, Contract, Loan or Program: _____

Please list any other Government entities you have notified or plan to notify about this incident
(Federal, State and Local) _____

**CONTACT INFORMATION OF INDIVIDUALS
WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Company, organization, or other entity affiliation, if applicable): _____

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Company, organization, or other entity affiliation, if applicable): _____

(If additional individuals can provide information, please attach separate page.)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Please provide any additional information concerning this misconduct, such as (1) a list or description of any documents you or others may have that is relevant to the complaint; (2) any other information you believe may be relevant to the complaint.

CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE COMPLAINANT

Please provide your contact information.

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Tel: _____

Fax: _____

If employed by the Richmond County Board of Education, please provide Department/School, supervisor and job site location:

PLEASE SUBMIT FORM TO:

**Richmond County School System
Superintendent of Schools
864 Broad Street
Augusta, GA 30901-1215**

Richmond County School System Parent and Family Engagement Plan

Revised June 26, 2026

2026-2027

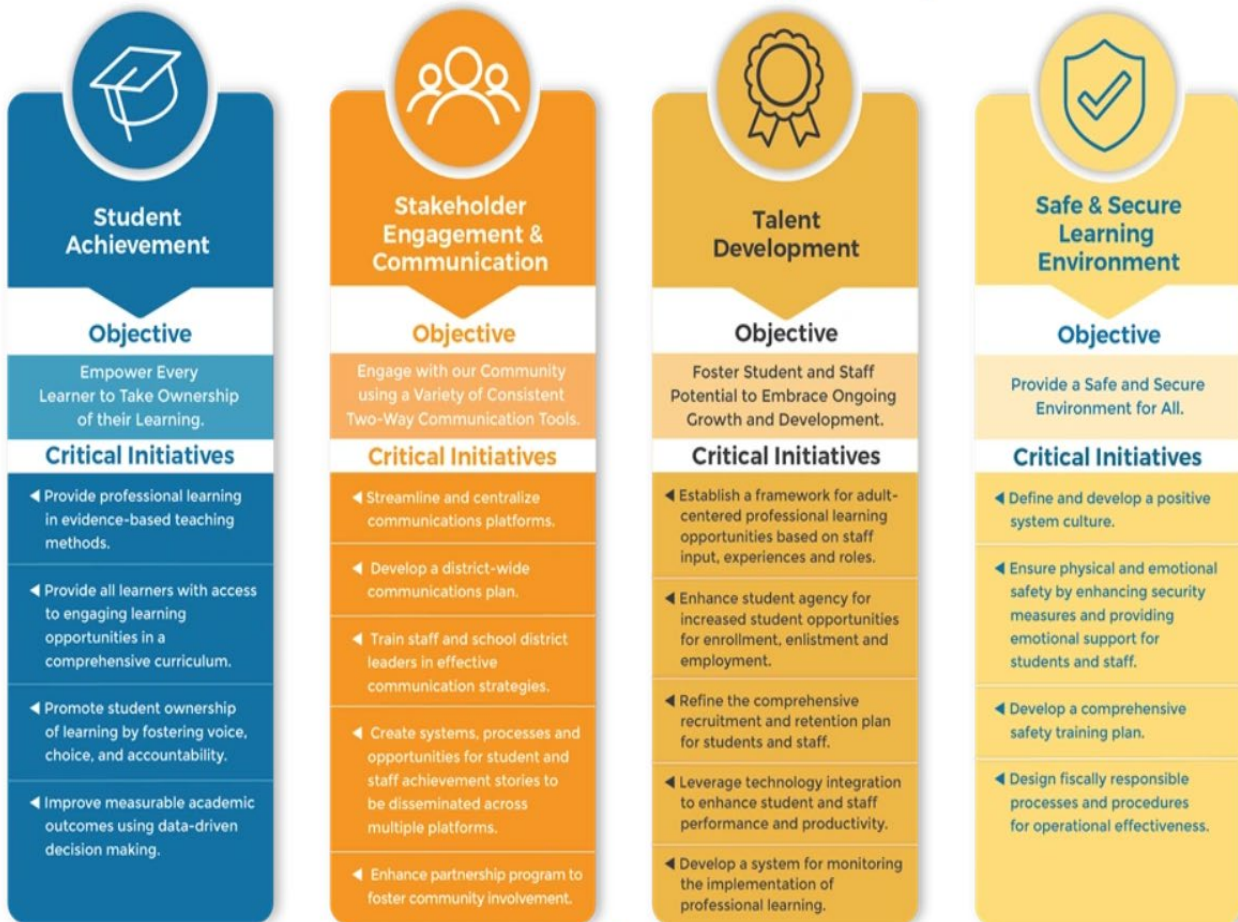
Mission Statement:

Empowering Every Learner Every Day

Vision Statement:

The Richmond County School System prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world

RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM 2025-2030 Strategy Map



Richmond County School System
Dr. Malinda Cobb, Superintendent
864 Broad Street
Augusta, Ga. 30901
706-826-1000

What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement means the participation of parents and family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:



- (A) That parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- (B) That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education.
- (C) That parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- (D) The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA.

About the Parent and Family Engagement Plan

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Richmond County School System (RCSS) has developed this parent and family engagement plan that establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe RCSS's commitment to engage families in the education of their children and to build the capacity in its Title I schools to implement family engagement strategies and activities designed to achieve the district and student academic achievement goals.

When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and enjoy school more. Title I, Part A provides for substantive family engagement at every level of the program, such as in the development and implementation of the district and school plan, and in carrying out the district and school improvement provisions. Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains the primary Title I, Part A requirements for schools and school systems to involve parents and family members in their children's education. Consistent with Section 1116, the RCSS committed to coordinating and integrating parent and family engagement strategies under Title 1 Part A with other federal, state, and local laws and programs by:

- Committing to utilize each school's budget to provide self-help resources, parenting magazines, resources for the home (such as "Study Buddy," and summer bridge reading and math materials), and improvement guides to assist with each student's academic growth.
- Communicating effectively with parents utilizing parent workshops on various topics suggested by parents.
- Considering and addressing parents' needs by committing to obtain documented suggestions, ideas, and comments at each scheduled parent event.
- Building relationships with internal and external departments and organizations within the community. Internally we will commit to scheduling monthly brainstorming sessions with our Partnership Office to assist with engagement strategies. Externally, we will align with local community partners as they plan community events and be in attendance with resources to distribute.

Jointly Developed

Throughout second semester of the 2025-2026 school year, parents were given the opportunity to provide input to improve the RCSS Parent and Family Engagement Plan, the consolidated LEA Improvement Plan, and the school improvement/Title I School wide/ Title I Targeted Assistance Plan and the Continuous Support and Improvement and the Target Support and Improvement plans for the 2026-2027 school year.

Parents were invited to give feedback during school parent meetings across the district, District Parent and Community Stakeholder Input Meetings and by completing surveys via the website and various communication platforms. The information was gathered and included in the 2026-2027 RCSS Parent and Family Engagement Plan.

Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement plan will be incorporated into the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) which was submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the plan at any time on the school district website. All feedback received by June 26, 2026, will be included within the plan for the FY 27 school year.

The district parent and family engagement plan is posted on district and school websites, distributed during the annual Title I district and school meetings, and made available to parents in school parent centers or guidance offices in a format and language they can understand.





Strengthening Our Schools

RCSS will provide support and technical assistance to all its Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement practices inclusive of School-Parent and Family Engagement Policies/Plans, School-Parent Compacts, and all Title I parent and family engagement requirements through:

- Program specialists
- District family engagement specialist and a district parent center that supports parent and family engagement
- Local parent centers as funded by schools and school level parent facilitators

In addition to frequent communication and school visits, Title I schools will receive notifications, resources, and training from the district to help them improve and strengthen parent and family engagement.

Additionally, the Accountability and Federal Programs Department will provide training to principals so principals will understand parent and family engagement requirements and plan.



Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

The Accountability and Federal Programs Department, in collaboration with Title I schools, conducted its annual evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Plan to assess its content and effectiveness in enhancing student achievement and improving school performance. The Accountability and Federal Programs Department gathered feedback through multiple methods, including a district-wide parent survey on the RCSS website, school-level surveys, and in-person Spring Title I Parent Input Meetings hosted at each school site.

Various focus meetings were held from February through June 2026, providing multiple opportunities for parents and family members to participate in the evaluation process. A key event during this period was the Comprehensive Needs Assessment meeting in June 2026, where families engaged in collaborative brainstorming sessions to identify effective strategies for improving family engagement practices.

Input collected from these meetings and surveys will inform updates to the Parent and Family Engagement Plan for the 2026–2027 school year. These revisions will support more inclusive, effective, and meaningful engagement efforts throughout all RCSS Title I schools.

Reservation of Funds

The Richmond County School District will involve the parents and family members of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to Title I schools.

RCSS will share with parents and family members the budget for parent and family engagement activities and programs and how parents and family members will be involved in providing input into how the funds are used. The funds are used for supplies and resources for the District Parent Center and District Parent workshops. Each Title I school will host an input meeting for parents to provide suggestions as to how these family engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-level. In addition, parents can complete district surveys on the district website or at various parent and family engagement events such as cluster meetings. Surveys, input forms, and minutes from these meetings will be reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and to consider changes to the family engagement budget.



Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation

All parents of students eligible to receive Title I services are invited and encouraged to share their input and suggestions throughout the year on the District Parent and Family Engagement Plan, the CLIP and Schoolwide Improvement/Title I Schoolwide Plan/Title I Targeted Assistance Plan in the following ways:

- During February thru June 2026, all stakeholders in Title I schools were invited to give input and feedback on the District Family engagement Plan and the Comprehensive Needs Assessment/District Improvement Plan. Open Community input meetings were held, and online feedback forms were available to gather input for the district's needs assessment. Parent, student, and staff surveys are conducted annually and used in the needs assessment and planning process.
- Feedback forms will be available at the school, online and in the community
- Schools will be encouraged to host multiple in person input opportunities throughout the year as requested through parent input.
- To the extent feasible, schools and the district will use virtual options to host meetings and collect parent input
- School parent input meetings will held, and parents will be encouraged to contact their parent facilitator, family service facilitator, or other parent engagement representative
- The annual district survey is available on the district's Federal Programs webpage
- District-wide parent input meetings will be held at multiple times and in multiple locations in the spring
- The Accountability and Federal Programs Department can be contacted at 706-826-1000



Parents are notified via school and district website, ShoutPoint, notifications at the school, announcements at parent events and in the community about these opportunities as they are scheduled. Feedback forms are provided online as well as in the schools and in the community giving parents the opportunity to share their input and suggestions on the use of Title I funds, their school's Title I parent and family engagement program, their school's school-family compact, their school's parent and family engagement plan and the district parent and family engagement plan.

Building Parent and School/Staff Capacity

The RCSS will build parent and school/staff capacity to strengthen parent and family engagement throughout the district.

Parent Capacity

- Schools will educate parents in understanding the State academic standards, school curriculum, student progress monitoring, and standardized assessments such as Georgia Milestones and End-of- Course tests.
- School staff will teach parents through parent workshops throughout the FY26 school year at various sites. Topics may include improved discipline and communication, attendance, how brain development affects children's behavior and decision-making, parenting a special needs child, seven smart strategies parents can use for immediate school success, and preventing use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.

- School staffs will offer parent workshops on topics suggested by parents such as at- home reading strategies, homework tips, and utilizing community resources. Programs will be held for parents who have children transitioning from pre-k to kindergarten, middle school to high school, and high school to post- secondary education in order to help parents prepare those students for their next steps in education.

Staff Capacity

- School staffs will be trained to educate parents in understanding the State academic standards, school curriculum, student progress monitoring, and standardized assessments such as Georgia Milestones and End-of-Course tests. Other topics may include improved discipline and communication, attendance, how brain development affects children’s behavior and decision-making, parenting a special needs child, seven smart strategies parents can use for immediate school success, and preventing use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
- Federal programs staff will work with staffs to ensure parents receive information in multiple ways such as website, distribution of flyers, Shoutpoint, texts, phone calls, and marquee posts, and that information is in a language and format parents can understand.
- Principals and their leadership teams will receive training to learn strategies to increase parent and family engagement, (to include training on the importance of the six “Shalls,”), to plan activities for parents and families throughout the 2025-2026 school year, and to discuss ways to improve communication between the school and families/community.

Coordination of Services

RCSS will coordinate with other organizations, businesses, and community partners to provide additional supports and resources to families such as public programs or organizations to help students transition to middle, high, and postsecondary schools or careers.

1. Providing support from the Office of Federal Programs
2. Providing parents’ access to the district parent centers and local school centers.
3. Extending flexible operating hours to accommodate the needs of the community, parents and stakeholders.
4. Ensuring residential facilities (Homeless, Foster care, and N&D) in the school’s attendance areas are included in parent and family engagement correspondence and activities
5. Ensuring allocations and equitable services for participating private schools with eligible Title I students



Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the Accountability and Federal Programs director will communicate and collaborate with student services, Title III, special education, and curriculum offices to ensure full opportunities for participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children including providing of information and school reports in a language parents can understand.

Adoption

This districtwide parent and family engagement plan has been developed jointly and agreed upon with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by the collaboration of parents, school, and district personnel through parent meetings and survey.

This plan was adopted by the Richmond County School System on June 26, 2026 and will be in effect for the 2026-2027 academic school year. The school district will distribute this plan in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before October 30, 2026.





Event	Date	Time	Location
Elementary Open House	August 3, 2026	12:00pm-6:00pm	Each School's Location
K-8, Middle, High School Open House	August 4, 2026	12:00pm-6:00pm	Each School's Location
First Day of School Elementary	August 5, 2026	See School's Website	Elementary
First Day of School K-8, Middle, High	August 6, 2026	See School's Website	K-8, Middle, High
District Annual Title I Meeting	September/October 2026	5:30pm	TBD
Fall Parent Conference Window	September 14-October 9, 2026	By Appointment	Assigned School
Spring Parent Conference Window	February 16-March 15, 2027	By Appointment	Assigned School
Graduation	May 26-28, 2027	See School's Schedule	Bell Auditorium
Summer School	June 2-30, 2027	See School's Contact	Assigned Locations

Thank you, Richmond County School System parents, families, and school community, for your valuable input which helped to jointly develop this Parent and Family Engagement Plan. Staying engaged in your child's education and the decision-making process for schools, and the district is vital to our success. If at any time during the year you have additional comments or feedback regarding this plan or other matters relating to your school and district parent and family engagement programs, feel free to contact the Federal Programs Department via phone, email or by mailing the form below. We look forward to meeting you at our next stakeholder input meeting in the spring.

Stakeholder Input Comments

Please contact me regarding my concern/comment.

Phone _____ Email _____

Name _____ (Please print.)

I am a ☐ parent ☐ family member ☐ school staff member ☐ community member

My child attends _____ ES MS HS (circle)

Date _____



864 Broad Street – 4th Floor
Augusta, Georgia 30901-1215
(706) 826-1124 – Fax: (706) 826-4613

MRS. SHAWNDA R. STOVALL
President

DR. MALINDA B. COBB
Superintendent of Schools

MR. ED D. LOWERY
Vice-President

August 4, 2026

Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

Dear Parents,

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

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

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact your student's principal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malinda B. Cobb".

Dr. Malinda B. Cobb
Superintendent of Schools
Richmond County School System



864 Broad Street – 4th Floor
Augusta, Georgia 30901-1215
(706) 826-1124 – Fax: (706) 826-4613

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Superintendent of Schools

MR. ED D. LOWERY
Vice-President

Augusto 4, 2026

Derecho a conocer las calificaciones profesionales de los maestros y paraprofesionales

Estimados padres:

Conforme a los requisitos de la Ley para que todos los alumnos tengan éxito, a la Richmond County School System le gustaría comunicarle que puede solicitar información sobre las calificaciones profesionales del (de los) maestro(s) y/o paraprofesional(es) de su hijo/a. Puede solicitarse la siguiente información:

- Si el maestro del alumno:
 - ha cumplido con la calificación y los requisitos para la licencia del Estado para los niveles del grado y las asignaturas en las que el maestro enseña;
 - está enseñando en carácter provisional o de emergencia a través del cual no se exigen los requisitos para la licencia ni la calificación del Estado y
 - está enseñando en el campo de la disciplina de la certificación del maestro.
- Si son paraprofesionales los que le brindan servicios al alumno y, de ser así, sus calificaciones.

Si desea solicitar información acerca de las calificaciones del maestro y/o paraprofesional de su hijo/a, comuníquese con el director del alumno.

Saludos cordiales,

Dr. Malinda B. Cobb
Superintendent of Schools
Richmond County School System

SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE

ISSUANCE OF DISORDERLY CONDUCT CITATIONS

Background and Jurisdiction

Each Officer employed by the Richmond County School System is P.O.S.T.-certified and thus has limited arrest powers and authority to issue disorderly conduct citations for violations occurring on Richmond County Board of Education Property, and its surrounding School Safety Zone. Certain arrest powers and authority to issue disorderly conduct citation warrants shall be governed by and conducted pursuant to the terms of the Cooperative Agreement with the Richmond County's Sheriff's Office and applicable State laws, as follows:

Arrest Jurisdiction Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-8-1, et seq. Georgia law provides school security personnel law enforcement arrest powers for offenses committed on the school property or within 500 yards of the property. O.C.G.A. § 20-8-1, et seq. The law enforcement efforts of the Richmond County School System School Safety and Security Department will be generally confined to properties of the Richmond County School System, except as otherwise mentioned herein, or otherwise authorized pursuant to the Cooperative Agreement. The same distance requirements apply to the issuance of disorderly conduct citations.

Disorderly Conduct Citations

Each Officer is authorized to issue citations for disorderly conduct for any individual(s), including, but not limited to, parents and students on school property or with 500 yards of school property when the Officer has probable cause to believe that the individual(s) has violated Georgia law or Richmond County Ordinances. Consultation with the administration is not required. The officer shall follow all jurisdictional requirements as well as any procedures contained within the Cooperative Agreement with local law enforcement agencies.

While School System employees may request that disorderly conduct citations be issued, there must be articulated probable cause that a statute or ordinance has been violated before the officer may issue a citation. If the officer does not determine in his or her sole discretion that probable cause exists, no citation shall be issued. No School System employee may direct an officer to issue a disorderly conduct warrant.

Training and Updates

Before the beginning of each school year, officers employed by the Richmond County School System shall receive training and updates relating to the standards and jurisdiction for making arrests and issuing disorderly conduct citations, including, but not limited to, proper requests for and use of citizen identification documents. Training also shall include best practices for speaking with and addressing the public. The update shall be provided by school system counsel or other qualified trainers.

Notice

Notice to students, parents and employees that is easily understood will be widely distributed by posting on the School System's website and on the individual websites of each school. The notice will identify the effective date of the new procedures and the location of the procedures on the School System's websites. The procedure shall be placed in the printed version of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, which is distributed annually to each parent and student in the School System. The procedure will be placed in the School Safety & Security Department's Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE ASSIGNMENT OF OFFICERS FOR SECURITY AT MEETINGS

1. All officers assigned for security of meetings shall be assigned by the Director of the School Safety and Security Department or his/her designee, which will typically be a captain or lieutenant assigned to Central Headquarters.
2. The designation officer shall be aware of the purpose of security. Additionally, the officer to be assigned shall be familiar with the key persons to attend the meeting or activity.
3. If the officer to be assigned has previously been engaged in an altercation, the issuance of a citation or arrest of any student, parent or third party who is expected to attend the meeting, that officer will not be assigned as security and an alternate officer will be assigned.
4. If, after arriving at the location of the assignment, the officer assigned realizes that he/she has had a prior exchange which led to an altercation, issuance of a citation or arrest of any student, parent or third party who is present, such officer shall excuse him/herself and notify the Director of the School Safety and Security Department or his/her designee that another officer should provide security.

Special Assistance Alternative Community Eligibility Provision NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH/SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS

By participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and eliminating the need for meal applications, **Richmond County School System** will reduce administrative and printing costs. Families also benefit from the elimination of completing and submitting meal applications.

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Richmond County School System** offers healthy meals every school day at no charge to your child(ren). Our food service receives support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

The following schools will be participating in this alternative provision and provide meals at no charge to children during School Year **2026-2027**:

MAGNET SCHOOL

John S. Davidson
A.R. Johnson Health
Science & Engineering
C. T. Walker
Richmond County
Technical Career

HIGH SCHOOL

Academy of Richmond
County
Cross Creek
George P. Butler
Glenn Hills
Hephzibah
Lucy C. Laney
T.W. Josey
Westside

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Alternative School

Performance Learning Center

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Belair
Glenn Hills
Hephzibah
Langford-Tutt
Pine Hill
Richmond Hill
W.S. Hornsby

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A. Dorothy Hains
Bayvale
Belair
Blythe
Copeland
Deer Chase
Diamond Lakes
Freedom Park K-8
Glenn Hills

Goshen
Gracewood
Hephzibah
Jamestown
Lake Forest Hills
Lamar-Milledge
McBean
Meadowbrook
Monte Sano
Richmond Hill
Sue Reynolds
T. Harry Garrett
Tobacco Road
Warren Road
Wheless Road
Wilkinson Gardens
W.S. Hornsby

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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

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

SR Incident Type	General NCES / Federal Definition		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
(00) Continuation of Incident	Definition	An event with multiple actions for a single incident has occurred.			
	Examples				
(01) Alcohol	Definition	Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, beverages or substances represented as alcohol. Students under the or consumption of intoxicating alcoholic influence of alcohol may be included if it results in disciplinary action	Unintentional possession of alcohol	Under the influence of alcohol without possession	Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol
	Examples				
(02) Arson	Definition	Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary devices. (Note: Possession of fireworks or incendiary devices must be reported as "Possession of Unapproved Items". Use of such items should be reported as Arson.)	N/A	Attempt to commit arson or use of matches, lighters or incendiary devices at school; includes but not limited to the use of fireworks	Intentional damage as a result of arson-related activity or the use of an incendiary device
	Examples				
(03) Battery	Definition	Intentional touching or striking of another person to intentionally cause bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between battery and fighting is that fighting involves mutual participation.)	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in no bodily injuries	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack on school personnel; Physical attack on teachers should be reported as Violence Against a Teacher (44). Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on battery three or more times during the same school year. Includes but not limited to choking, pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical confrontations resulting in severe injuries; Includes any physical attack on school personnel; includes incidents serious enough to warrant calling the police or security
	Examples				

(04) Breaking & Entering – Burglary	Definition	Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft). (Note: Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.)	N/A	N/A	Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft)
	Examples		N/A	N/A	
(05) Computer Trespass	Definition	Use of a school computer for anything other than instructional purposes or unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data	N/A	Unauthorized use of school computer for anything other than instructional purposes	Unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, obtaining confidential information or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data; includes disclosure of a number, code, password, or other means of access to school computers or the school system computer network without proper authorization.
	Examples		N/A	See above. Includes but not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view or send inappropriate material, and violation of school computer use policy	See above. Includes but not limited to hacking.
(06) Disorderly Conduct	Definition	Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff or others. (Includes disruptive behaviors on school buses)	Creating or contributing to a moderate disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others	Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others; may represent a repeat action	Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the school environment or poses a threat to the health and safety of others. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on disorderly conduct three or more times during the same school year
	Examples		Includes but not limited to general bus misbehavior, spitting on property or persons, encouraging disruptive behavior	Includes but not limited to general bus misbehavior, spitting on property or persons, encouraging disruptive behavior	Includes but not limited to disruptive behavior on school bus, misbehavior during a fire drill or other safety exercise

(07) Drugs, Except Alcohol and Tobacco	Definition	Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics	Unintentional possession of prescribed or over the counter medication. Does not include the possession of narcotics or any illegal drugs	Any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school	Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics
	Examples	any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school	See above. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-776	See above. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-776	See above. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-776
(08) Fighting	Definition	Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and intent to harm (Note: The key difference between fighting and battery is that fighting involves mutual participation.)	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in no bodily injuries	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in severe bodily injuries. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on fighting three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples		No injuries	Mild or moderate Injuries may include but are not limited to scratches, bloody noses, bruises, black eyes, and other marks on the body	Repeated physical confrontations resulting in severe injuries that require medical attention
(09) Homicide	Definition	Killing of one human being by another	N/A	N/A	Killing of a human being
	Examples		N/A	N/A	Includes but is not limited to shooting, stabbing, choking, bludgeoning, etc.
(10) Kidnapping	Definition	The unlawful and forceful abduction, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will	N/A	N/A	The unlawful and forceful abduction, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will.
	Examples		N/A	N/A	See above
(11) Larceny / Theft	Definition	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity (e.g., school) without threat, violence or bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between larceny/theft and robbery is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$25 and \$100	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$100 and \$250	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value exceeding \$250. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on larceny/theft three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples		Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception	Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception	Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception

(12) Motor Vehicle Theft	Definition	Theft or attempted theft of any motor vehicle	N/A	N/A	Theft or attempted theft of any motor vehicle
	Examples		N/A	Includes but not limited to cars, trucks, ATVs, golf carts, etc.	
(13) Robbery	Definition	The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. (Note: The key difference between robbery and larceny/theft is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery)	N/A	Robbery without the use of a weapon	Robbery with the use of a weapon
	Examples		N/A	Taking something by force or threat of force	Weapons may include but are not limited to guns, knives, clubs, razor blades, etc.
(14) Sexual Battery	Definition	Oral, anal, or vaginal penetration against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent; touching of private body parts of another person either through human contact or using an object forcibly or against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent	N/A	N/A	Oral, anal, or vaginal penetration against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent; touching of private body parts of another person either through human contact or using an object forcibly or against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent
	Examples		N/A	N/A	Includes but is not limited to rape, fondling, child molestation, indecent liberties and sodomy
(15) Sexual Harassment	Definition	Non-physical and unwelcome sexual advances, lewd gestures or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature; requests for sexual favors; gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment	Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes or suggestive jokes that are not directed towards specific individuals	Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes, suggestive jokes or lewd gestures that are directed towards specific individuals or group of individuals	Physical or non-physical sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on sexual harassment three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples		Includes but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes	Includes but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes; leering	See above
(16) Sex Offenses	Definition	Unlawful sexual behavior, sexual contact without force or threat of force, or possession of sexually explicit images; can be consensual	Inappropriate sexually-based physical contact including but not limited to public groping, inappropriate bodily contact, or any other sexual contact not covered in levels 2 or 3	Inappropriate sexually-based behavior including but not limited to sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts	Engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or during school activities
	Examples		Public groping or inappropriate bodily contact	Sexting; lewd behavior; possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts	Oral, anal or vaginal penetration; pimping; prostitution; indecent exposure of private body parts

(17) Threat / Intimidation	Definition	Any threat through written or verbal language or act which creates a fear of harm and/or conveys a serious expression of intent to harm or violence without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to actual physical attack	N/A	Physical, verbal or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack	School-wide physical, verbal or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack; Note: Students that display a pattern of behavior that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm, threat of harm or visibly bodily harm may be coded as bullying.
	Examples				
(18) Tobacco	Definition	Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on transportation to and from school	Unintentional possession of tobacco products	Use of or knowledgeable possession of tobacco products	Distribution and/or selling of tobacco products; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on tobacco three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples	Does not include electronic smoking devices; See (42) Electronic Smoking Device			
(19) Trespassing	Definition	Entering or remaining on a public school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry. (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.)	N/A	Entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose	Entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose. Refusing to leave school grounds after a request from school personnel; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on trespassing three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples				
			N/A	See above	See above

(20) Vandalism	Definition	The willful and/or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property without consent	N/A	Participating in the minor destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission	Participation in the willful/malicious destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on vandalism three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples				
(22) Weapons – Knife	Definition	The possession, use, or intention to use any type of knife	Unintentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate	See above	See above
	Examples				
(23) Weapons – Other	Definition	The possession, use, or intention to use any instrument or object that is used or intended to be used in a manner that may inflict bodily harm (does not include knives or firearms)	N/A	Unintentional possession of a weapon, other than a knife or firearm, or simile of a weapon that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm	Intentional possession and/or use of any weapon, other than a knife or firearm, in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm
	Examples				
(24) Other Incident for a State-Reported Discipline Action	Definition	Any other discipline incident for which a student is administered corporal punishment, detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, expelled, suspended for riding the bus, assigned to an alternative school, referred to court or juvenile system authorities, or removed from class at the teacher's request (pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738)	Any other discipline incident for which a student is administered corporal punishment, detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, expelled, suspended for riding the bus, assigned to an alternative school, referred to court or juvenile system authorities, or removed from class at the teacher's request (pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738)	Level 2 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating local school policies not listed among the state incident types.	N/A
	Examples				
				Includes but is not limited to parking violations, etc.	N/A

(25) Weapons – Handgun	Definition	Possession of a firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand; and any combination of parts from which a firearm described above can be assembled. NOTE: This definition does not apply to items such as toy guns, cap guns, bb guns and pellet gun [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]	N/A	N/A	Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a handgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm
	Examples				pistols or revolvers
(26) Weapons – Rifle/Shotgun	Definition	The term "rifle" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger. The term "shotgun" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger. [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]	N/A	N/A	Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a rifle or shotgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm
	Examples				rifles, shotguns
(27) Serious Bodily Injury	Definition	The term "serious bodily injury" means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.	N/A	N/A	Infliction of "bodily harm" that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes substantial risk of death
	Examples				Any behavior that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes substantial risk of death

(28) Other Firearms	Definition	Firearms other than handguns, rifles, or shotguns as defined in 18 USC 921. Includes any weapon (including started gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e. bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. (NOTE: This does not include toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or Class-C common fireworks). [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]	N/A	N/A	Intentional or unintentional possession or use of any firearms other than rifle, shotgun, or handguns (including starter pistols) and any other destructive device which includes explosives
	Examples	Includes any weapon (including started gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e. bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. (NOTE: This does not include toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or Class-C common fireworks). [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]	N/A	N/A	Includes any weapon (including started gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e. bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. (NOTE: This does not include toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or Class-C common fireworks). [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]

(29) Bullying	Definition	Behavior, which may include written, verbal, physical acts, or through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology occurring on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm or visibly bodily harm	First Offense of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4	Second incident of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4	Repeated acts, as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4, occurring on school property or school possession that is a willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, or apparent means to do so, any display of force that puts victim at fear of harm, any written, verbal or physical act that threatens, harasses, or intimidates; causes another person physical harm; interferes with a student's education; so severe and pervasive intimidates or threatens educational environment.
	Examples		Includes but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or using any type of electronic means to harass or intimidate	Includes but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or the use of electronic equipment on school property or using school equipment to harass or intimidate	Includes but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or the use of electronic equipment on school property or using school equipment to harass or intimidate
(30) Other - Attendance Related	Definition	Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardiness: including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions	Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardiness; including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions	N/A	N/A
	Examples		Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardiness; including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions	N/A	N/A

(31) Other - Dress Code Violation	Definition	Non-invasive and non-suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance.	Invasive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance.	Invasive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school dress code policy three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples	Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 1 may include but are not limited to bare feet; trousers, slacks, shorts worn below waist level, no belt; clothing that is excessively baggy or tight; skirts or shorts that are shorter than mid-thigh; sunglasses worn inside the building; hats, caps, hoods, sweatbands and bandanas or other head wear worn inside school building	Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 2 may include but are not limited to depiction of profanity, vulgarity, obscenity or violence; promote the use or abuse of tobacco, alcohol or drugs; creates a threat to the health and safety of other students; creates a significant risk of disruption to the school environment; clothing worn in such a manner so as to reveal underwear, cleavage or bare skin; spaghetti straps, strapless tops, halter tops, see-through or mesh garments or other clothing that is physically revealing, provocative or contains sexually suggestive comments	Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school dress code policy three or more times during the same school year.
(32) Academic Dishonesty	Definition	Intentional receiving or providing of unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assessments and assignments	Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a minor classroom assignment or project	Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a major exam, statewide assessment or project or the falsification of school records (including forgery)
	Examples	Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assignments or exams	Includes but is not limited to Intentional dishonesty on minor classroom projects, assignments, homework, etc.	Includes but is not limited to cheating on major exams, statewide assessments or other state mandated academic work; Includes the falsification of school records; forgery; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on academic dishonesty three or more times during the same school year.

(33) Other - Student Incivility	Definition	<i>Insubordination or disrespect to staff members or other students; includes but is not limited to refusal to follow school staff member instructions, use of vulgar or inappropriate language, and misrepresentation of the truth</i>	Failure to comply with instructions or the inadvertent use of inappropriate language. May include but is not limited to general disrespect for school staff or students; profanity; failure to follow instructions	Blatant insubordination or the use of inappropriate language directed towards school staff or peers; intentional misrepresentation of the truth	Blatant and repeated insubordination or intentional misrepresentation of the truth; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to student incivility. Issuing false reports on school staff; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on student incivility three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples				
(34) Other - Possession of Unapproved Items	Definition	<i>The use or possession of any unauthorized item disruptive to the school environment. (Note: The use of fireworks or incendiary devices must be coded as Arson.)</i>	The possession of any unauthorized item. Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous	The use of the any unauthorized item (i.e. toys, mobile devices, or gadgets). Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous	The use or possession of unauthorized items including but not limited to toy guns or other items that can be construed as dangerous or harmful to the learning environment; Includes the possession of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks. The use of matches, lighters, incendiary devices or fireworks should be coded as Arson; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to unapproved items.
	Examples				
(35) Gang-Related	Definition	<i>Any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire which engage in criminal gang activity (O.C.G.A. § 16-15-3)</i>	N/A	Wearing or possessing gang-related apparel; communicating either verbally or non-verbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang	Includes but are not limited to matches, lighters, or the possession of fireworks, bullets, stink bombs, CO2 cartridges; includes the use of pepper spray with injury The solicitation of others for gang-membership, the defacing of school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans, threatening or intimidating on behalf of a gang, the requirement or payment for protection or insurance through a gang. Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to gang activity.

	<i>Examples</i>		N/A	Possession or wearing of gang-related clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or using colors to convey gang membership or affiliation; gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc. to convey gang membership or affiliation; committing any other illegal act or other violation of school policies in connection with gang-related activity	Soliciting students for gang membership; tagging or defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang; requiring payment for protection, insurance, otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity; inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity
(36) Repeated Offenses	<i>Definition</i>	Collection of offenses not previously assigned a state reportable action that occurs on a single or across multiple school days that leads to a state reportable disciplinary action.	Collection of minor incidents	Collection of moderate incidents	Collection of severe incidents
	<i>Examples</i>		See above	See above	See above
(40) Other Non-Disciplinary Incident	<i>Definition</i>	This code is used exclusively for the reporting of Physical Restraint. When the INCIDENT TYPE = '40', then the ACTION CODE must = '95' for Physical Restraint. Do not report a Teacher ID when Incident Code is "Other Non-Disciplinary Incident."	Can only be used to report "Physical Restraint" with Action "95" (no teacher name)		
	<i>Examples</i>		See above		
(42) Electronic Smoking Device	<i>Definition</i>	Any device used to deliver nicotine or any other substance intended for human consumption that may be used by a person to simulate smoking through inhalation of vapor or aerosol from the device.	Unintentional possession of an electronic smoking device	Use or knowledgeable possession of an electronic smoking device	Distribution and/or selling of electronic smoking devices: Level 3 may be used for students that violate school policy on electronic smoking devices three or more times during the same school year
	<i>Examples</i>	Such devices include those manufactured, distributed, marketed or sold as an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, electronic hookah, vape pen, electronic nicotine delivery system or any cartridge or other component of the device or related product.			

(44) Violence Against a Teacher	Definition	Intentional physical attack against a teacher with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack against a teacher.	N/A	N/A	Intentional physical attack against a teacher with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack against a teacher. Violence against other school personnel should be reported as Battery (03) – Level 3.
	Examples	Violence against other school personnel should be reported as Battery (03) – Level 3.			
(45) Personal Electronic Devices	Definition	Any portable electronic device capable of transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media. The term personal electronic devices includes, but is not limited to, smart phones, smartwatches, tablets, headphones, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission.	The unauthorized use of personal electronic devices	The unauthorized possession of personal electronic devices	The unauthorized use or possession of personal electronic devices; Level 3 The unauthorized use of personal electronic devices should be used for students that violate school policy on the unauthorized use or possession of personal electronic devices three or more times during the same school year.
	Examples				

**CORRELATION OF VIOLATION OF LOCAL BOARD RULES WITH REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS
OF RULES OF TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

RCSS Rule	State Rule
1a	06
1b	06
1c	02, 06
1d	06, 13 (threat), 17, 23, 28, 34
1e	06, 33
1f	06, 33
1g	06, 33
1h	06, 33
1i	06, 13 (threat), 17, 33, 34
1j	06, 33
1k	06, 13 (threat), 17, 33
1l	06, 16, 34
1m	06, 32
1n	06, 24
1o	06
1p	06, 34
1q	06, 19
1r	05, 06, 16, 17, 33, 34
1s	06, 24
1t	06, 32
1u	06, 16, 33
1v	06, 17
2	02, 04, 06, 11,12, 13, 20
3	02, 04, 11,12, 13, 20
4A	03, 13 (threat), 17 (staff), 33, 44
4B	03, 27, 44
4C	33
5A	03, 08, 13 (threat), 17 (student), 27, 33
5B	29, 33
6	22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 34
7A	01
7B(1)	07
7B(2)	07
8A	14, 15, 16
8B	14, 15, 16
9	19, 33
10	30
11	30
12	30
13	30
14	31
15	18, 42
16	45
17	06
18	24
19	06, 24
20	06, 33, 36
21	24
22	35
23	24
31	No state rule
32	06, 09, 10, 24

Code of Student Conduct and Discipline
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Augusta, Georgia

S.I.P.D. #15 (Rev 7-26)

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION FOR STUDENTS

The Richmond County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities for students. The following person has been designated to investigate any complaints communicated to the Board of Education alleging compliance of non-discrimination policies regarding student activities.

Inquiries can be directed to:

Deputy Superintendent of School Improvement and Strategic Initiatives

864 Broad Street – Augusta, GA 30901

Phone: (706) 826-1000

[RCSS Nondiscrimination Information Online](#)

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Richmond County School System does not discriminate in employment or services on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or age.

Inquiries can be directed to:

Chief Human Resources Officer

864 Broad Street – Augusta, GA 30901

Phone: (706) 826-1000

[RCSS Nondiscrimination Information Online](#)

