

Hephzibah Elementary School



Parent/Student Handbook 2026 – 2027

Dr. Josh Workman, Principal
Mrs. Stephanie Spencer, Assistant Principal

2542 Highway 88, Hepzibah, GA 30815
706-592-4561 (phone) / 706-592-3703 (fax)



Dear Hephzibah Koala Families:

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Hephzibah Elementary School, I would like to welcome you to our school for the 2026-2027 school year. As I begin my 5th year of tenure, it is an honor and a privilege to serve as your principal. Each of us at Hephzibah Elementary School appreciate you entrusting us with the opportunities to touch and shape the lives of your children.

It is my hope that you will read this Student Handbook and will become familiar with the rules, policies, and procedures of the school so that we will all be able to work together in providing every child with the very best possible learning environment and the highest quality of education. It has been prepared to help keep you informed about important dates and activities at our school. Some policies have been updated and other changes have also been made. It is requested that you support the policies, procedures and rules of our school. If you have any questions or need further clarification on anything contained in this handbook, please contact me at 706-592-4561.

As an International Baccalaureate School, we offer all of our students a transdisciplinary educational experience in all content areas along with Art, Spanish, Music, Physical Education, Computer Literacy, and Orchestra. Additionally, we are an ArtsNow school where we believe in the integration of fine arts standards into daily pedagogical process with our students. We anticipate a great school year and hope that you will take an active and supportive role in your child's life and his/her education. Let me encourage you to stay in close contact with your child's teacher(s) and take the opportunity to volunteer at our wonderful school.

Once again, let me take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your help and support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Workman". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a cursive-style name.

Dr. Josh Workman
Principal



2026-2027

Richmond County School System School Calendar

July '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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September '26						
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December '26						
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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						
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Hephzibah Elementary School

Mission: to develop life-long learners who are caring, compassionate, responsible, and committed to seeking knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Vision: to develop a team approach to education where accountability will be shared between all stakeholders of the school community as students' educational experiences, exposure to technology, character education, and knowledge of diverse skills prepare them to meet and embrace the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Koala Way: There are essential characteristics that embody students at Hephzibah Elementary School. These are:

- Kind
- Organized
- Act Responsibly
- Listen and Learn
- Act Respectfully

Hephzibah Elementary Beliefs and Values:

- Every student deserves an opportunity for a quality education.
- All children can learn and achieve personal goals.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.
- Awareness and understanding of individual and cultural differences contribute to a positive learning environment.
- High expectations courage students to reach high levels of achievement in physical, emotional, social and academic development.
- A variety of teaching methods is needed to meet diverse learning styles
- Teamwork among school personnel, home and community enhances learning.
- It is the responsibility of the home, school and community to model and encourage good character.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, life-long learners.

Hephzibah Elementary School Hours

School Building opens: 7:50 a.m.

Breakfast served: 7:50 – 8:15 a.m.

Learning begins & students seated in class: 8:20 a.m.

Dismissal: 3:10 p.m.

ADMISSION/REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Certified Birth Certificate**---A child must be age five (5) on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten or age four (4) on or before September 1 to enroll in pre-kindergarten.
2. **Student's Social Security Number** *or* Copy of student's Social Security Card (optional)
3. **Current Georgia Immunization Certificate**---GA Form 3231
4. **Certificate of Eye, Ear, and Dental Examination**
5. **Documentation of withdrawal from previous school** (if applicable)
6. **Legal Custody Papers** (if appropriate)
7. **Current Proof of Residence** (must contain physical address of the property & must be within past 30 days)

PTA OBJECTIVES

The PTA promotes the welfare of children and youth in the home, the school, the community, and place of worship. To accomplish this aim, this association secures adequate laws designed to protect and care for them both inside and outside the school environment. The PTA tries to raise the standards of home life and bring together home and school so that parents and teachers cooperate intelligently in the education of the students. In doing this, the PTA hopes to develop united efforts between educators and the general public to secure the highest advantage in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education for all children and youth.

We earnestly solicit your membership in the PTA. This group of parents and teachers is of great benefit to our school, and we believe they will be of great interest and benefit to you and your child this coming year. Your attendance, interest, and personal contribution are of great value in helping the school to do a better job in our joint venture of educating your child.

SCHOOL ZONES

School zones are strictly enforced by the board of education. Parents must sign a statement on the registration card that certifies that the address given for the student is correct. If the student's address is found to be out of our school zone, the student will be required to move to the school in his or her attendance zone. On rare occasions, zone exemptions are granted through the central RCBOE office.

STUDENTS REPORTING TO SCHOOL

Students should not arrive at school prior to 7:50 a.m. The cafeteria opens at 7:50 a.m. ***All students should be seated and ready to learn in their classes before 8:20 a.m.*** Students who are not inside the classroom at 8:20 a.m. will be counted tardy.

Parents who bring their students to school are asked to have their ***children ready to get out of the car and enter the school building.*** For the safety of your child, please park and walk your child into the building after 8:20 am as there are no teacher on duty after this time. Students should have their belongings ready to immediately get out of the car and come into the school. ***Additionally, parents may only walk their students to their class for the first three days of school.*** This allows the students to learn to be self-reliant and the IB trait - responsible.

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT RIDE THE BUS HOME

Our students are dismissed at 3:10 pm. All parents must remain in their cars during dismissal.

Parents cannot enter the school at dismissal to get their children as this causes confusion and may create an unsafe situation. Parents must have a car rider sign to pick up their students and must do so in the car rider line. Please request as many signs as you need for individuals that will be picking up your student. If you do not have the sign you will need to wait until the buses have departed and enter through the front with a photo id to pick up your student in the front office. All early dismissal will stop at 2:30 to allow for the dismissal process to begin.

SCHOOL RULES

(See also “Richmond County Code of Student Conduct and Discipline”)

Hephzibah Elementary students are among the best-behaved in Richmond County. We follow closely the rules outlined in the Code of Conduct from the Richmond County Board of Education. The Code of Conduct is given to each student at the beginning of the year and is reviewed in class.

Hephzibah Elementary students are expected to be diligent in carrying out their school responsibilities. Failure to be diligent in study or adhering to school rules means that a student is guilty of misconduct. Students will be given every opportunity to achieve scholastic success, but those who persist in creating behavioral problems either inside or outside the classroom (including the bus) will be subject to disciplinary action, administered in a consistent and fair manner. Maintaining a proper educational setting combined with concern for each student’s safety and welfare also enters into each disciplinary action. While it is impossible to cover every possible discipline incident in a student handbook, the following are major areas of concern:

- **FIGHTING** – Wrestling, horseplay, physical attacks, rough play, etc. are viewed as serious and each will result in suspension from school. In other words, students should not put their hands on another student for **ANY** reason.
- **PROPERTY DAMAGE** – A student should not damage or steal school property or private property. Parents of students who damage or steal property may be responsible for the cost of replacing the item(s).
- **DISRESPECT** – Arguing, back talk, and rudeness will not be tolerated.
- **PROFANITY** – Vulgar remarks, gestures, pictures, and foul language have no place in the school setting.
- **DEFIANCE** – Failure to respond or carry out a reasonable request by a staff member is considered defiance.
- **DISRUPTION** – **Students who consistently disrupt class to the point that instruction cannot take place will be removed from the classroom setting.** The act of deliberate and willful conduct detrimental to the normal function of the class and/or school will not be tolerated. Students who cause disruptions in the classroom, on the school grounds, or on the busses three or more times in a school year

may be considered habitually disruptive. This will require students and parents to participate in an individual remedial discipline plan through the Response to Intervention (RTI).

The following general school rules apply daily. They are not all-inclusive, but cover a majority of the expectations:

- Students are expected to be ready and prepared for class.
- Students are expected to keep their hands and feet to themselves. They are expected to respect others and their property.
- Talking, sound effects, and other behaviors that prevent others from completing their assignments are forbidden.
- Students must avoid running on the school campus – except at PE and Recess!
- Littering is against the law and makes the school dirty. Students should be proud of their school and help keep it clean.

These rules will also help you to be successful in the classroom and at school:

1. Sit in your assigned seat or your assigned group.
2. No talking unless permission is given by the teacher.
3. Do not leave your seat without permission from the teacher.
4. Raise your hand if you want to speak or leave your seat. Wait patiently for the teacher to recognize you. Do not call the teacher's name, wave your hand, or make noises to attract the teacher's attention. If the teacher is busy and cannot call on you at the moment, lower your hand and wait patiently for a better time.
5. Sit properly in your seat. Do not sit on top of your desk or put your knees or feet in the seat.
6. Do not leave the room for any reason unless the teacher has given permission.
7. Do not make noises or motions that will distract the teacher or other students.
8. Do not wear hats, caps, and gloves in the classroom or in the school building.
9. Do not chew gum or eat candy, etc. All food must be eaten in the lunchroom and may not be taken out of the lunchroom.
10. You must be orderly and quiet when moving to the lunchroom or other classes, such as Specials, PE, music, etc. Running or playing while moving to these classes is not allowed. Also, when you are dismissed from class, to go to another class, bathroom, etc., you must go directly to the assigned destination.
11. You must not run or play in the media center or computer lab. Playing around electrical equipment is dangerous.
12. You must follow the playground rules while at recess and PE. Fighting and play fighting are not allowed. Running or rough play on the playground equipment is forbidden. Due to the problems associated with playing football at our school, this game is not allowed. Do not throw sticks, rocks, or anything that could

harm another student on the playground. Do not torment or tease other students. Respect the rights of other students.

13. Respect and take care of school property. **Do not write on or damage walls, desks, or any other item of school property. Parents may be charged for any incurring damages.**
14. Do not bring toys to school. Charms that are played with in class or otherwise used to distract other students or the teacher will be considered toys. Toys that are taken from students must be picked up by parents.
15. Do not make negative statements about other students, teachers, or any other member of the school community. We are all here to support one another.
16. Follow any other rules that your teacher or principal find it necessary to implement.

BULLYING

The Richmond County Board of Education has a No Bullying Policy. It states: A student shall not do, attempt, or threaten to bully any person:

- (a) On the school grounds at any time;
- (b) Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; (c) En route to and from school.

Bullying is defined as any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so or any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

STUDENT DRESS

(See Richmond County Code of Student Conduct and Discipline)

Hephzibah Elementary adheres to the mandatory Richmond County policy for elementary schools. All students should dress in accordance with the rules governing body cleanliness, neatness, and good grooming. Clothes that show good taste are always acceptable. Baggy overshirts, though appropriate for weekend or casual playwear, are not considered neat in-school apparel. Avoid extreme designs, styles, and color. Any garments imprinted with advertising, profane or obscene words, phrases, or pictures are prohibited. Blue jeans must not be frayed or oversized.

All shirts will be buttoned and secure at the natural waistline. No fish net shirts, tank tops, midriffs, or halters with back and stomach showing will be allowed. Styles of dress should neither be too short, too tight, nor too low cut.

All pants and shorts must be worn at the natural waistline, not “baggy” or low-riding. Belts are to be worn to hold up the pants. In general, all students are to dress in a manner that one may reasonably expect of a child who is attending school for the purpose of learning. For safety reasons, shoes must be worn properly and laced or buckled at all times. **No flip-flops, slides, shower shoes or open toe shoes that do not cover the top of the foot.** Shoelaces must not drag the floor. Students must wear shoes that will permit their full participation in physical education exercises and playground activities.

Shorts and skirts must be in good taste. No short shorts, skirts, biker pants or gym shorts will be permitted. A good rule of thumb would be to place a dollar bill in the back crease of the knee. The dollar should have Washington standing up. If the shorts or dress does not touch the dollar bill, the clothes are too short. This

guideline pertains to all shorts, including those worn at PE. Parents may be called to bring more suitable clothing for students whose clothing is determined to be inappropriate.

DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS

Students who fail to follow the mandatory Rule 14 of the Code of Student Conduct (dress code policy) shall face the following disciplinary actions:

- First Offense: Written notification to parent will be sent by the school and the parent will be required to sign an acknowledgement of the violation and return the signed acknowledgment to the school.
- Second Offense: The teacher will telephone the parent to discuss the matter and seek to resolve the failure of the student to follow the policy.
- Third Offense: There will be a parental conference required with the parent before the student may return to school.
- Fourth Offense: Student may receive discipline, up to and including a period of suspension.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

An atmosphere conducive to a desirable learning situation is necessary if we are to relate to students. Our policy will be firm, consistent, and persistent – yet positive and fair. Please refer to Richmond County's Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. Discipline is tracked for each student and consequences for undesirable behaviors get more serious each time a student is referred to the office. These are rules governing the use of the cafeteria, the bus, hallways, restrooms, the campus, assemblies, and the classrooms. Students may be temporarily removed from the breakfast program, recess, assemblies, and busses, just as they may be removed from the classroom. Please stress the importance of appropriate behavior to your child in all aspects of the school setting. Students may also be denied field trip participation if the teacher deems that the student's behavior may endanger himself or the other students. Consistent failure to obey the teacher instructions and inappropriate behavior towards peers' places students in dangerous situations.

DISCIPLINE ACTIONS

The majority of student discipline is handled at the classroom level by the teacher. Continual misbehavior or an incident that requires immediate attention is handled by one of the administrators. Student discipline is tracked to note tendencies and patterns of misbehavior. The action taken on an incident is based upon the severity of the incident and the student's past history. **As a student begins to compile a large number of incidents, the discipline will become more severe. Consistency and fairness are the most important aspects of dealing with student discipline.** All incidents are thoroughly investigated by the administration and/or the teacher before a disciplinary action is taken. **The principal trusts the teacher to be impartial and fair in dealing with students. Therefore, the teacher's account of the event and his/her suggestions for discipline will be seriously considered by the principal.** Parents/guardians are informed of ALL discipline incidents that reach the principal's office through the use of the discipline referral form.

CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

A student may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reflection time or out-of-school suspension, if the student utilizes a cell phone or other electronic device to engage in bullying, threats or intimidation,

or harassment of any form, to create and/or send and/or receive and/or possess and/or transmit to others pornographic or obscene pictures or messages, to create and/or send and/or receive and/or possess and/or transmit to others offensive or humiliating or inappropriate pictures of one's self or others, to engage in academic cheating in any form, to invade anyone's privacy in a locker room, restroom or other place on a school campus or at a school activity or to engage in academic cheating in any form.

If a student uses a cell phone or other device of this nature at school for any purpose other than those related to education, it will be taken from him/her, and turned in to the office with a note containing the student's name, date, and time along with the teacher's name. The device will be held in the Principal's Office until a parent has been contacted and comes to the school and picks up the device. After the second offense of this nature, disciplinary consequences will apply and the device will be kept for a period of 30 days. Upon the third offense, additional disciplinary consequences will apply and the device will be kept for the remainder of the semester or school year—whichever shall first occur.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a student may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion, if the student utilizes a pager, cell phone or other electronic device to engage in bullying, threats or intimidation, or harassment of any form, to create and/or send and/or receive and/or possess and/or transmit to others pornographic or obscene pictures or messages, to create and/or send and/or receive and/or possess and/or transmit to others offensive or humiliating or inappropriate pictures of one's self or others, to invade anyone's privacy in a locker room, restroom or other place on a school campus or at a school activity or to engage in academic cheating in any form.

Please refer to the *RCSS Code of Student Conduct and Discipline* for more details.

BUS INFORMATION

Information about bus routes will be provided during registration. Please do not permit your child to arrive at the bus stop more than a few minutes ahead of the pick-up time. Your cooperation in this respect will help prevent problems that arise at bus stops when children are unsupervised for unduly long periods of time. You may also wish to download the Bus App that will allow you to follow the progress of your student's bus ride. Students who are **8 years old or younger** must have a parent, guardian, or approved adult (18+) meet them at the bus stop. If no approved person is there, the child may be returned to the school.

STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES

Students are expected to sit quietly on school busses so that the safety of all students can be assured. Misconduct reports will be completed by bus drivers for students who misbehave. For the first report, the principal may give the student a suspension or warning from the bus. **Fighting on the bus may result in suspension from school.**

Keep this copy of school bus rules and pupil responsibilities in a place where your child can see it:

1. The driver is in charge of the bus and all pupils aboard. Students must obey the driver promptly and with respect.
2. Students must obey and respect the orders of authorized persons (such as assistants, bus volunteers, and supervisors).
3. Students must be on time; the driver cannot wait beyond his/her regular schedule for those who are tardy. Students cannot expect the bus driver to wait until the student leaves his house and comes to the bus stop. Students should be waiting on the driver when the bus arrives at the stop.

4. Students must wait in an orderly line, away from the street or road.
5. Students may only ride the bus assigned by school officials.
6. Students must 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 of ten feet).
7. Students are not to run toward a school bus while it is in motion.
8. Students are not to try to get on or off the bus or move about within the bus while it is moving.
9. Pupils must occupy seats assigned to them and remain seated while the bus is moving. Students may ride three in a seat if necessary and are not to exchange seats unless given permission by the driver.
10. Students must behave on the bus as though it were in the classroom. Insolence (talking back to the driver), disobedience, vulgarity, foul language, fighting, pushing, hitting, and similar offensive acts will not be tolerated. Students will be denied bus-riding privileges for these actions!!
11. Students must not engage in any activity which might divert the driver's attention, such as loud talking or laughing, unnecessary conversation with the driver, extending any part of the body out of the bus windows or doors, or into the bus aisles.
12. Students do not must not open or close bus windows without permission of the driver, nor shall they regulate or operate any part of the bus.
13. Pupils must not engage in any activity which might damage, cause excessive wear or litter to the bus or other property. The following activities are NOT ALLOWED:
 - Eating on the bus.
 - Spitting or throwing anything in or from the bus.
 - Bringing knives or sharp objects on the bus (Parents are responsible for damages to school bus property when damaged by their child – at full replacement cost).
 - Bringing animals on the bus.
 - Tampering with mechanical equipment, accessories, or controls of the bus.
14. Students must be courteous to the driver, to fellow students and to passers-by.
15. Pupils will not leave the bus on the way to school or home without permission of the driver. Drivers will not give permission except in case of personal emergency or upon request of the principal or the pupil's parent.
16. Students may not choose whether or not they want to ride the bus. All changes must be in writing, signed by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal. If a parent or guardian is to pick the child up instead of him/her riding the bus, the parent must give written notice prior to the loading of the buses or the child will be placed on the bus. Telephone messages are not acceptable as we have no way to validate the accuracy of the information from the caller. (Please do not ask for an exception to this rule.)

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation to and from school is provided for students. Riding the school transportation is a privilege – NOT a right. Students who misbehave on the school busses will be denied transportation privileges. Students are to ride the same bus to and from their home every day unless permission has been granted to ride another bus. Parents must request, in writing, permission for their child to ride a different bus or get off at a different bus stop. Requests are made through the school office and are approved by the principal in advance on the day of the change.

Parents who request students NOT be placed on a bus must send a written note/or message the assistant principal using Class Dojo requesting that the child not ride the bus and must arrive at the school to pick up the child prior to the bus leaving or the student will be placed on the bus.

TARDINESS

It is realized that there will be times when tardiness is unavoidable but please make every effort to ensure that your child is in school at the appointed time. Tardiness in school is a major problem during the school term. School begins at 8:20 a.m. When your child is late for school, time is spent by the teacher changing records, etc. This takes valuable teaching time away from all students. If a student has an appointment during school time, it is best that the child report to school at the regular time and be picked up by the parent later for the appointment. We urge you to support our policy on tardiness. We depend on you to see that your child is at school on time.

Tardies also apply to the breakfast program. Students must be in the cafeteria no later than 8:15 am for breakfast. Additionally, students must be in their classrooms by 8:20 am or they will be marked tardy.

A student is tardy when he or she enters the classroom or homeroom after the ringing of the tardy bell. The following disciplinary procedures will be followed each school year, and accumulated for each of two nine weeks periods comprising the first half and second half of each school year, for tardiness to school (homeroom and class). 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 make a habit of picking 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, whereby it would be inappropriate to punish the child for being tardy

Grades Pre-K thru 5:

- 1st Tardy
 - Letter sent home to parents explaining the Tardy Policy.
- 5th Tardy
 - The parent must bring the student to school the next school day for a conference with the Principal where the Tardy Policy will be explained and parents will sign a letter stating they understand the policy.
- 8th Tardy

- A second letter will be sent home, requiring the parent to bring the student to school the next day and for a conference with the Principal. A Social Worker and/or DFACS will be contacted and requested to contact the parent.
- 11th Tardy
 - Discipline of a one-day suspension shall result with a letter sent home to so inform the parent.
- 16th Tardy
 - Discipline of a two-day suspension shall result with a letter sent home to so inform the parent. A Social Worker will be sent to the home.
- 21st Tardy
 - Discipline of a three-day suspension with a letter sent home to so inform the parent. If the student transfers to another Richmond County School, unexcused absences/tardies will follow the student.

ATTENDANCE

Students who are absent from school are required to bring a written excuse for the absence their first day back at school. 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:

- A. Personal illness or when attendance in school endangers the student's health or the health of others.
- B. Family death and funeral.
- C. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours.
- D. Attendance of non-school activities or functions authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
- E. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
- F. Registering to vote or voting in a public election.
- G. Mandate or order of government agency.
- H. 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.
- I. Extreme circumstances that cannot be resolved outside school hours; parent or guardian must request and receive approval from the Principal or designated representative.
- J. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein, but deemed by the Local Board to have merit based on the circumstances.

(Note: A foster care student, who attends Court proceedings relating to the student's foster care, shall be counted as present by the school.)

Unexcused Absence Any absence not covered in (A)-(J) 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. 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

Truant - For the purposes of this protocol, truant is defined as any child who has more than five days of unexcused absences during the academic year.

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.

Make-Up Work

- A. Upon returning to school following an absence, it is the parent/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. Class work and tests missed due to unexcused absences may be subject to a 10 percent grade reduction
- B. Suspensions: For purposes of the countywide 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 & Discipline.
- 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 Receipt. 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.

AUTHORITY OF SUPERINTENDENT

In addition to not being allowed to make-up missed work, tests or assignments, students who have unexcused absences may not receive credit or grades for the school year in which the absences occurred. Provided, however, that the Superintendent or designee shall have the right to review the facts and circumstances surrounding the absence of any student for more than the designated absentee days or the period of time designated to make up work; and in those special instances where the facts and circumstances support an exception, the Superintendent or designee may allow such student to complete make-up work and possibly receive a grade for the period.

FULL DAY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

A student who wishes to leave school early must bring a written request to school stating the reason for early dismissal. Leaving school for unauthorized purposes before the end of the instructional day will be counted as a tardy. Parents should not pick up students before the end of the school day except where there is a legitimate emergency.

EARLY RELEASE FROM SCHOOL

Students who are picked up early from school miss valuable instructional time. As you know, Richmond County Board of Education has a policy regarding the missing of classes due to tardiness and dismissals. The office staff will not allow parents to pick up students from the office after 2:30.

This is at the close of the day and many things must take place prior to dismissal.

The following excuses are the only ones accepted as legal:

- A. Illness in the classroom.
- B. Medical or dental appointment with signed statement from physician or dentist.
- C. Family death or funeral accompanied by an obituary or a program from the funeral.
- D. To attend non-school activities authorized by the superintendent of schools or his designated representative.
- E. Extreme circumstances which cannot be resolved outside school hours; dismissal must be authorized in writing personally by parent or guardian and approved by the school principal.
- F. Leaving early is counted as a tardy.

VERY IMPORTANT!!

Students will not be allowed to leave with anyone whose name does not appear on the student information card in the office. Please make sure we have the name of everyone who is authorized to pick up your child listed on the card. We will check his/her driver's license. If there are changes that need to be made on registration cards during the year, we ask that you come by the office to update. In the event that there is an emergency, the school needs a current contact's name and phone number. **Parents should not change the way a student travels home without a written note or Class Dojo message to the teacher from the parent or guardian. Telephone messages will not be accepted, as we have no way to verify the authenticity of the person calling.**

LEGAL CUSTODY RIGHTS

Schools need proof of legal custody and visitation rights. In cases where parents are separated or divorced, and one parent has legal custody, the school must have proof of the court order that spells out both custody and visitation rights. Schools must have on file appropriate legal documentation in order to assure compliance with any limiting court order. Only the legal guardian(s) are allowed access to any knowledge of the student's academic achievement or any other pertinent information.

We will not become involved in a custody battle. **Parents cannot be legally denied access to their children without a copy of a court order specifying no contact is permitted.** We will, however, work closely with you to ensure your child's safety and welfare.

VISITORS

Hephzibah Elementary School encourages parents to visit the classroom, but with prior notice. "Drop - in" visits are not appropriate. Anyone visiting a classroom or a teacher (by appointment) must report to the front office to obtain a visitor's pass. Please do not go directly to a teacher's room. Remember that teachers cannot conference in front of other students. Please speak to your child's to make appointments for parent conferences.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Please refrain from calling your child during school hours. We will not be able to call students to the phone during the day. Changes made concerning the way the child is to go home must be received in writing on the MORNING of the change. For emergency purposes, please keep us informed of your current home and business telephone numbers. It is important that we are able to contact you in case of an emergency involving your child.

ILLNESS – ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

Our school nurse is at Hephzibah Elementary on a part-time basis during the week. Therefore, we need your help to ensure that we can reach you when your child becomes ill. Please keep your child home with any sign of communicable disease, such as:

- An undiagnosed skin rash or sore
- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Continuous coughing
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Untreated pink eye
- Persistent headache, earache, or other discomfort
- Untreated head lice – Persistent reoccurring head lice will be reported to the Department of Family and Children's Services.
- Untreated ringworm or fungus
- MRSA

Following any fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, a child should remain at home for 24 hours. You will be contacted if you child shows any of the above symptoms while at school.

Student accidents are to be reported to the office. The parent will be contacted about the injury or illness. The teacher will refer ill or injured students to the office. Only emergency first aid will be administered in the school. The office staff will help keep the student calm and comfortable until the parent arrives. In case of serious illness or injury, the principal asks that the parents notify him after the doctor has seen the student.

As a general rule, there is no dispensing drugs or treatment of chronic ailments. If you child must take medicine at school, it is to be brought with written instructions from the parent and in the labeled prescription bottle. This is a necessary step for the protection of all students. Students with asthma are allowed to carry their inhalers with them as long as there is no abuse of the medication.

Parents should discuss with the teacher and/or principal any problem pertaining to the health of the student. It is a good policy to record this information on the registration card in case of an emergency.

IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Immunization against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella are required for all children attending Georgia public schools. The certificate issued by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, when properly completed, is the only instrument recognized by the Richmond County School system as proof of the required immunizations. This certificate must be presented to officials at the time of registration or within 30 days of registration or the child will be withdrawn from school. The certificate will be retained by the school and placed in the child's permanent record. The certificate may be obtained from any Richmond County health clinic or from the Pediatrics Clinic on Fort Gordon (by those who are eligible to use that facility), or from a private physician.

According to legislation enacted during the 1972 session of the GA Legislature, eye, ear, and dental examinations are required for all students entering GA schools for the first time. These examinations are available through the local health department, Fort Gordon, or a private physician.

MEDICINE POLICY

We receive many requests from parents to administer medicine to students. We follow the Richmond County policy for administering medicine and a copy of this policy and required form can be obtained in the front office. We will not administer medicine unless it meets the guidelines of the policy, and the completed form is in our possession.

PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS

Under exceptional circumstances, medicine and medication may be administered by the school principal, his/her designee or the school nurse in compliance with the following administrative regulations:

Prescription Medications

A completed form shall be on file for each child requiring prescription medication or medicine. Such forms shall include:

1. Name of child, address, and telephone number,
2. Name of medicine and medication,
3. Purpose of medicine and medication,
4. An official label must be on the container of medicine and medication,
5. Physician's requirements specifying frequency (dosage) and method of administration,
6. Physician's description of anticipated reactions of child to medicine or medication,
7. Instructions for school personnel to follow in the event of side effects
8. Termination date for administering medicine or medication statement that medication is to be given for indefinite period of time,
9. Parent(s)' or legal guardian(s)' signature approving the administration of the medicine or medication.

Long-term medication will not be administered to students unless the above conditions are followed.

Over-the-counter Medication

Over-the-counter medication should not be given at school unless a completed form shall be on file for each child requiring medication or medicine or unless the information received in writing by the school contains the following information:

1. Before over-the-counter medication can be administered to students, there must be a signed note from the parent authorizing such administration and setting the dosage, frequency, and termination date.
2. All of such over-the-counter medicines must be in the original containers with the child's name on the bottle.
3. Such medicines shall be administered by the principal or the principal's designee or school nurse. The principal may designate for over-the-counter medicines, the classroom teacher or office personnel, depending on what would be appropriate under the circumstances.

THE SCHOOL CANNOT DISPENSE TYLENOL, MOTRIN, OR ANY OTHER PAIN MEDICINE WITHOUT THE ABOVE CONDITIONS BEING IN PLACE. PLEASE DO NOT ASK US TO DO SO.

General Conditions for administering all medicine:

The school principal, his/her designee, or the school nurse shall:
Inform the classroom teacher of the medicine,
Keep a record of the administration of the medicine,
Keep the medicine in a securely locked cabinet,
Return unused medicine to the parent,
Call an ambulance in any emergency situation.

The parent or legal guardian of the child must assume full responsibility for informing the school principal or school nurse of any change in medication.

School System Discretion

The school system retains the right to reject request for administration of medicine where all of the conditions set forth herein are not met or where, in the opinion of authorized personnel, the administration of such medicines is not appropriate to be administered in the school. In those cases where it is determined that the appropriation of a particular medicine is not proper for administration in the schools, the director of guidance and the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services shall be notified, so that alternative arrangements can be made, if necessary.

Forms Requirement

The “Administration of Medicines/Medication” form must be completed and filed each school year and whenever the prescription is changed by the physician. A copy of this form shall be filed in the student’s personal folder, the school nurse’s office and forwarded to the child’s parent.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents or legal guardians may see the permanent record and other files that the school keeps on their child. You may examine these records in order to monitor school progress and to review for accuracy. Student directory information may be released as part of a list outside the school system unless you request in writing that it not be done. Contact your child’s teacher in writing for an appointment.

Information concerning a student cannot be given to anyone other than the legal guardian and those school employees who are actively involved with educating the student.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Progress cards will be sent home at six-week intervals and report cards will be distributed at the end of each semester. The parent copy should be kept at home and the jacket should be signed and returned to the school the following day. Test papers and other significant work by students will be sent home regularly. **Students will be asked to return these papers signed by the parent. Students who constantly “lose” or**

“forget” signed papers will forfeit the privilege of taking papers home; however, parents may schedule a conference in order to see the papers at school. Report cards, progress reports and daily papers are the means by which we inform you of your child’s progress in school. If you are not receiving weekly reports, check with your child’s teacher and find out why! **Parents are encouraged to enroll and monitor their children grades through Infinite Campus Parent Portal on the Richmond County Board website. Please see Mrs. Slade for guidance on how to enroll in the Campus Parent Portal.**

STATE TESTING PROGRAMS

Each year students in grades K-5 may be tested in their grade level. The primary aim is to provide information to educational policy and decision makers, teachers, students, parents, and concerned citizens. We ask that parents support the standardized testing program by having the child at school on time and rested for the testing sessions. A good performance usually begins at home. Parents are urged to contact the school when results are sent home if there are any questions concerning their child’s academic progress.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

Teachers need at least 24-hour notice when students are being withdrawn from school in order to get the withdrawal forms ready to take to the new school. These forms contain clearance information from the media, averages for the current six weeks and instructional information. This process takes time to compile and teachers cannot be asked to stop teaching to get the information ready. If students owe for textbooks (not returned) or media materials, withdrawal forms will not be given until missing items are returned or paid for. **Students cannot register in the new school without a withdrawal form and no records will be sent.**

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

We encourage each of you to stay in contact with your child’s teacher concerning his/her academic progress and/or behavior. We greatly appreciate your interest and participation in the education of your child to his/her maximum potential. We will be glad to discuss any problem with you, but we also require 24 hour notice to avoid conflicts in the teachers’ or principal’s schedules.

If you wish to have a conference with your child’s teacher, please call the school secretary and she will arrange a conference at a time convenient to both you and the teacher. Our teachers want to meet with you when there are concerns. The best way to have a productive meeting is to schedule a time when the teacher’s attention is not divided.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are available by request for every student in the school and are provided in a confidential manner. Requests for counseling can be made by administration, teachers, parents, and students.

Services include individual and group counseling, as well as parent consultations. Parental permission is required for continual counseling.

LUNCH PROGRAM

The Richmond County School System has received a grant from the government which allows all students to receive free lunches. Students are required to key in their number and move through the lunch line. We urge you to encourage your child to eat in the lunchroom. Students may bring lunch from home, if desired. Students may bring a thermos, but flavored beverages in cans or bottles are prohibited in the lunchroom. This is a county policy and it **DOES PROHIBIT SOFT DRINKS**. **We cannot allow parents to bring restaurant food/cakes/cupcakes to their child in the cafeteria.**

Hephzibah Elementary serves breakfast from 7:45 – 8:15 a.m. and is free for all students. Students must be in line for breakfast by 7:45 AM to be served.

Hephzibah Elementary School Media Center Policies and Procedures

Objectives of the Library Media Center Program

The program will:

- Provide services to students, faculty, parents, and staff that will enhance the instructional program;
- Provide instructional materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, ethical standards, and aesthetic and moral values;
- Provide information that will enable students to make intelligent, informed decisions in their daily lives;
- Provide technology options for all students, as well as print and non-print materials, in their quest for knowledge;
- Provide materials on opposing views of controversial issues so students, with guidance, may develop skills necessary for critical reading, thinking, and listening;
- Provide materials representative of many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and contributions to our mutual heritage.

Library Media Center Hours of Operation

Our media center adheres to state requirements regarding library media hours of operation. The Hephzibah Elementary Media Center is open with supervision by the media center staff, unconditionally each and every school day from 8:15 AM to 2:45 PM for instructional activities of any variety.

Media Center Conduct Policy

- Use a whisper voice or inside voice while in the media center.
- Return all library books on time.
- Use a ruler in between books to save the place of the book when browsing the shelves.
- Do not pull barcodes from the library books.
- Do not run or play in the media center.
- Sign in at the door when you visit the media center.
- Bring your library card to the media center in order to check-out books.
- Do not eat or drink while reading the library books.
- If you are at the reading center, do not talk while someone is reading to you.

Students who do not follow the rules will be asked to leave the media center and return when they can follow the rules. Teachers will be notified of their students' behavior problems in the media center.

Library Policy

- Students may visit the library media center anytime during the day, but they should have a pass written in their Agenda from the classroom teacher.
- Students must follow the media center rules/conduct policy.
- No more than four students from one classroom may visit the library media center for library check-out.
- Students may visit the library only once a day during the normal school hours.
- Computers are available for student use for academic purposes only.
- Students must have an Internet Acceptable Use Policy form signed by their parents on file in the media center.

Circulation Policies

All library materials must be checked out from the circulation desk.

Student Circulation

- Students in Pre-k through kindergarten may only check out 1 book which must remain in the teacher's classroom. Pre-k through kindergarten teachers will pull books from the shelf from which their students to make their selections.
- Students in 1st grade may check out 1 book and are allowed to take the book home.
- Students in 2nd grade may check out 2 books.
- Students in 3rd – 5th grade may check out 3 books.
- Books are to be checked out for a maximum of two weeks.
- If a student has an overdue book, he/she may not check out another book until that book is returned or the student has paid for the lost book.
- Students must have their library card to check-out.
- Students may not check out audio/visual equipment, software, videos, or magazines.
- Reference materials may be checked out for the period of one day.
- Overdue notices will be sent out every Monday.
- Barcodes pulled from a library book will result in a fine.

- Fines will not be charged for overdue books.
- Fines will be charged for damaged or lost books.

Overdue Fines

- Overdue notices will be printed and distributed to students.
- No fines will be imposed for overdue books.
- Students must return all library books that are overdue before new books can be checked out.
- Report cards will be held at the end of the year until overdue books are returned or the book prices have been paid.

Damaged and Lost Materials

According to Richmond County Board of Education policy, the media specialist will determine the amount charged for lost or damaged library books, materials, and equipment.

- A minimum of \$1.00 shall be charged for damages.
- Damaged barcodes will be charged as damage to books. Lost books will be charged according to cost.
- If a student owes money for lost or damaged books, materials, or equipment, the student's parents will be notified by either an overdue slip, lost book notice, and/or a bill for damages.
- Students who withdraw owing money for lost or damaged books, materials, or equipment will have the amount owed and the item written on the withdrawal slip. No records will be forwarded, or report cards issued until the account has been settled. If the student transfers within Richmond County, the administrator will accept the student and attempt to collect the amount owed.

Acceptable Use Policy

It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education that teachers and students should be furnished educational opportunities and resources to have access to programs and services available for "online" computer services offered by various vendors. In this connection, the Department of Instructional Technology is authorized to provide for procedures with various online suppliers to ensure that these online services do not cost the student or the school district any funds; to ensure that there is access limited to instructional and curriculum related matters; and to provide procedures for other similar matters to ensure that the rights of the online provider and the school district are protected. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the students are not granted access to anything other than educational and instructional materials and resources.

1. Internet is accessed only for support of the instructional program and the curriculum as outlined in the Richmond County Curriculum Guides.
2. Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited, including copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret.
3. Use for commercial activities is prohibited.
4. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited.
5. Netiquette- Generally accepted rules of network etiquette shall include, but not limited to the following: be polite; use appropriate language; no swearing or vulgarities;

Email is not necessarily private, therefore be careful about what you say about others; no disruptive use of the network such as “chain letters” or other non-educational traffic; remember statements offered by the user are a personal opinion and do not necessarily reflect the views of Richmond County Schools.

6. Internet usage is a privilege not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges and may result in disciplinary action.
7. Security – Students not to reveal their personal information (home address, telephone number, social security number, etc.) to other individuals on the Internet. On E-Mail, use only the school address.
8. Vandalism – Vandalism is defined as any attempt to harm or destroy hardware, software or data of another user, Internet or any agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Vandalism will result in the immediate cancellation of privileges and disciplinary action
9. No software of any kind may be brought from the student’s home for use on any school computer.

SCHOOL PARTIES/BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We will have two parties per year – the last day before Christmas holidays and the last day of school. Students often request parties for other special occasions such as teachers’ birthdays, etc.

We feel that the time spent in school should be devoted to educational endeavors. Therefore, we appreciate your help in limiting the parties to the two occasions outlined above. Birthday celebrations are not permitted in the lunchroom due to regulations. If a parent wants to drop off pre-packaged cupcakes, they must get permission from the teacher. Many students have various allergies and cannot eat or be in the presence of certain foods.

FIELD DAY ACTIVITIES

This event occurs during the last weeks of school which gives our students an opportunity to share their athletic abilities by competing against other classes. Parents are invited to attend this joyous event. Parents are not allowed to bring children enrolled in other Richmond County or other Counties for this event due to liability

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, ART, COMPUTER LITERACY AND SPANISH

Our school offers physical education, music, writing computer literacy and art classes. To educate every child in these areas is a difficult but rewarding task. Grades are determined by participation and effort. Therefore, poor conduct will not only affect the student’s conduct grade and class grade, but will also keep other students from learning skills for life. Therefore, students who misbehave will be dealt with severely.

LOST AND FOUND

The lost and found is located in the “lost and found” bin located in the main office. Students are urged to check daily for items left on the school grounds. Our students are very good about turning in lost items. All unclaimed items are donated to Goodwill periodically during the school year.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Students must attend school and be counted present every day. To be counted present, the student must attend at least half of the school day. An accumulation of 10 tardies in the year will disqualify a student from getting perfect attendance. Tardies include arriving to school late AND leaving to go home early. Each semester, students who have perfect attendance for the whole semester will receive a special perfect attendance certificate and a treat. At the end of the year, students who have perfect attendance for the entire year will receive a trophy at the Honors Day program.

PROMOTION POLICY

To meet promotion requirements, students in grades 1-5 must pass three of four areas of study – Language Arts, Math, Science/Health, and Social Studies – which must include a passing grade in Language Arts and Math. Third grade students MUST pass the GEORGIA MILESTONE in Reading; Fifth grade students must pass Reading and Math. A child must also master the Georgia Standards for Language Arts, Math, Science/Health, and Social Studies at the assigned grade level.

In Kindergarten, a student should master the Richmond County Standards in the areas of Language Arts and Math.

THE GIFTED PROGRAM

Richmond County provides programs for all qualifying system students in K –12 who exhibit superior performance, advanced learning needs, and demonstrate high-level motivation and creativity. The identification process uses multiple criteria as mandated by the Georgia Board of Education.

Students may qualify on mental abilities and achievement or on three of four components, which include mental abilities, academic achievement, creativity and motivation or mental abilities alone for grades K – 2.

An automatic referral process requires all schools to screen intelligence and achievement test scores on their students twice annually for referral purposes. Students may also be referred by parents, peers, teachers, principals or counselors of the student. Referrals are solicited in May for August testing and in November for testing in January. Parents of students referred are notified of test dates two or more weeks in advance by Gifted Program personnel.

Students entering the system who had prior placement in a gifted program will be placed at once if they meet Georgia Department of Education eligibility. Gifted Program staff will evaluate those who do not have the required eligibility documentation.

Written parental consent must be on file before students are evaluated. Parents receive a written report of evaluation results and are offered an opportunity to discuss the results with program personnel. Written parental consent for placement must be on file in the gifted program office before students are allowed to participate. Qualifying students in K –8 are enrolled in a five hour per week resource program which provides thematic units of study. Parents receive a progress report three times per year. Students are provided transportation to a Gifted Program resource center. A contract is signed by students, general education teacher gifted program facilitator and parents. Gifted endorsement is received on the transcript.

AWARDS

Students will be recognized for the following awards at the end of the year grade level ceremonies.

- Distinguished Scholar Award (certificate & trophy)
 - Reading – Students have scored above grade level requirements on the Spring i-Ready Reading Test
 - Math – Students have scored above grade level requirements on the Spring i-Ready Math Test
- Scholar Award (certificate & medal)
 - Reading – Student has obtained grade level requirements on Spring i-Ready Reading Test.
 - Math – Student has obtained grade level requirements on Spring i-Ready Math Test
- Most Improved Award (certificate & medal)
 - Reading – Student has the highest percentage for annual typical growth from the Fall to the Spring i-Ready Reading Test.
 - Math – Student has the highest percentage for annual typical growth from the Fall to the Spring i-Ready Math Test.
- I-Ready Growth Award (certificate)
 - Reading – Student achieved the recommended i-Ready typical growth for the year based on the difference between the Fall and Spring i-Ready Test.
 - Math – Student achieved the recommended i-Ready typical growth for the year based on the difference between the Fall and Spring i-Ready test
- IB Character Award (certificate & medal)
 - The Guidance Counselor will issue the award.
 - Student must demonstrate all ten-character words of the IB Learner Profiles.
- Dojo Conduct Award (certificate)
 - No discipline referrals for the year
 - Based on 90% or better average in Class Dojo for the school year through May 18th.
- Perfect Attendance Award (certificate & trophy)
 - No absences from school; a maximum of 9 tardies including early release
- First in Math Award
 - Given to the student with the most First in Math points.
- PE Award
 - One student per class will receive this award for exemplifying what Physical Education stands for.
- Art Award
 - One student per class will receive this award for being an outstanding artist.

- Reading Club Recognition
 - Student will receive a certificate for participating in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl.
- Math Team Recognition
 - Students will receive a certificate for participating in the Richmond County Math Competition.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Hephzibah Elementary School does offer special education for students with disabilities. However, the needs of these students are usually handled in the regular education setting. It is our belief that all children can learn.

TITLE IX INFORMATION

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

The Richmond County Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It does not and will not practice sex discrimination in any of its educational or employment practices according to the rules and regulations for the administration of Title IX of the education Amendments of 1972, P.L. 92-318, as amended by Section 3 of P.L. 93-568.

The following person has been designated as the coordinator of the Board of Education's effort to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX, including the investigation of and complaint communicated to the Board of Education alleging its noncompliance with Title IX, or alleging any action which would be prohibited by this part.

Deputy Superintendent
Richmond County Board of Education
864 Broad Street
706-826-1000

The following procedure is to be used in reporting and settling grievances under Title IX:

1. Complaints are to be forwarded, in writing, to the person designated as coordinator. A complete description of the alleged violation is required.
2. The coordinator shall, within 15 days, investigate and report results of the investigation, in writing, to the complaints.
3. The decision of the coordinator may be appealed to the Regional Director of the Office for Civil Rights, 50 Seventh Street NE, Room 404, and Atlanta, GA 30323.

The Richmond County Board of Education does not discriminate in employment or services on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS TO PARENTS

1. Please do not allow your child is not to bring dangerous or distracting articles to school, such as toy guns and knives, water guns, toys, radios, jewelry, etc.
2. Place names on all articles of outer clothing (coats, gloves, hats, caps, sweaters, raincoats, etc.)

3. The school maintains a lost and found box. Please feel free to investigate if your child loses or misplaces something.
4. Instruct your child never to converse with a stranger, never to accept a gift from a stranger, and never to get into a car with a stranger.
5. Your child must have plenty of sleep (8 hours or more) each night for him/her to do good school work.
6. If there is something that you want to know about school, if something happened at school that worried you or your child, if there is a misunderstanding, or if you need more information for any reason, see your child's principal.
7. Visit your child's school. You, as a parent, are not only welcome at school, you are urged to visit. It is highly desirable that you attend the various meetings.
8. You will also want to know your child's teacher. If you wish to confer with a teacher, please call the school and make an appointment. You should not take his/her class time to discuss an individual problem.

IDEAS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD

Parents can do their part to improve homework when they:

1. Cooperate with the school to make homework effective.
2. Provide your children with suitable study conditions (desk or table, lights, books, and supplies).
3. Reserve a time for homework. Turn off the television and cell phones.
4. Encourage your children, but avoid undue pressure.
5. Show interest in what your children are doing, but do not do the work for them.
6. Understand that the school expects homework to be completed and returned.

Children will improve their study habits by observing the following:

- Study conditions should include good lighting, ventilation, and quiet.
- Be sure you understand each assignment.
- Form the habit of using a certain time and place for study.
- Try to develop the skill of working independently.
- Have necessary materials at hand.
- Spend enough, but not too much time on each subject.