

# WHITEHALL CITY SCHOOLS

Student Handbook  
2026-27

## Kae Avenue Elementary



**Kae Avenue Elementary School**  
**4750 Kae Avenue**  
**Whitehall, OH 43213**

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**Fax:** 614-417-5607

**Principal**

Cameron Carter - (614) 417-5601

**Assistant Principal**

Jamel Johnson - (614) 417-5618

**Secretary**

Rosa Méndez - (614) 417-5600

**Intervention Coordinators**

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*We are relationship-driven, resourceful, resilient, and ready!*

Dear Kae Avenue Families,

It is with great excitement and honor that I welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year at Kae Avenue Elementary School. As your principal, I am thrilled to join the Kae Avenue family and become part of the wonderful Whitehall City School District community.

I am pleased to introduce Mr. Johnson, our assistant principal, who returns in leading our school this year. Together, we are committed to providing an exceptional educational experience for your children.

At Kae Avenue, we proudly serve our Kindergarten and 1st grade students, laying the foundation for their academic journey. Our goal is to educate students through four key principles:

1. Relationship
2. Resilience
3. Resourcefulness
4. Readiness

These principles guide our approach to nurturing young minds and helping each child reach their full potential.

Our school motto, "RAMS," encapsulates our core values:

- Respectful
- Ambitious
- Mindful
- Student(s)

We believe that by embodying these values, our students will develop into confident, capable learners ready to tackle any challenge that comes their way.

As we embark on this new school year, Mr. Johnson and I are excited to work alongside our talented staff, supportive families, and amazing students. Together, we will create a vibrant learning environment where every child can thrive.

We look forward to meeting you all and partnering with you in your child's education. Here's to a fantastic year of growth, discovery, and achievement at Kae Avenue Elementary School!

Warmest regards,

*Cameron Carter*

Cameron Carter, Principal



*We are relationship-driven, resourceful, resilient, and ready!*

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

**Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year!**

We are excited to welcome you to a new year of learning, growth, and opportunity in Whitehall City Schools. Our mission is to maximize relationships and innovation to empower growth, adaptability, positivity, creativity, and accountability for all, and our vision is to ignite a passion for innovation so students grow as resourceful, resilient, and future-ready learners. Those commitments guide our work each day as we support every child.

At our elementary schools, we are committed to helping students grow academically, socially, emotionally, and creatively. Through strong instruction, caring staff, and a continued focus on student well-being, we work to create safe, supportive, and engaging learning environments where every child feels welcomed, valued, and encouraged to do their best. This work reflects our Commitment 2030 focus on academic growth, student well-being, and strong partnerships with families.

We know that students are most successful when schools and families work together. We encourage you to review this handbook with your child, as it includes important information about school procedures, expectations, and resources to support a strong school year.

Thank you for your partnership and support. We are grateful to work alongside you as we help every student learn, grow, and thrive. If you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We are relationship-driven, resourceful, resilient, and ready.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Wells*

Sharee Wells, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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625 S. Yearling Rd    Whitehall, OH 43213    P: 614.417.5000    F: 614.417.5023    WCSRams.org

|                                                     |                                                       |                                                          |                                                      |                                                            |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C. Ray Williams ECC<br>4738 Kae Ave<br>614.417.5680 | Kae Avenue Elementary<br>4750 Kae Ave<br>614.417.5600 | Beechwood Elementary<br>455 Beechwood Rd<br>614.417.5300 | Etna Road Elementary<br>4531 Etna Rd<br>614.417.5400 | Rosemore Middle School<br>4800 Langley Ave<br>614.417.5200 | Whitehall-Yearling High School<br>675 S. Yearling Rd<br>614.417.5100 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|



## **Motto**

**“We are relationship-driven, resilient, resourceful, and ready!”**

## **Vision**

Whitehall City Schools will ignite a passion for innovation to grow resourceful, resilient, and future-ready students.

## **Mission**

Whitehall City Schools maximizes relationships and innovation to empower growth, adaptability, positivity, creativity, and accountability for all.

## **Board of Education**

Lorena A. Lacey | President  
Jayne Shannon | Vice President  
Leo Knoblauch  
Dr. Joanne Lunceford  
Kyra Thorpe

## **Superintendent**

Dr. Sharee Wells

# Commitment 2030: At a Glance

## OUR FOUNDATION

**Vision**

Whitehall City Schools will ignite a passion for innovation to grow resourceful, resilient, and future-ready students.

**Mission**

Whitehall City Schools maximizes relationships and innovation to empower growth, adaptability, positivity, creativity, and accountability for all.

**Motto**

We are relationship-driven, resourceful, resilient, and ready!

## OUR PLAN

**Strategic Commitments**

**ACADEMIC & COGNITIVE EXCELLENCE**

**PERSONALIZED GROWTH & WELLBEING**

**MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION**

**Core Initiatives**

- Elevate literacy everywhere, every day
- Use high-impact strategies and curriculum
- Embed career-connected learning from PreK to 12th

- Teach social & emotional skills at all levels
- Create safe, supportive schools
- Support positive behavior with clear expectations

- Create a culture of respect & teamwork using RAMS Way
- Partner with our community to support students
- Be transparent about operational and financial decisions

## OUR FUTURE



**Relationship-Driven Connectors**

- Build strong, inclusive relationships, collaborate, communicate, and share accountability
- Be engaged in school and the broader community

**Resourceful Innovators**

- Use tools, data, and technology to solve problems
- Be creative and determined
- Break down complex problems and explore multiple solutions

**Ready Achievers**

- Demonstrate self-direction and set and pursue clear goals
- Be strong readers, writers, and mathematicians
- Motivate self and others

**Resilient Problem-Solvers**

- Apply critical thinking, and persevere through obstacles
- Be adaptive and maintain a growth mindset

## OUR GOALS

**80% of students** will perform on or above grade level.

**Chronic absenteeism** will improve by **15%**.

**All schools** will **meet or exceed** state standards.

Students will demonstrate **positive behavior** and reduce incidents by **30%**.

**100%** of students will graduate with **college credits or credentials** to pursue their plan for life.

# THE RAMS WAY

## Respectful

**R**

### Be Respectful & Kind

Treat and speak to everyone in the school community with kindness and respect. Act thoughtfully and speak with empathy.

### Think the Best of Others

Listen with an open mind, try to understand different perspectives, and give others the benefit of the doubt.



## Accountable

**A**

### Share Concerns Responsibly

Share concerns directly with the right person and work through them respectfully.

### Protect Privacy

Respect personal information and keep private matters private to build trust and protect one another.



## Motivated

**M**

### Build Strong Relationships

Be friendly, welcoming, and supportive. Make time to listen, connect, and build trust.

### Focus on Solutions

Work together to solve problems, stay positive, and focus on what helps the district grow and improve.



## Safe

**S**

### Respect Differences & Expectations

Honor differences and follow school expectations so everyone feels valued, included, and safe.

### Work Together as One Community

Support one another and work as a team to create a safe and positive learning environment.



The RAMS Way outlines how students, staff, and families work together to build a respectful, supportive school community.

**RELATIONSHIPS ALWAYS MATTER**

# THE RAMS WAY FAMILY GUIDE



## Be Respectful & Kind and Think the Best of Others

- Speak to staff, students, and other families in a courteous and professional manner.
- Assume positive intent and seek clarification before drawing conclusions.
- Model respectful language and behavior for children both in person and online.
- Ask questions and seek understanding.
- Allow staff reasonable time to investigate concerns, gather information, and respond.
- Work together to support student success.
- Schedule appointments to meet with staff.



## Share Concerns Responsibly and Protect Privacy

- Contact the person closest to the concern first (teacher, counselor, coach, etc.).
- Follow established school procedures for resolving concerns.
- Share concerns directly with school personnel rather than through social media or community gossip.
- Encourage your child to attend school regularly, arrive on time, and be prepared to learn.
- Support school expectations and help your child take ownership of their actions, learning, and growth.



## Build Strong Relationships and Focus on Solutions

- Maintain regular communication with teachers and school staff.
- Participate in conferences, school events, and other opportunities to support learning.
- Celebrate effort, growth, and achievement.
- Work collaboratively with staff to identify solutions when challenges arise.
- Keep conversations centered on what is best for students.
- Approach concerns with a problem-solving mindset.



## Respect Differences & Expectations and Work Together as One Community

- Follow school procedures for visitors, arrival, dismissal, and student supervision.
- Share safety concerns promptly with school staff.
- Reinforce school expectations for behavior, citizenship, and digital responsibility at home.
- Encourage children to report concerns to trusted adults.
- Help create an environment where all students feel welcomed, valued, and safe.
- Work together to support decisions that prioritize student safety and well-being.

**The RAMS Way is our shared commitment to creating a respectful, accountable, motivated, and safe learning community for every student.**

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The Whitehall City School District designates the following items as directory information: student name, address, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, and achievement awards and honors. The district is also required by law to provide student names, address and phone numbers to military recruiters when requested.

The district will disclose any of these items without prior consent, unless notified in writing to the contrary by September 16, 2025. Written notification for non-disclosure must be submitted each new school year. Send written requested to:

Office of the Superintendent  
Whitehall City Schools  
625 South Yearling Road  
Whitehall OH 43213

## **LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE**

**Attention parents and guardians:** Whitehall City Schools provides free language interpreting and translation services for those who need assistance. This free service is available for any parent or guardian whose skills are limited in any of the following areas: speaking, comprehending, reading, and writing. If you require language assistance for a school program or activity, **for Spanish, please contact Nicolas Rosales at (614) 417-5018 or [rosalesn@wcsrams.org](mailto:rosalesn@wcsrams.org)**, for all other languages please contact Mary Huggins at (614) 417-5013 or [hugginsm@wcsrams.org](mailto:hugginsm@wcsrams.org)

## **BREAKFAST, ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TIMES**

Breakfast | 8:40 a.m.      School Start Time | 9:05 a.m.      Dismissal | 3:35 p.m.

## **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

### **Bus and Daycare**

Buses and Daycare riders will be dropped off in the front of the building in the loop from their bus or daycare. Only bus and daycare riders will enter/exit through the front doors.

### **Car Riders/Hand to Hand**

Car riders and walkers will enter through the cafeteria doors. Parents may walk students to the outside of the cafeteria doors. Car riders can either pull up to the drop-off loop on the south side of the building (parents stay in the car, and staff can help students get out of the car) or park in the Rosemore parking lot and walk students to the doors.

**No parents are allowed to park in the staff parking lot.**

## **DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

### **Bus and Daycare**

Bus and Daycare riders only will exit through the front doors. Parents can not remove students from these lines. Buses and Daycare will be in the loop closest to the building. Two buses and the Whitehall van will use the staff parking lot loop.

### **Car Riders**

Car riders will be picked up from the car loop. Parents will stay in the cars and staff will help walk the children to the cars.

### **Hand to Hand**

Hand to Hand will be picked up from the back of the building on the blacktop by the tables. Parents will park at John Bishop Park and walk to the building.

If there is an emergency change to your child's dismissal and you are unable to send written documentation, please call the office as soon as possible **and no later than one hour prior to school dismissal (Kae Avenue - 2:35 pm)**. We may not be able to change dismissal for students with less than one hour's notice. The office is closed from 3:00 pm -3:45 pm daily.

**No parents are to park in the staff parking lot.**

## Office Hours

The office is open daily at 8:40 am. No one will be admitted to the office before this time.

The office is closed daily from 3:00 pm through 3:45 pm. During this time, no one will be admitted to the building and phone calls will not be answered by the office staff.

## **BANNED ITEMS**

For the safety of our students and staff, the following items are not to be brought to school. Please keep in mind that this list is not all-inclusive.

- Toys
- Chewing gum
- Skateboards/Scooters/In-Line Skates/Wheelies
- Trading Cards
- Laser Pointers
- Radios, CD Players, MP3 Players and I-Pods
- Guns and knives or anything that could be used as a weapon (including toys)
- All electronic games
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco or related paraphernalia

***Board Policy: KGC***

## **ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

Kae will follow all guidelines for attendance tracking, reporting, and truancy filing set forth by district policies. **(See District Information Section)**

### **Attendance Reporting & Absence Procedures**

#### **Daily Absence Notification**

If a child is absent, parents are required to call the school before 9:00 a.m. to inform the staff of the child's absence. School telephone numbers are listed after the cover page. A message can be left on voicemail, as it is checked regularly.

The District makes an attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student who has not notified the school of the student's absence that day regarding that student's absence without a legitimate excuse **within 120 minutes of the start of the school day**. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to determine and use the appropriate notification procedure and methods consistent with State law.

### **Return to School**

Parents shall send a note explaining the absence to the child's teacher when the child returns to school. In that note, parents should state if the child is contagious or needs special attention. Notes provide necessary attendance documentation for the building staff.

Each absent student must immediately, upon return to school, make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to make up for missed work. Students who are absent from school for reasons not permitted by State law may or may not be permitted to make up work; each case is considered on its merits by the principal and the respective teacher(s). Students who are absent due to an in-school or out-of-school suspension are permitted to make up missed classroom assignments in accordance with District-level policies and procedures.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

Whitehall City Schools is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and positive learning environment where all children can grow, learn, and succeed. Staff use a proactive, preventive, and instructional approach to behavior guidance that focuses on teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

Our programs utilize Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and social-emotional learning practices to help children develop the skills necessary for success in school and in life. Staff members intentionally teach, model, and encourage positive behaviors while fostering respectful relationships and a sense of belonging for all students.

### **Social-Emotional Skills for Success**

The following skills are essential for children's social, emotional, and academic development:

- Self-confidence and independence
- Positive relationship-building skills
- Ability to focus, persist, and manage frustration
- Recognition and appropriate expression of emotions
- Listening and following directions
- Social problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills
- Self-regulation and responsible decision-making
- Empathy and respect for others

Research shows that children who develop strong social-emotional skills are better prepared for academic success, healthy relationships, and positive lifelong outcomes. Therefore, our programs intentionally integrate social-emotional learning into daily routines and activities.

### **Behavior Guidance Practices**

Staff work collaboratively with families to support children's development and encourage positive behavior. When behavior concerns arise, staff will use developmentally appropriate strategies such as:

- Teaching and reinforcing expected behaviors
- Redirecting children to appropriate activities
- Providing choices and opportunities for problem-solving
- Modeling positive social interactions
- Supporting children in identifying and expressing their emotions
- Collaborating with families to develop consistent strategies when needed

### **Prohibited Discipline Practices**

To ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of every child, staff shall not:

- Neglect or leave a child unsupervised.
- Use corporal punishment or any form of physical discipline.
- Use cruel, harsh, humiliating, or unusual punishment.
- Threaten, shame, ridicule, or intimidate a child.
- Use profane, derogatory, or abusive language toward a child or family.
- Delegate responsibility for disciplining other children to a child.
- Use physical restraint except as permitted by law and district policy for emergency safety situations.
- Confine a child in a locked room, enclosed area, or any space from which the child cannot freely leave.
- Punish a child for toileting accidents, failure to eat, or inability to sleep or rest.
- Withhold food, rest, water, or access to restroom facilities.
- Punish an entire group of children because of the behavior of one or a few children.
- Exclude or isolate a child from activities for an extended period of time.

Our goal is to partner with families to create a positive, respectful, and supportive environment where every child can develop the skills needed to become a confident, capable, and successful learner.

**Students will be held accountable for their behaviors and the district will follow the processes set forth in the District's Student Code of Conduct when administering discipline.**

### **BICYCLES**

Bicycle riders are required to abide by the same laws as those governing cars and other vehicles. All bicycles must be walked on school property and parked and locked in the racks provided.

## BUSES

*(See Student Code of Conduct)*

## CAFETERIA

The Whitehall City Schools are committed to providing nutritious meals daily. All cafeteria meals must meet USDA nutritional standards. Therefore, students are not permitted to bring non-nutritious foods such as sodas.

Students with dietary restrictions must provide medical authorization for nutritional modifications.

We urge all students to use the cafeteria as it is intended. Students are expected to use good table manners and positive behavior at all times. Disruptions and behavior that are not within school behavioral guidelines will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to clear the table where they have eaten and exit the cafeteria in an orderly fashion. Food and drinks are not permitted outside the cafeteria at any time.

The school has a closed campus for lunch. Children will not be sent home for lunch. If you want your child to come home for lunch, you must come to the office and sign your child out. This is for your child's safety.

Breakfast and lunches are free for all students. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria 25 minutes prior to the opening of school. **Adult lunches are \$4.00.** Extra milk is .50 cents. Menus are posted in each classroom and are published.

At the beginning of each school year, or at the time of enrollment, parents are responsible for communicating any special dietary needs or food allergies, to the school. Substitutions for medical reasons to regular school meals can be made for students when that need is certified, in writing, by the student's physician.

## CELEBRATIONS

Families are welcome to send in store-bought treats for birthdays, but please check with your child's teacher first to make sure they follow classroom allergies and school rules. Treats should be brought to school by your child and not dropped off in the office. Also, **please do not send balloons, gifts, or cards to school.**

To keep everyone safe and included, we encourage non-food items as birthday alternatives. Things like stickers, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, or small toys are fun, easy to share, and make great birthday surprises for the whole class.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

**(See District Information Section)**

### **DRESS CODE**

A student's dress is an important factor in supporting a positive learning environment by improving student behavior, school security, school spirit and image in the community. Students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to the school environment and which does not cause disruption to the academic process or constitute a health threat to the individual or others. No flip flops, slides, or shoes without back straps.

(See appendix for board policy JFCA-R-1 -Student Dress Code)

### **SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES FOR WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS** **(See District Information Section)**

### **SCHOOL EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

**During All Fire Drills Or Tornado Drills, There Must Be Absolutely No Talking.**

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

(Fire, Tornado & other Safe School Drills)

Specific procedures are posted in each classroom. A schedule of practice drills will be established by each building.

### **FEES**

Students enrolled in district schools will be furnished ID Cards without cost. Replacement cost for ID cards is \$3.00.

Board Policy JN, ORC 3313.642

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Any student attending a field trip must have a completed field trip permission form on file at school.

(See Annual School Trip Permission Form in the appendix.)

Board Policy HCA

### **FIRE DRILLS**

*(See Emergency Procedures)*

### **HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)**

There are occasional cases of head lice within our student population. This can happen in any institution where people come in close contact with one another. Parents will be given information on the treatment and follow-up for head lice. Immediate treatment is essential to control this condition. If a student has been identified as having live lice on 3 or more occurrences, it will be considered chronic and at that time a meeting between the parent, school nurse, social worker and anyone else that it pertains to will be called. At the meeting a plan will be set up to help the family eradicate the lice infestation.

### **ILLNESS OR INJURY AT SCHOOL**

In the event of serious illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called. Attempts will be made to contact a child's parents when serious illness or injury occurs at school.

Please keep your school informed if you change your place of employment, your sitter, or any of your emergency contacts. Ill or injured elementary students will not be sent home alone.

At Whitehall City Schools, we take the health and well-being of our students seriously. The goal of the nursing staff is to keep students healthy and in school. There are occasions when students will be sent home or asked to remain out of school. These include:

- Vomiting – A student will be sent home and may return to school once he or she has been free from vomiting for 24 hours without the use of medication or with a physician's note deeming the student is not contagious. Exceptions are made for students with a related documented medical condition on file.
- Diarrhea – A student will be sent home if he or she is complaining of persistent diarrhea and may return after the student has been free from diarrhea for 24 hours without the use of medication, or with a physician's note deeming the student is not contagious. Exceptions are made for students with a related documented medical condition on file.
- Fevers – A student will be sent home with a temperature of 100.4 or higher. A student may return when he or she is fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (Tylenol and Ibuprofen).
- Any symptoms/illness that significantly impairs a student's ability to learn at the discretion of the nursing staff.

Parents will be asked to pick up students that are displaying any of the above symptoms. The nursing staff advises having back-up plans for sick students and updated contact information in Infinite Campus. If a student is displaying any of the above symptoms prior to the start of the school day, please call and speak to your students' nursing team member for directions. If there are any questions regarding these procedures, please reach out to your students' nursing team members.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

Students eligible for kindergarten and students new to the district must present written evidence of immunizations, or written evidence to indicate that they are in the process of receiving such immunizations. These should be completed no later than the day of entrance. Students failing to complete such immunizations within 14 days after entering are not permitted to return to school.

Board Policy JHCB

## **INHALERS FOR ASTHMA**

Children who require asthma inhalers are now allowed to carry them at school. In order to do so, the school must provide both the written permission of the parent and the written approval of the child's physician.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Students finding items at school should place them in the Lost and Found where the owner can claim them. Students losing items should check the Lost and Found frequently when attempting to find a lost item. Parents/guardians are encouraged to mark coats, jackets, hats, boots, lunch boxes, etc. with the student's name. Unclaimed items will be given to a charitable organization after a reasonable length of time. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **LUNCHES**

(See Cafeteria)

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

All prescription and over-the-counter medications can only be administered when the Whitehall City Schools medication form is completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the child's physician.

All medication must be in the original container with the original prescription label intact.

Board Policy JHCD-R, ORC 3313.713

## **MISSING CHILDREN & VERIFYING CUSTODY OF CHILDREN**

To comply with the "Missing Children Law" we require an original birth certificate be brought in for the registration process of new students.

Further, we require divorced or separated parents to prove custody prior to enrollment. We also require school records be forwarded to us to verify a student's attendance at other non-Whitehall schools. If no records are received after 14 days, the child may be reported to the Whitehall Police as a possible missing child.

Board Policy JEE

### **OFFICE HOURS**

8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Office is closed daily from 3:00-3:45

### **OPEN ENROLLMENT**

(See Enrollment)

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

(See Report Cards)

### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT/REDIRECTION OF A CHILD**

A student may need to be physically redirected or restrained in order to prevent them from harming themselves or others. Staff members may use prudent judgment when the need arises to touch a student who is creating a safety problem.

Board Policy JF

### **PLAYGROUND RULES**

- All students are to remain in the designated supervised area.
- Hazardous games or activities are not permitted.
- Once outside, students will remain outside until recess ends or a teacher instructs otherwise.
- Horseplay or throwing of dangerous objects will not be tolerated.
- No play fighting is allowed. If it looks like fighting, it's fighting, and must be stopped.
- Tackle and wrestling type activities are not permitted.
- All students are to remain in the designated supervised area.
- Hazardous games or activities are not permitted.
- Once outside, students will remain outside until recess ends or a teacher instructs otherwise.
- Horseplay or throwing of dangerous objects will not be tolerated.
- No play fighting is allowed. If it looks like fighting, it is fighting, and must be stopped.
- Tackle and wrestling type activities are not permitted.

### **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

Our Parent teacher organizations have shown excellent support for our school by providing classroom parties, fund-raising projects, scholarship programs and a multitude of other activities. You are encouraged to join and support the parent/teacher groups.

### **PROMOTION/RETENTION**

By law any student who has been truant for ten percent or more of the days school is in session cannot be promoted unless the principal and teacher agree that the student is academically prepared to proceed to the next grade. State of Ohio law requires students to attend school ninety percent of the day's school is in session.

**Board Policy IKE, ORC 3313.609**

Due to the state law referred to as Third Grade Reading Guarantee, a student must meet the promotion benchmark on the 3rd Grade English Language Arts Assessment. If a student does not reach that score, the student may still move on to fourth grade if he/she qualifies for a retention exemption, per ODE guidelines. If the student is not eligible for an exemption, but the student can demonstrate reading proficiency on the state assessment by the end of the summer, the student will be promoted to the fourth grade. If the student does not demonstrate proficiency in reading during the summer on a state approved assessment, then the student will be considered a retained student. The student will enter the third grade for the second time. Any promotion after the start of the school year, even as early as September, would be considered a mid-year promotion. ([www.ode.state.oh.us](http://www.ode.state.oh.us))

### **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL/RECESS WEATHER POLICY**

Please dress your child for the weather. All children will be expected to go outside for arrival/dismissal/recess unless a doctor's note is provided. However, if the wind chill temperature is below 25 degrees Fahrenheit, arrival/dismissal/recess may be held indoors.

### **RECORDS, ACCESS TO STUDENT**

Parents, legal guardians, and school personnel are the only persons permitted access to your child's records unless a signed release from the parent or legal guardian is secured.

**Board Policy JO, ORC 3313.642**

### **REPORT CARDS AND TEACHER CONFERENCES**

An excellent way of understanding your child's progress is by meeting with your child's teachers. The district schedules parent-teacher conferences twice a year. The teaching staff always encourages parent-teacher communication and will schedule conferences for parents as needed.

Progress reports are published on the Parent Portal 4 times per year for elementary school students. As a rule, reports are published one week after the end of the grading period. Student

achievement in grades Kindergarten through Four will be reported in terms of Proficient, Basic, or Limited. Fifth grade students receive traditional letter grades.

Academic success is a result of several factors, including school attendance, positive school attitude, class participation, and test performance.

### **SIGNING A CHILD OUT EARLY**

(See Visitation and Attendance)

### **STUDENT INSURANCE**

Student accident insurance is available to students of the Whitehall City Schools, at the financial responsibility of the parent. The insurance provides 24-hour coverage. Contact the school for more information on student insurance.

### **TEACHER CONFERENCES**

(See Report Cards)

### **TELEPHONE--STUDENT USE IN EMERGENCY**

Office phones are for school business; therefore, we must use discretion before permitting students to make calls. Students may use the phone after they have received permission from the school secretary or other office personnel. **Students may be allowed to possess pagers, cellular telephones and other electronic communications devices while on school property or while attending school-sponsored activities on or off school property, as long as these devices are turned off during school hours unless authorized by a school administrator.** Students are not permitted to call home for band instruments, P.E. clothes, homework, etc. Students are not allowed to receive phone calls at school. Should you need to reach your child, please call the school office and we will get a message to the student. Board Policy JFCK

### **TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY BOOKS, OR OTHER CLASSROOM BOOKS**

All books are loaned to students for their use during the school year. Your child is responsible for all loaned books. If your child loses, misplaces, or damages a book, you are responsible to pay for the replacement.

### **TORNADO DRILLS**

(See Emergency Procedures)

### **TRUANCY**

(See Attendance in District Information)

### **VISITATIONS TO SCHOOL**

Safety and security is of the utmost importance. If there are sensitive issues regarding access to your child during the school day, please make sure the classroom teacher, the school secretary, and the building principal are aware of the situation. Visitors will not be allowed to enter the building and walk to classrooms with students during arrival. All classroom observations and/or visits shall be by appointment only.

All visitors are required to report to the office, sign-in and pick up a visitor's pass.

### **VOLUNTEERS IN EDUCATION**

Parents and other interested adults are welcome to take part in helping our children. If you would like to participate in this program, please call the school.

# **DISTRICT INFORMATION**

## **Policies, Forms, and Expectations**

# DISTRICT STUDENT ATTENDANCE & DISMISSAL POLICY

## Absences and Excuses (Board Policy: JED)

Regular attendance by all students is very important. In many cases, irregular attendance is—the major reason for poor schoolwork; therefore, all students are urged to make appointments, do personal errands, etc., outside of school hours. Work missed through absences is difficult to make up. There is no substitute for the actual participation in the daily classroom discussion and work.

### Medically Excused Absences

Reasons for which students may be medically excused include, but are not limited to:

- Personal illness of the student.
- Illness in the student's family requires the presence of the child.
- Quarantine for contagious disease.
- Emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the Superintendent constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, which may include, but not be limited to, absences due to documented medical, behavioral, or dental appointments.

### Non-Medically Excused Absences

Reasons for which students may be non-medically excused include, but are not limited to:

- Needed at home to perform necessary work directly and exclusively for parents or legal guardians for a limited period of time when approved in advance by the Superintendent (applies to students over 14 years of age only when all statutory obligations have been met for such excusal).
- Death in the family (applies to absences of up to 18 school hours unless a reasonable cause may be shown for a longer absence).
- Observance of religious holidays is consistent with the truly held religious beliefs of the student or the student's family.
- Traveling out of state to attend a Board-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity (applies to absences of up to 24 school hours).
- College visitation.
- **Career and Workforce Technical Exploration (HB 98 Compliance):** Job interviews, vocational assessments, or formal presentations/interviews with career-technical education programs or certified skilled trade representatives.
- **Military Enlistment & Support (HB 98 Compliance):** Pre-enlistment reporting, processing at a military enlistment processing station, or absences of a student of a military family for purposes of visiting their parent, legal guardian, or custodian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services called to duty, on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment.
- Absences due to a student's placement in foster care, change in foster care placement, or any court proceedings related to their foster care status.
- Absences due to a student being homeless.
- Other reasons, as determined by the Superintendent.

## **Attendance Reporting & Absence Procedures**

### **Daily Absence Notification**

If a child is absent, parents are required to call the school before 9:00 a.m. to inform the staff of the child's absence. School telephone numbers are listed after the cover page. A message can be left on voicemail, as it is checked regularly.

The District makes an attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student who has not notified the school of the student's absence that day regarding that student's absence without a legitimate excuse **within 120 minutes of the start of the school day**. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to determine and use the appropriate notification procedure and methods consistent with State law.

### **Return to School**

Parents shall send a note explaining the absence to the child's teacher when the child returns to school. In that note, parents should state if the child is contagious or needs special attention. Notes provide necessary attendance documentation for the building staff.

Each absent student must immediately, upon return to school, make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to make up for missed work. Students who are absent from school for reasons not permitted by State law may or may not be permitted to make up work; each case is considered on its merits by the principal and the respective teacher(s). Students who are absent due to an in-school or out-of-school suspension are permitted to make up missed classroom assignments in accordance with District-level policies and procedures.

### **Family Vacations**

The Board does not believe that students should be excused from school for vacations or other non-emergency trips. The responsibility for such absences resides with the parent(s), and they must not expect any work missed by their child to be retaught by the teacher. If the school is notified in advance of such a trip, reasonable efforts are made to prepare a general list of assignments for the student to do while he/she is absent.

### **Driving Privileges Suspension**

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to establish a hearing and notification procedure for the purpose of denying a student's driving privileges if that student of compulsory school age has been absent without legitimate excuse for more than 60 consecutive hours during a school month or a total of at least 90 hours during a school year.

### **District Absence Intervention Strategies**

The district will use a continuum of strategies to reduce student absence, including, but not limited to:

- Notification of student absences to the parent and guardian.
- Development and implementation of an absence intervention plan, which may include supportive services for students and families.
- Counseling.
- Parent education and parenting programs.
- Mediation.
- Intervention programs available through juvenile authorities.
- Referrals for truancy, if applicable.

## Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism

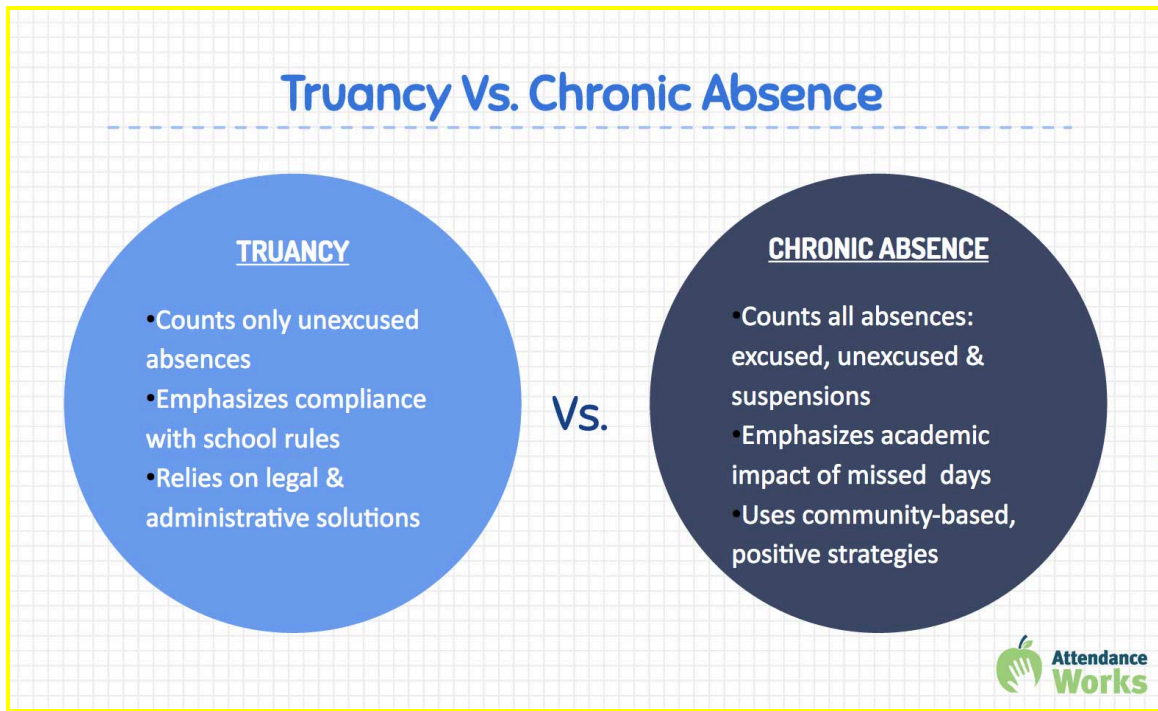
### Habitual Truancy

A student is legally classified as a habitual truant when they miss school **strictly without a legitimate excuse**. Triggering this tier requires the school to form an Absence Intervention Team with the family within 7 to 10 days to build a formal, mandatory attendance correction plan. Under state law, uniform access opportunities for armed forces recruiters, certified skilled trades, or vocational programs cannot be coded as unexcused.

- **Consecutive Track:** Absent **30 or more consecutive hours** without a legitimate excuse.
- **Monthly Track:** Absent **42 or more hours** in one school month without a legitimate excuse.
- **Annual Track:** Absent **72 or more hours** in one school year without a legitimate excuse.

### Chronic Absenteeism

A student is considered chronically absent if they miss **10% or more of the school year** for any reason (excused or unexcused). This metric serves as an overarching indicator of academic risk and is a key benchmark used by the administration when evaluating long-term student development, intervention success, and class retention decisions.



## Illness Accommodation Protocols

### Multi-Day Illness

If a student is anticipated to be absent for multiple days, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school for daily assignments.

- Parents must give teachers a **24-hour notice** to prepare homework assignments for ill children.
- Teachers will select assignments that should be made up and how much review and remedial work will be required.
- Parents are encouraged to help with directions and give examples, but all work must be done independently.

### Extended Illness/Recovery (Virtual Home Instruction)

If a student requires an extended period of absence due to chronic illness or the need to recover from an injury or surgery, the district can provide virtual home instruction to assist the student in staying current with school work.

A letter from a medical professional is **REQUIRED**. The letter must include a general description of the condition making home instruction necessary and an estimated date of return to school. To initiate this process, please contact the Special Services office at (614) 417-5013.

## School Day Arrival & Dismissal Routines

### Arrival Safety

Students should not arrive at school before the start of breakfast. Teachers and staff are not on duty prior to this time, and there will be no adult supervision. If a child arrives after the official start of the school day, he/she must report directly to the main office to sign in before going to the classroom.

### General Dismissal

Children are expected to leave the building and school grounds immediately upon dismissal. It is important for our students to follow the routine upon dismissal. Please ensure that your child is picked up at the appropriate dismissal time. Be sure to communicate all routine dismissal information to your child's teacher in writing.

### Early Sign-Outs

If it is necessary for a child to leave school before dismissal time, a written note must be sent in advance, and an authorized adult must sign the student out through the main office. Please do not interrupt your child's class by going directly to the classroom.

### Emergency Dismissal Changes

We understand that emergencies happen and changes to dismissal routines may be needed, however rare. If your child is to be dismissed differently for the day, please send written communication of the change to your child's teacher.

If there is an emergency change to your child's dismissal and you are unable to send written documentation, you must call the main office as soon as possible and **no later than one hour prior to that building's specific school dismissal time** (e.g., 1:55 p.m. for Beechwood, 2:15 p.m. for Etna, 2:35 p.m. for Kae Avenue). The district may not be able to accommodate or safely execute dismissal modifications for students with less than one hour's notice.

## Building-Specific Scheduling Addendums

### High School Exceptions: Early Release and Late Start

Students at the High School level may be granted an early release or late start in their daily schedule based on course tracks and credit fulfillment.

- **Academic Standing Requirement:** This scheduling flexibility is a privilege, not a right. If a student utilizing either option begins to fail a class, the early release or late start option may be immediately removed from their schedule.
- **Building Clearance:** Students who are granted early release must exit the school building immediately following their last scheduled class bell.

## ATHLETICS

### General Eligibility

The Ohio High School Athletic Association outlines eligibility rules and regulations that cover a broad spectrum. Listed below are those basic rules with academic eligibility rules listed in the following section. Specific information can be found on the OHSAA website or by contacting the athletic offices.

**High School:** After entering ninth grade for the first time, students are permitted 8 consecutive semesters of playing eligibility regardless of whether they participate in a sport or not. A student will become ineligible when he/she turns 20 years of age.

**Middle School:** A student who turns 15 before August 1 of the school year in which he/she desires to participate is not eligible for seventh and eighth grade athletics (there are two limited exceptions to this regulation outlined in Bylaw 4-2-2 OHSAA)

1. A student must be a legal resident of the Whitehall City School district or have an approved open enrollment.
2. A student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must reside in Ohio.
3. A student must maintain amateur status.
4. A student may not provide any false information regarding name, address, academic performance, or the like.
5. A student may not participate on any non-school team of the same sport while participating on any school team.
6. This includes rec, travel, church, community, all-star, etc.
7. A student may not be recruited to attend or participate at a member school.
8. A student may not use anabolic steroids or other performance enhancing drugs.
9. Students must have all OHSAA or WCSD forms (physical, transfer, foreign exchange, etc.) on file with the school prior to any participation.

### Academic Eligibility

The student must pass the equivalent of five half or full credit courses in the previous grading period as required by the Ohio High School Athletic Association for High School participation and four full credit courses in the previous grading period for Middle School. In addition, the following requirements must be met to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities:

1. A student must obtain a minimum GPA of 2.0 the preceding grading period to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.
2. All grades (passing, failing, and incomplete) will be averaged to determine the GPA.
3. A grade marked as an incomplete will be treated as an "F" until make-up work is completed and the grade is officially changed.
4. "WF - Withdrawal Failing" will be averaged as an "F" unless the course was dropped by teacher recommendation due to incorrect placement.

5. Eligibility for new students to the Whitehall City School District will be determined by meeting minimum standards as set by the OHSAA upon receiving transcripts from the previous school.
  6. Provisions may be made for individual students with special or adjusted educational needs and/or extenuating circumstances (i.e. medical).
  7. Athletic Directors shall have the right to require attendance at study sessions for participating students, on an individual and/or group basis, to be eligible for participation in extracurricular activities.
  8. Attendance is necessary for a student to receive the maximum benefit from the instructional program in the Whitehall City Schools.
- A. Student athletes are required to attend school at least half of the school day, (11:00am) except for excused appointments, to be eligible to participate in practices or contests.
- If a student athlete leaves school due to illness the day of a practice/contest, he/she must provide the athletic department with a physician's note to be eligible to participate. If a student athlete leaves school due to reasons other than illness, he/she must have prior approval by the athletic department in order to be eligible for participation that day.
- B. During their sports season, student athletes who arrive after the start of the official school day tardy, unexcused, absent unexcused, or have disciplinary issues during the day could face the following consequences:

Revocation of privileges may occur should the student acquire any one of the following:

- 7 or more unexcused absences in a quarter
- 7 or more unexcused tardies to school in a quarter
- 3 or more assignments to ISS Room in a quarter
- 2 or more Out of School Suspensions, including Emergency Removal
- Failing 2 or more classes at grade checks and 9-week quarter grade reports.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Whitehall City School District (WCS) celebrates and rewards the RAMS Way with respectful, accountable, motivated and safe behavior within its schools. We believe that when students are aware of what is expected of them, the great majority of our students will make wise choices. Per the Ohio Department of Education, WCS has established a PBIS Plan (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support). We believe all students can learn and grow from mistakes. When behavior doesn't meet expectations, our focus is on reteaching, repairing harm, and restoring relationships so learning can continue safely for everyone. The Whitehall City Schools Student Code of Conduct serves as a guide for students, families, and staff to learn District expectations. The examples of offenses listed in the WCS Code of Conduct are not intended to provide a complete list of offenses that may result in disciplinary action. Any act that disrupts learning and threatens the order, the safety of students, and/or the school environment will be considered for disciplinary action.

### **Student Rules of Conduct First Warning**

Your acknowledgment of these rules constitutes a first warning. You will be given no further warnings. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these rules and the consequences of violating them. The rules herein apply to all students when on all school premises, at all school-sponsored activities, and when aboard a school bus or other Board-owned vehicle. The application of policies in this handbook applies to all Whitehall City Schools activities.

### **Availability of Board of Education Policies**

The Board of Education has established policies and procedures that pertain to students, staff, and school operations. These policies and procedures can be found via links on the District website.

### **Notice of Language Assistance**

Whitehall City Schools will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in all services, activities, and programs available throughout the district. It is the policy of WCS to ensure meaningful communication with LEP students and families and to communicate information related to the education of all students. All services needed to comply with this policy will be provided for students and their families in need of such assistance free of charge. For assistance, please call 614-417-5000.

### **Rights of Students and Parents/Guardians**

In public schools, parents/guardians and students have certain rights given by federal and state laws and Board of Education policies. Nevertheless, the individual rights of students will be weighed against the safety and welfare of the majority of students in the schools.

### **Whitehall City Schools believes that:**

- Students have the right to learn.

- Students have the right to feel safe.
- Students have the right to be treated fairly.
- Students have the right to respectfully express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.
- Students have the right to feel valued & affirmed.
- Students have the right to learn and grow from their mistakes.
- Students have the right to be engaged & involved in their own learning.

### **Due Process of Law**

As a WCS student and parent/guardian, you have the right to due process of the law. Before a student is suspended, the student has the right to receive written notice of the reason for the intended suspension and has an opportunity for an informal hearing. Before a student is expelled, the student and the parent/guardian, have the right to receive written notice of the reason for the proposed expulsion and have an opportunity for an informal hearing before the Superintendent or Designee.

### **School's Right to Search**

Lockers are assigned to students for their personal belongings, but are considered school property. Sharing of lockers is prohibited. The locker and its contents may be searched at the Administrator's discretion. All lockers must be locked.

Lockers, desks, and any storage place provided for student use is, and remains at all times, property of the Whitehall City School Board of Education. These areas and the contents therein are subject to search at any time, pursuant to board policy. Students' vehicles at school or at a school function may also be searched pursuant to board policy. The regulation also applies to the use of any school district equipment including furniture, computers, and related accessories. The Board also authorizes the use of devices and canines trained in detecting the presence of drugs when the Administration has reasonable suspicion that illegal drugs or devices may be present in a school.

There are certain circumstances in which school officials may be authorized to conduct a search of a student or a student's personal property based on individualized reasonable suspicion. School officials may conduct a search of a student's person or property if they have reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or school rules and regulations.

### **Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

Students have the right to learn, feel safe, and be treated fairly — and the responsibility to help others feel the same. As a WCS Student, you have the responsibility:

- To know and follow the rules and regulations of Whitehall City Schools;
- To do your part to create a positive environment at your school by working toward academic excellence, striving for perfect attendance, and participating in school activities;

- To respect the dignity and worth of yourself, your fellow students, your teachers, and the school staff;
- To respect the authority of teachers, school administrators, and other authorized personnel in maintaining discipline;
- To behave in a way that does not disrupt the educational process or lead to physical or emotional harm;
- To learn problem-solving skills to effectively handle conflict situations in an effort to avoid disrespectful and harmful behaviors.

**STUDENTS ARE PERSONALLY AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARE AND SECURITY OF THEIR PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND THE SCHOOL ITEMS ISSUED TO THEM. THE WHITEHALL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LOSS, THEFT, DAMAGE, OR VANDALISM OF A STUDENT'S PERSONAL OR SCHOOL-ISSUED PROPERTY.**

### **Consequences and Strategies to Correct Behavior**

All students have the right to learn. No student has the right to disrupt the learning activities of others. The safety and security of your child is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe learning environment. Our staff is committed to teaching and reinforcing positive behavior, providing corrective instruction when expectations are not met. Responses to behavior are designed to support learning and growth and may vary based on a student's age, grade level, individual needs, students with disabilities, history, and the nature or seriousness of the behavior.

Each building establishes its own school-wide PBIS Plan that includes activities for teaching and encouraging expected behaviors. The school principal and staff communicate the school-wide PBIS Plan to parents/guardians and students on an annual basis, as well as to new student enrollees.

### **Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct**

The most important goal of the WCS District extra-curricular program is to provide every participant the opportunity to grow mentally, morally, physically, and emotionally, and to further provide for the safety, health, and welfare of the participant. It must be remembered that participation in extra-curricular activities is not a right but a privilege that may be regulated. Therefore, all students who participate in interscholastic athletics or other extra-curricular activities at any time must meet the WCS Code of Conduct and the conditions that apply which are outlined in this manual.

### **Behavioral Intervention Strategies in our District**

An intervention strategy is an action designed to help a student overcome academic and/or behavioral barriers to learning. School personnel will use intervention strategies to help

prevent or reduce negative behaviors. This list is not inclusive of all interventions that a team or administrator may decide to provide for a student.

**1. Parent/Guardian Contact/Conference**

Notification and a conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s) should take place regarding the student's behavior for disciplinary actions.

**2. School-Based Behavioral Interventions**

Examples of interventions include strategies such as the creation of a behavioral contract with the student, participation in anger management training, loss of privilege, office time-out, loss of recess, re-teaching the behavioral expectation, referral to a school counselor, referral to the school's health lab, other support services, and development of a community service plan or a behavior improvement program/plan.

**3. Detention/Behavior Intervention**

A student may be required to stay after school or be assigned to lunch detention as a consequence of their behavior. The detention may include lessons in behavior management created to help a student learn problem-solving skills that will lead them to make positive choices.

**4. Emergency Removal**

Exclusion of a student who poses a continuing danger to District property or persons in the District or whose behavior presents an ongoing threat of disrupting the educational process provided by the District. The emergency removal may be for part of a day and does not count toward suspension days.

**5. In-School Suspension**

Reassignment of the student from the classroom to an alternative setting will take place. Students assigned to in-school suspension will be excluded from extracurricular activities until the next school day following the completion of their suspension.

**6. Out-of-School Suspension**

Removal of a student from school for a period of one to ten days will be decided based upon the level of offense. While students are suspended from school, they may have the opportunity to work on class assignments. During the suspension, students are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, be on any school property, or ride in any school bus/vehicle. Appeal procedures are available at any school building upon request and are included in the notice of suspension. Classwork will be provided when the outcome decided upon is an out-of-school suspension.

Students in kindergarten through third grade will receive out-of-school discipline aligned with the current laws of the State of Ohio.

## **7. Expulsion**

Removal of a student from school for a period of eleven school days to one calendar year will occur based upon the severity of the offense. Students expelled from the district are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, be on any school property, or ride in any school bus/vehicle. Expulsion may result in the loss of credit for courses being taken at school, at the Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools, or at any college or university, whether under an Education Option, CCP, or at the student's own expense. Expulsion may extend into the following school year. Additionally, any student expelled will not have access to the School of Choice, Community Choice, or Open Enrollment Lottery Process for transfer between schools upon their return the following school year, and are not permitted to be on other school campuses that serve as an extension to our program (college campus, career centers, etc.).

## **8. Individualized Plan**

Grades and related academic credit(s) are awarded to students upon successful completion of their assignment.

## **9. Use of Outside Agencies**

School buildings may also utilize outside agencies to provide services and positive behavior interventions.

## **10. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED**

### **Student Bus Conduct**

Bus expectations are the same as RAMS Way — be **Respectful** (listen to the driver), **Accountable** (stay seated), **Motivated** (follow directions quickly), and **Safe** (keep hands and feet to yourself). Students on a bus or other authorized Board of Education transportation vehicles are under the authority of and directly responsible to the bus/vehicle driver. The driver has the authority to enforce the established regulations for bus/vehicle conduct. Disorderly conduct or refusal to submit to the authority of the driver will be sufficient reason for refusing transportation service to any student. A student may be suspended from school bus/vehicle riding privileges for all or part of a school year for any violation of established regulations for bus conduct and/or conduct occurring on the bus/vehicle in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Before a suspension from bus/vehicle riding privileges is imposed, the Superintendent or other designated District personnel will provide a student with notice of an intended suspension and an opportunity to appear before the Superintendent or other designated personnel. Disciplinary suspension periods will be commensurate with the infraction(s) committed as determined by the Superintendent or designated personnel.

### **Surveillance Equipment**

The WCS District is dedicated to a safe and secure school system. For student safety and welfare, video surveillance equipment and other devices are placed throughout the buildings and school grounds and on buses. Actions recorded on these cameras may be used as evidence in disciplinary action. Any attempt to damage or interfere with the function of these devices will result in disciplinary action by the school and possible referral to local law enforcement agencies.

### **School Resource Officers**

The School Resource Officer program is a cooperative agreement between the Whitehall City School District and the City of Whitehall. This program assigns Police Officers to support the Whitehall City School District. In addition to their law enforcement duties, the School Resource Officers provide mentoring to students, interact with faculty, and participate in the classroom as guest speakers. The addition of the School Resource Officers has not only provided a safe school environment but also enhances a positive relationship between students and the police.

### **Anonymous Safety Reporting**

Please report all safety issues to the office. Students who feel uncomfortable reporting this information to the office may see an administrator, teacher, or counselor. Additionally, concerns can be reported to the Safer Ohio School Tipline by calling 844-723-3764. Calls to the Safer Ohio School Tipline can be made anonymously.

### **Student Behavior Expectations and Responses**

The goal of all discipline is to correct and modify behavior to ensure a safe and positive learning environment. The district will utilize both supportive and corrective measures to address student misbehaviors. Multiple options for correcting student behavior may be selected depending on individual student needs including the age and grade level of the student, history of misbehavior, and seriousness of any specific offense.

The level of infractions and potential school and district responses are outlined in the WCS Infraction Matrix section below. The matrix is followed by a description of each infraction. Both the matrix and descriptions serve as a general guide. Infraction classifications and disciplinary consequences may vary as determined by the school or district administrator.

## **WCS Behavior Expectations Infraction Matrix**

### **Level I: Minor Offenses**

- Violations that have the potential to negatively impact the safe learning environment.

### **Level II: Moderate Misconduct or Repeated Level I Offenses**

- Violations that may cause harm or potential harm to person or property.

### **Level III: Serious Misconduct or Repeated Level I or Level II Offenses**

- Violations of serious misconduct, illegal offenses, health-threatening offenses that may cause harm or potential harm to a person or property

**Corrective Measures:** Multiple options for correcting student behavior may be selected depending on individual student needs including the age and grade level of the student, history of misbehavior, and seriousness of any specific offense.

| SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES & CONSEQUENCES |                                                                |                                                                                       |                             |                           |                                      |                                   |                   |                      |                                                   |                        |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Infraction Level                     | Student Code of Conduct Infractions                            | Code of Conduct Infraction Number --> **code used for multiple repeated infractions** | Support Initiatives         |                           |                                      | Corrective Measures               |                   |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      |                                                                |                                                                                       | Parent & Student Conference | School Based Intervention | Referral to Student Support Programs | Detention / Behavior Intervention | Community Service | In School Suspension | Out of School Suspension or Alternative Placement | Referral for Expulsion |
| Level 1: Minor Infraction            | Inappropriate Behavior - Disturbance                           | 7a --> 11                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | N/A                  |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Inappropriate Behavior - Horseplay                             | 7b --> 8                                                                              | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Inappropriate Behavior - Loitering                             | 7c --> 17                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Inappropriate Behavior - Electronics                           | 7d --> 25                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Inappropriate Behavior - Cheating                              | 7e --> 23                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Disrespect - Profanity                                         | 10a --> 9                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Disrespect - Minor act of Defiance                             | 10b --> 11                                                                            | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Public Display of Affection (P.D.A.)                           | 15 --> 16                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Tardiness/Missing from Class                                   | 19 --> 18                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Unauthorized Use of Property                                   | 21 --> 14                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
|                                      | Dress Code Violation                                           | 24 --> 11                                                                             | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 |                      |                                                   |                        |
| Level 2: Moderate Infraction         | Counterfeit Substances                                         | 2                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Smoking or Use of Tobacco                                      | 3                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Committing a Felonious Act or Other Violation of Law           | 4                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Unauthorized Touching or Hitting or Throwing                   | 8                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Insubordination                                                | 11                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Damage to School Property/Vandalism                            | 12                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Extortion                                                      | 13 --> 9                                                                              | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Theft or Possessing Stolen Property                            | 14                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Sexual Misconduct                                              | 16                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Presence in an Unauthorized Area or Trespassing                | 17                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Truancy                                                        | 18                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | N/A                                               |                        |
|                                      | Driving Regulations/Use of Auto/Illegal Parking                | 20                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Bus Behavior                                                   | 22                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Academic Dishonesty                                            | 23                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Improper Possession and/or Use of Electronic Equipment/Devices | 25                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Fighting                                                       | 26                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Gambling                                                       | 28                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    | X                                 | X                 | X                    | X                                                 | X                      |
| Level 3: Serious Infraction          | Alcohol and Drugs                                              | 1                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    |                                   |                   |                      | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Possession or Use of Weapons or Dangerous Instruments          | 5                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    |                                   |                   |                      | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Inducing Panic                                                 | 6                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    |                                   |                   |                      | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Bullying and Hazing (Harassment and Intimidation)              | 9                                                                                     | X                           | X                         | X                                    |                                   |                   |                      | X                                                 | X                      |
|                                      | Serious Bodily Injury                                          | 27                                                                                    | X                           | X                         | X                                    |                                   |                   |                      | X                                                 | X                      |

## Substance Use Matrix

| <b>Tobacco/Vaping<br/>(non-drug)</b> | <b>Drugs<br/>and/or<br/>Alcohol</b> | <b>Disciplinary Strategies and Consequences</b>                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1st Offense</b>                   | <b>N/A</b>                          | Up to 10-day suspension without an expulsion. Can be reduced to 3 days (1 day OSS, 2 days ISS/PALS) with completion of drug screen and intervention deemed necessary.  |
| <b>2nd Offense</b>                   | <b>1st<br/>Offense</b>              | Up to 10-day suspension without an expulsion. Can be reduced to 5 days (2 days OSS, 3 days ISS/PALS) with completion of drug screen and intervention deemed necessary. |
| <b>3rd Offense</b>                   | <b>2nd<br/>Offense</b>              | Up to 10-day suspension (7 days OSS, 3 days ISS/PALS) without an expulsion. Referral to an outside agency.                                                             |
| <b>N/A</b>                           | <b>3rd<br/>Offense</b>              | Up to 10-day suspension with recommendation for expulsion.                                                                                                             |

This matrix serves as an additional guide for substance use infractions. Early intervention and drug screening are embedded to best support and educate students. Interventions and consequences to substance use infractions may include mandatory individual and/or family-based education, counseling, small group discussions, etc.

## Code of Conduct Infraction Descriptions

### 1. Alcohol and Drugs

- a. For purposes of this section of the Code of Conduct, the term "Substance" shall include, but not be limited to the following: alcohol; illegal drugs; medications; narcotics; hallucinogens; amphetamines; barbiturates; marijuana; steroids; caffeine tablets; K2, spice, posh, "legal weed", or any other marijuana substitute; look-alike drugs; or any substance that is represented to be, to contain, to mimic, or be used to produce the same or similar effects as illegal drugs, narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, edibles, alcohol, CBD products, stimulants, depressants, or other intoxicants; or any other controlled substance as defined under the laws of Ohio or federal

- law. E-cigarettes, vaping, juuling, IQOS, or the use of other similar devices used to inhale or ingest foreign substances will be treated as a drug violation.
- b. A student shall not possess, solicit, use, conceal, sell, distribute, offer to sell, purchase, be under the influence of, show evidence of consumption, supply, distribute, or transmit any substance, or otherwise violate Board Policy.
- c. "Possession" includes, but is not limited to, retention of a substance on the student's person or in a bag, purse, wallet, locker, desk, or vehicle. Included in this prohibition is the possession of drug paraphernalia, which includes, but is not limited to rolling papers, and other items used to inject, inhale, administer, deliver, ingest, or otherwise consume a substance.

## **2. Counterfeit Substances**

- a. No student shall possess any counterfeit "Substance," as the term is defined under "Alcohol and Drugs;". No student shall possess any counterfeit money, nor shall any student make, sell, offer to sell, give, package, conceal, supply, transmit, or deliver a counterfeit substance. Possession is defined under "Alcohol and Drugs."
- b. No student shall directly or indirectly represent a counterfeit Substance as a Substance that is prohibited by the Code of Conduct by describing, either with words or conduct, its effects as being the same or similar to the physical or mental effects associated with the use of a Substance.
- c. No student shall directly or indirectly represent a counterfeit Substance as a Substance that is prohibited by the Code of Conduct.
  - i. Any Substance that bears, or whose container or label bears, a trademark, trade name, or other identifying mark used without authorization of the owner or rights to such trademark, trade name, or identifying mark;
  - ii. Any unmarked or unlabeled contraband that is represented to be a Substance prohibited by the Code of Conduct, which is manufactured, processed, packaged, or distributed;
  - iii. Anything that is represented to be a Substance prohibited by the Code of Conduct but does not fall within the definition of a "Substance."
  - iv. Anything that a reasonable person would believe to be a Substance prohibited by the Code of Conduct because of its similarity in shape, size, color, markings, labeling, packaging, distribution, or the price for which it is sold or offered for sale.

## **3. Smoking or Use of Tobacco**

- a. Ohio law prohibits pupils from smoking and/or using and/or possessing and/or selling tobacco in any area under the control of the school district or at any activity supervised by any school in that district.
- b. E-cigarettes, vaping, juuling, IQOS, or the use of other similar devices used to inhale or ingest foreign substances deemed to not be a CBD/THC or other illicit substance.

- c. Therefore, a student shall not smoke, otherwise use, possess, buy, sell, attempt to sell, distribute, or burn tobacco in any form, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes/vaporizers, vaping devices, cigars, clove cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other nicotine products.
- d. Students may be assumed to be smoking if any one of the following conditions exists;
  - i. odor of smoke present,
  - ii. more than one person in a restroom stall,
  - iii. or refusing to come out of the stall if asked.

#### **4. Committing a Felonious Act or Other Violation of Law**

- a. A student shall not commit any act not listed herein that constitutes a felony, misdemeanor, or violation of an ordinance.

#### **5. Possession or Use of Weapons or Dangerous Instruments**

- a. A student shall not possess, transmit, or conceal a dangerous weapon, dangerous instrument, or “look-alike” counterfeit weapon or instrument. Such items include, but are not limited to, explosives, bullets, fireworks, mace and/or pepper spray, firearms, knives, BB or pellet guns, tasers or any object that can reasonably be considered a dangerous instrument. Look-alike weapons include but are not limited to, any object a reasonable person might consider, under the circumstances, to be a weapon or dangerous instrument, this includes toy look-alike guns.
- b. Additionally, [O.R.C. Sec. 2923.122](#) makes it a felony for any person to knowingly convey, attempt to convey, or possess any deadly weapon or dangerous ordinance onto or on any property owned by or controlled by, or to any activity held under the auspices of, a school. A violation may result in the student being expelled for a period of one calendar year. Violators of the Code of Conduct may be referred to civil authorities. Whenever a student is suspended, expelled, or permanently excluded from school for a Code of Conduct violation involving a firearm, knife, or other weapons, the student may lose or be denied a driver’s license.
- c. Infractions broken down by weapon type due to State reporting guidelines. Firearm (5A) , firearm look-a-like (5B), other dangerous weapons (5C), or explosives (5D).

#### **6. Inducing Panic ([ORC 2917.31](#))**

- a. No student shall induce panic, i.e., cause the evacuation of any school building or otherwise cause serious public inconvenience or alarm, by:
  - i. Initiating or circulating a report or warning of an alleged or impending fire, explosion, crime, or other catastrophes, knowing that such a report or warning is false. Examples include, but are not limited to, pulling a

- fire alarm when you know there is no fire, making a bomb threat when you know there is no bomb, and making a fake “hit list”.
- ii. Threatening to commit an offense of violence, as that term is defined in O.R.C. Section 2917.31. Examples include, but are not limited to, threatening to kill, assault, kidnap, rape, or rob someone, to commit extortion, to provoke a riot, to commit arson, or to discharge a firearm at or into the school.
- iii. Committing any offense with reckless disregard for the likelihood that its commission will cause serious public inconvenience or alarm. For purposes of this policy, reckless disregard means perversely disregarding a known risk that your conduct is likely to cause serious public inconvenience or alarm, and being heedlessly indifferent to the effects of your actions on others.
- iv. Any student who violates this rule will be subject to school discipline, in accordance with board policy and the Code of Conduct. In addition, any student who violates this rule may be referred to the authorities. Under Ohio law, any person who “induces panic” is guilty of a felony, regardless of whether anyone is hurt or the school suffers economic harm.
- v. Students may be expelled for one calendar year. (See ORC Section 2917.31)
- b. This could include, but is not limited to, social media posts, in person comments, or notes.

## **7. Inappropriate Behavior**

- a. DISTURBANCES: Students causing disturbances on school premises (i.e. classroom disruption, profanity not directed at a person)
  - i. Including but not limited to excessive noise, which will also include excessive noise for electronic devices and/or speakers.
- b. Horseplay between students
- c. Blocking/loitering
- d. Minor electronics violations
- e. Cheating - Minor violations of cheating, as outlined in academic dishonesty, being classroom managed

## **8. Unauthorized Touching or Hitting or Throwing**

- a. This is the act of physically touching, ~~or~~ hitting, throwing objects, or assault to a student or employee of the school system, or any other person while on school property or at a school event. This includes spitting or forcing bodily fluid onto a person. Charges may be filed in the event of an assault. A violation may result in the student being expelled for a period of up to one calendar year.

**9. Bullying and Hazing (Harassment and Intimidation) [\\*\\*Incident reporting form](#) required documenting ongoing and/or pervasiveness of events required\*\***

- a. Ongoing and/or pervasive harassing, hazing, intimidating, bullying, and/or dating violence behavior by any student in the District is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. Harassment, hazing, intimidation, bullying, and/or dating violence means any intentional written, verbal, electronic, graphic, or physical acts, including electronically transmitted acts, either overt or covert, by a student or group of students toward other students or school personnel with the intent to haze, harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity; in any District publication; through the use of any District-owned or operated communication tools, including but not limited to District e-mail accounts and/or computers; on school-provided transportation; or at any official school bus stop.
- b. Bullying is defined according to [ORC 3313.666](#)
- c. Ongoing and/or pervasive hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or dating violence can include many different behaviors. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:
  - i. physical violence and/or attacks;
  - ii. threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures;
  - iii. extortion, damage, or stealing of money and/or possessions;
  - iv. exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors;
  - v. repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other web-based/online sites (also known as cyberbullying), such as the following:
    - 1. posting slurs on web sites, social networking sites, blogs or personal online journals;
    - 2. sending abusive or threatening emails, web site postings or comments and instant messages;
    - 3. using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs or videos of students and/or distributing or posting the photos or videos online and
    - 4. using web sites, social networking sites, blogs or personal online journals, e-mails or instant messages to circulate gossip and rumors to other students.

**10. Disrespect**

- a. A student shall not use abusive, obscene, profane, or offensive language, gestures, or signs toward another student, school employee, or adult. This could include, but is not limited to, social media posts, in person comments, or notes.

- i. excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers.
- b. Minor acts of defiance

#### **11. Insubordination**

- a. A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable requests or directives of adults or school employees.

#### **12. Damage to School Property/Vandalism**

- a. A student shall not knowingly cause or attempt to cause physical damage to any school building or school property or private property of another, including the private property of school employees on school property. Parents, guardians, or custodians shall be held financially responsible for any such property damage, by their child, pursuant to O.R.C. [3109.09](#), [2307.70](#), and any other applicable sections of law. The building administrator will determine the extent of the damage and will assign discipline.
  - i. Fires - A student shall not burn or attempt to burn any part of any building or objects, or any other property belonging to another person or to the Whitehall City Schools, unless authorized by school personnel.

#### **13. Extortion**

- a. Extortion is defined, by Ohio Revised Code, as exposing or threatening to expose any matter tending to subject a person to hatred, contempt, or ridicule, or to damage any person's personal or business repute, or to impair any person's credit.
- b. A student shall not commit an act of extortion, threatened extortion, or threaten reprisals in order to secure an object, benefit, or service from another person.

#### **14. Theft or Possessing Stolen Property**

- a. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal property. If a student finds an item that does not belong to him/her, they must immediately turn it into a staff member. A person commits a theft when he/she:
  - i. obtains or exerts unauthorized control over the property of the owner (including computer software or copyrighted material); or
  - ii. obtains by deception control over the property of the owner; or
  - iii. obtains by threat control over the property of the owner; or
  - iv. obtains control over stolen property, knowing the property to have been stolen or under circumstances, as would lead him/her to reasonably believe that the property was stolen, and he/she:
    - 1. intends to deprive the owner of the use or benefit of the property; or

2. knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property in such a manner as to deprive the owner of such use or benefit; or
3. uses, conceals, or abandons the property, knowing such use, concealment, or abandonment probably will deprive the owner of such use or benefit.

#### **15. Public Display of Affection (P.D.A.)**

- a. Students shall not have physical contact including but not limited to: cuddling, kissing and/or any other intimate touching.

#### **16. Sexual Misconduct**

- a. Students shall not engage in sexual misconduct on school grounds or at school-sanctioned events as defined in Ohio Revised Code ([ORC 2907.01](#)), including but not limited to fondling, sexual contact, sexual activity, intercourse, masturbation, nudity, prostitution, sexual acts that are harmful to juveniles,
- b. Pornography & Sexting
  - i. The possessing, taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing of nude, obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs.
  - ii. Whether by local storage or electronic data transfers or otherwise (commonly called texting, emailing, posting on social media, etc.) may constitute a crime under state and/or federal law.
  - iii. Any person possessing, taking, disseminating, or sharing nude, obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs may be punished under this Code of Conduct and may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

#### **17. Presence in an Unauthorized Area**

- a. A student shall not be on school grounds or in any unauthorized area of school grounds or any Whitehall City Schools building without permission.
- b. A student shall not be outside the building without permission.
- c. A student shall not leave school grounds without permission.

#### **18. Truancy**

- a. Refer to the attendance section of the handbook and the Whitehall City Schools board policy [JEDA](#).
- b. A “habitual truant” is any child of compulsory school age who is absent without a legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one month or 72 or more hours in a school year.
- c. School administrators will begin this process with the School Absence Intervention Team.

## **19. Tardiness/Missing from Class**

- a. Students are expected to arrive at school on time.
- b. Students are expected to abide by the school's class schedule, arriving to class on time.
- c. Tardiness to School: Refer to the attendance section of the handbook and the Whitehall City Schools board policy [JEDA](#).
- d. Tardiness to Class: If a student arrives late to class without a pass or excuse, the student will be considered tardy to class and may be referred to the office for additional discipline.
- e. If a student fails to attend an assigned period without an excuse, the absence will be counted as unexcused.

## **20. Driving Regulations/Use of Auto/Illegal Parking**

- a. Students are not permitted to park in designated staff, visitor, and/or handicapped spaces, or improperly use an automobile to and from school and on school property, or be in violation of the parking code.

## **21. Unauthorized Use of Property**

- a. Students may not use any school-owned property or another student's/staff's property without permission.

## **22. Bus Behavior**

- a. A student shall not violate the bus rules listed below. All bus discipline will be reported to the transportation supervisor and school administrator. (Refer to the School Bus Conduct section)
- b. Inappropriate behavior on bus/school transportation may result in suspension from riding privileges.
- c. **STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES**
  - i. The following regulations pertain to school bus conduct and are intended to ensure the safety and welfare of the students, the bus driver and other drivers on the road and to ensure the safety and proper maintenance of school buses.
  - ii. Students will:
    - 1. Railroad Crossing - Be quiet, do not talk when the bus is approaching a railroad crossing or highway intersection
    - 2. Seats -Remain seated in assigned seats.
    - 3. Fighting also will not be permitted.
    - 4. Windows- Keep hands, heads, books and miscellaneous objects inside the bus, never outside the windows. Windows are to be opened only by approval of the driver.
    - 5. Eating –Eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted.
    - 6. Quiet -Talk quietly -no yelling inside the bus or out the windows.

7. Throwing Objects -Do not throw objects inside the bus or out the bus windows.
  8. Bus Stops -Wait until bus stops and driver gives the signal for crossing before leaving the residence side to board the bus. ·
  9. Crossing-Cross in front of the bus ONLY, approximately ten feet in front of the bus.
  10. Time -Will be at designated pick-ups on time in the mornings and in the evenings when school is dismissed.
  11. Profanity – the use of profanity will not be tolerated.
  12. mThe use of any kind of drug, tobacco, or vaping product while on the bus, is not permitted
- iii. In general, students riding school buses shall be expected to conduct themselves in the same manner as in the classroom.
  - iv. Students are always under the direction of the driver while on the school bus.
  - v. Riding to school is a privilege and convenience. The failure of a student to follow these regulations may result in his forfeiting the privilege of transportation by school bus.
  - vi. Prior to the start of school: Bus rules will be sent home to students/parents.
  - vii. The following disciplinary procedure will be used on school buses:
    1. FIRST INCIDENT: The driver provides a formal warning to the student and issues a student misconduct report to the building principal or designee.
    2. SECOND INCIDENT: The driver issues a bus conduct report which includes up to a three-day suspension from bus transportation. \*Parents will be notified of a loss of transportation privileges. The principal will set up a meeting with the parent, student and driver to discuss the problem.
    3. THIRD INCIDENT: The driver issues a bus conduct report which includes up to a ten-day suspension from bus transportation. \*The parents will be notified of the loss of transportation privileges. The parents and student will meet with the principal prior to reinstatement to the bus. An intervention plan will be developed to prevent future misconduct.
    4. FOURTH INCIDENT: The driver issues a bus conduct report which includes up to a 30-day suspension from bus transportation. \*Parents and students will be required to attend a conference with the principal to determine if/when riding privileges may be reinstated based upon meeting specific criteria.
    5. FIFTH INCIDENT: The driver issues a bus conduct report which includes a loss of transportation privileges for the remainder of

- the school year. Parents will be notified of the loss of transportation privileges.
- viii. The following severe inappropriate behavior may result in the loss of transportation privileges for the remainder of the year at the time of the incident:
    - 1. Fighting on the bus during the route.
    - 2. Throwing an object at the bus driver during the route.
    - 3. Using profanity at the bus driver during the route.
    - 4. Willfully causing damage to the school bus.
  - ix. Prior to implementing a suspension from the bus, it is necessary for the building administrator to contact parents/guardians. As some families do not have phones, the administrator may need to rely on mailing a notification of suspension to the home. In order to better communicate with the driver, the administrator will indicate the start and end date for the suspension on the bus misconduct form and provide it to the driver.

### **23. Academic Dishonesty**

- a. A student shall not cheat or use unauthorized materials on tests or other schoolwork.
- b. Academic Dishonesty is failure to appropriately acknowledge another's intellectual property in one's own work, to falsify facts or misuse information, to use unauthorized materials during a test, quiz, or exam, or to assist or contribute to another's academic misconduct. If a student is concerned that his or her work may violate academic integrity, then it is the responsibility of the student to confer with the teacher prior to submitting work for credit.
  - i. Definitions
    - 1. *Cheating*: The act of deception by submitting work as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to copying another student's assignment either all or in part, or supplying a student with another's assignment. Cheating also includes using unauthorized materials such as notes, books, prohibited technology, calculators, or computers during a test, quiz, exam, or project. Students may not share information on tests, quizzes, and projects unless the teacher has explicitly given permission to do so.
    - 2. *Plagiarism*: The act of presenting the published ideas or words of another as one's own. This includes but is not limited to books, poems, speeches, films, TV, newspapers, magazines, and Internet media. Using information from such sources requires proper citations and formatting in order to give credit to the author or speaker.

3. *Forgery*: The act of altering signatures, school-related forms, documents, or records (either paper or electronic form) for academic advantage.
4. *Stealing*: The act of taking academic information for personal gain. Examples include, but are not limited to, taking another student's work without permission, taking an exam key, removing a test from a teacher's room without permission, obtaining electronic material from a teacher's computer, or keeping test booklets instead of returning them to the teacher.
5. *Inappropriate Use of Technology* - I will not pass off work created by artificial intelligence as my own. This includes using artificial intelligence to generate responses to prompts, write essays, produce content, or solve problems. Doing so constitutes academic dishonesty.

#### **24. Dress Code Violation**

- a. A student shall not violate the dress code. ([Refer to the Dress Code section](#))

#### **25. Improper Possession and/or Use of Electronic Equipment/Devices**

- a. Please refer to the following board policies - Computer/Online Services - Acceptable Use and Internet Safety ([EDE](#)), Bring Your Own Technology Program ([EDEB](#)), Use of Electronic Communications Equipment by Students ([JFCK](#)).
- b. This infraction includes all personally owned devices, including cell phones.
  - i. Students will use approved devices only for an educational purpose, and only when directed by a classroom teacher or administrator.
  - ii. Students must keep devices turned off and stored away when not directed to use them.
- c. All electronic devices may be searched if there exists a reasonable suspicion that they may have been used in an activity prohibited by the Code of Conduct.
- d. Students are expected to use technology in a responsible way that does not violate academic dishonesty infraction

#### **26. Fighting**

- a. Students shall not engage in mutual physical conflict with one or more other individuals. This includes mutual participation of physical violence regardless of who initiated it. Including but not limited to contact between two or more individuals through striking, kicking, pushing, or other forms of physical engagement.

## **27. Serious Bodily Injury**

- a. An incident that results in serious bodily injury to oneself or others. Serious Bodily Injury is defined as “A bodily injury that involves substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or faculty (18 U.S.C. § 1365(3)(h)).

## **28. Gambling**

- a. Students may not gamble anywhere on school grounds or a school event.

*Note: This is a representative listing of rules and violations. It is not a complete listing of all acts of misbehavior that may require disciplinary action. The Whitehall City Schools administration reserves the right to take disciplinary action as the situation warrants.*

In addition to these items, a student may be subject to school disciplinary action, for misconduct that occurs off school property to the extent that the misconduct, regardless of when it occurs, is directed at a district official (or employee or the property of such official or employee.) Such action is deemed appropriate by the Board of Education because disrespectful acts could negatively affect student behavior at school and thereby cause deterioration in the learning environment. See ORC 3313.661(A).

Certain violations of the Code of Conduct involving firearms, knives, bomb threats, or serious physical harm to persons or property can result in the student being expelled for a period of up to one calendar year or being permanently excluded from school. See board policy.

Given a specific set of circumstances, charges may be filed against anyone who has violated the law in addition to school punishment.

The Code of Conduct shall apply to conduct not specifically set forth herein which substantially and materially disrupts or interferes with good order, discipline, or operation of the academic or educational process taking place in the school, or which substantially and materially is, or poses a threat to, the safety of persons or property.

Whitehall City Schools comply with all requirements of state and federal law in regard to the discipline of disabled students.

All Student Handbook policy references were current at the time of publication. Policies are subject to change as the Board of Education updates policies throughout the year. All discipline and policy enforcement will be based on current Board of Education policy located on the District website and/or at <https://go.boarddocs.com/oh/whitehall/Board.nsf/Public>. Please refer to board policies online for the most recent version.

In determining whether disciplinary action set forth in this policy is to be implemented, District administrators shall use a preponderance of evidence standard. Further, any individual charged with making a disciplinary determination under this policy shall retain all documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media created and/or received as part of an investigation.

In addition, this statement of due process rights is to be placed in all student handbooks (see next page) in a manner that will facilitate understanding by students and their parents.

These procedures shall not apply to in-school disciplinary alternatives including in-school suspensions. An in-school suspension is one served entirely in a supervised learning environment within a school setting. Nor shall these disciplinary alternative procedures apply to students who are prohibited by authorized school personnel from all or part of their participation in cocurricular, interscholastic, and/or non-interscholastic extra-curricular activities.

### **Board of Education Procedures and Rules**

It is not the intention of this manual to be all-inclusive of the District's policies. The procedures listed below are for reference only and can be obtained in their entirety at the WCS district office. Board policies are available on the WCS website.

**Due Process Rights – Policy [JFA](#)** Student Suspension and Expulsion Procedures The Board of Education recognizes that students have limited constitutional rights when it comes to their education. Accordingly, the Board establishes the following procedures which Administrators shall use when dealing with students:

### **Students Subject to Suspension**

When a student is being considered for an out-of-school suspension by the Superintendent, Principal, or other administrators:

1. The student will be informed in writing of the potential suspension and the reasons for the proposed action.
2. The student will be provided an opportunity for an informal hearing to challenge the reason for the intended suspension and to explain his/her actions.
3. An attempt will be made to notify parents or guardians by telephone if a suspension is issued.
4. Within one (1) school day of the suspension the Superintendent, Principal, or other administrators will notify the parents, guardians, or custodians of the student. The notice will include the reasons for the suspension and the right of the student, parent, guardian, or custodian to appeal to the Board or its designee; the right to be represented at the appeal; and the right to request the hearing be held in executive session if before the Board. The notice shall also specify that if the student, parent, guardian, or custodian intends to appeal the suspension to the Board or its designee, such notice of appeal shall be filed, in writing, with the Treasurer of the Board or the Superintendent within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the notice to suspend.

If the offense is one for which the District may seek permanent exclusion, then the notice will contain that information.

5. If a student leaves school property without permission immediately upon violation (or suspected violation) of a provision of the Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code or prior to an administrator conducting an informal hearing as specified above, and the student fails to return to school on the following school day, the Principal, assistant Principal, Superintendent, or any other administrator, may send the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) notice of the suspension, and offer to provide the student and/or his/her parents an informal hearing upon request to discuss the reasons for the suspension and to allow the student to challenge the reasons and to explain his/her actions, any time prior to the end of the suspension period.

### **Appeal of Suspension to the Board or its Designee**

The student who is eighteen (18) or older or the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the suspension to the Board or its designee. They may be represented in all such appeal proceedings.

A verbatim record will be kept of the hearing which will be held in a private session at the request of the student, parent, or guardian. The procedure to pursue such an appeal will be provided in regulations approved by the Superintendent. Notice of appeal must be filed, in writing, with the Treasurer or the Superintendent within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the notice to suspend.

### **Appeal to the Court**

Under Ohio law, an appeal of the Board's or its designee's decision may be made to the Court of Common Pleas.

### **Students Subject to Expulsion**

When a student is being considered for expulsion by the Superintendent:

1. The Superintendent will give the student and parent, guardian, or custodian written notice of the intended expulsion, including reasons for the intended expulsion.
2. The student and parent or representative have the opportunity to appear before the Superintendent or designee to challenge the proposed action or to otherwise explain the student's actions. The written notice will state the time and place to appear, which must not be earlier than three (3) school days nor later than five (5) school days after the notice is given unless the Superintendent grants an extension upon request of the student or parent.
3. Within one (1) school day of the expulsion, the Superintendent will notify the parents, guardians, or custodians of the student and the Treasurer of the Board. The notice will include the reasons for the expulsion and the right of the student, parent, guardian, or custodian to appeal to the Board or its designee; the right to be represented at the appeal; and the right to request the hearing be held in executive session if before the Board. If the offense is one for which the District may seek permanent exclusion, then the notice will contain that information.

### **Appeal of Expulsion to the Board**

A student who is eighteen (18) or older or a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the expulsion by the Superintendent to the Board or its designee. The notice shall also specify that if the student, parent, guardian, or custodian intends to appeal the expulsion to the Board or its designee, such notice of appeal shall be filed, in writing, with the Treasurer of the Board or the Superintendent within fourteen (14) calendar days after the date the expulsion begins. They may be represented in all such appeal proceedings and will be granted a hearing before the Board or its designee.

A verbatim record will be kept of the hearing which will be held in private session at the request of the student, parent, or guardian.

The procedure to pursue such an appeal will be in accordance with regulations approved by the Superintendent. Notice of appeal must be filed, in writing, within fourteen (14) calendar days after the date the expulsion begins with the Treasurer of the Board or the Superintendent.

### **Appeal to the Court**

Under State law, the decision of the Board or its designee may be further appealed to the Court of Common Pleas.

### **Students Subject to Emergency Removal**

Students whose conduct warrants emergency removal shall be dealt with in accordance with the rights and procedures outlined in Policy [JGDA](#) - Emergency Removal.

### **Students Subject to Permanent Exclusion**

Students whose conduct is that for which permanent exclusion is warranted shall be dealt with in accordance with the rights and procedures outlined in Policy [JEGA](#) - Permanent Exclusion.

### **Students Subject to Suspension from Bus Riding/Transportation Privileges**

Students whose conduct warrants suspension from bus riding and/or transportation services shall be dealt with in accordance with the rights and procedures outlined in Policy [JFCC-R](#) (also see [EEACC-R](#)) Student Conduct on District Managed Transportation

## **FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

Families are essential partners in supporting positive behavior. If your child needs extra support, you'll be invited to collaborate on a plan focused on growth, accountability, and success — together, we help every RAMS student Dream Big and Make It Happen. The district encourages parents to first work with their child's teacher(s) to address concerns or resolve conflicts. If you have further concerns after meeting with the teacher(s), contact the school's administration.

## PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Our goal is to resolve concerns promptly, respectfully, and at the lowest level possible.

If you have a concern or complaint related to your child's school experience, we encourage you to follow these steps:

1. **Speak directly with the staff member involved.** Many concerns can be resolved through open and respectful communication.
2. **Contact the staff member's supervisor.** If the concern is not resolved after speaking with the staff member, contact their immediate supervisor. If you are unsure who the supervisor is, please contact the school office for assistance.
3. **Submit a written complaint.** If the concern remains unresolved, you may complete and submit a formal complaint form to the appropriate school administrator.
4. The District is committed to promoting positive communication and effective conflict resolution. Written grievance procedures are posted at the school and are available in the school office upon request.

If you believe additional assistance is needed, you may contact:

- **Ohio Department of Education and Workforce:** 614-466-0224
- **Ohio Ombudsman Office:** 614-728-6699

## Directory Information

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Whitehall City Schools may designate certain student information as "Directory Information." Directory Information may be released without prior written consent unless a parent/guardian or eligible student requests that it not be disclosed.

Directory Information includes:

- Student name
- Address
- Date of birth
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Height and weight of members of athletic teams
- Awards, honors, and achievements

In addition, federal law requires school districts to provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of secondary students to military recruiters upon request unless a parent/guardian or eligible student has opted out of such disclosure.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who do not want Directory Information released must submit a written request for non-disclosure to the Superintendent's Office no later than September 16, 2026. A new request must be submitted each school year.

Submit written requests to:

Whitehall City Schools  
Office of the Superintendent  
625 South Yearling Road  
Whitehall, OH 43213

## STUDENT DRESS CODE

Part of the total educational process for students is learning to dress appropriately and behave responsibly in a variety of situations. Students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to the school environment which does not cause disruption to the academic process. Research has shown a correlation between appearance and behavior, especially in the school setting.

These regulations will assist parents, students, faculty, and administrators in determining appropriate student standards for dress while at school or school-sponsored activities.

These regulations will assist parents, students, faculty, and administrators in determining appropriate student standards for dress while at school or school-sponsored activities.

1. Students are responsible for dressing according to the approved dress code.
2. Parents/guardians are also responsible for ensuring students are dressed appropriately for school.
3. Administration and faculty, together, are responsible for the enforcement of the dress code. The dress code is enforced at school and school functions are not open to the public. The decision of the principal is final with regard to dress code violations.
4. When dress or grooming interferes with the cleanliness, health, welfare, or safety of students, or when dress or grooming disrupts the educational process by being distracting, indecent or inappropriate, it is prohibited. Clothing must be worn as designed.

5. Sponsors and teachers of elective programs (such as vocational classes) or elective activities (such as sports and music) may require more strict standards regarding dress and appearance for participants in their program or activity.
6. As new trends in fashion or dress emerge or become out of date, the District reviews and revises the dress code to reflect the standards of the community.

Students shall adhere to the following guidelines for dress and appearance:

- All clothing must conceal undergarments at all times. Shirts that reveal undergarments, cleavage, bare chests, or excessive skin, whether due to the transparency, length, fit, or lack of coverage of the shirt, are not permitted
- Skirts, shorts, and dresses must be at mid-thigh or below. Garments may not be form-fitting unless covered by an appropriate loose-fitting garment that completely covers both the front and rear private and buttocks areas.
- Shorts, skirts, and pants must be appropriately sized for the student and worn at the waist. Biking pants, tank tops, tuts or spandex are not allowed. Leggings and other form-fitting bottoms will not be permitted unless worn with a loose-fitting top that completely covers both the front private and rear buttocks area.
- Tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, and any shirt revealing cleavage, midriffs, backs, or chests are not allowed. No transparent or open mesh garments or garments with large open sides may be worn without an underliner. Undergarments must not be exposed.
- Shoes must be worn at all times and must not present a safety hazard. No flip-flops or slippers. Safety considerations may dictate the type of footwear worn in specific classes or school settings.
- Headcoverings, sleepwear, and outerwear including but not limited to hats, hoodies, bandanas, sunglasses, masks, sweatbands including arm and leg bands, and other outdoor or head apparel are not permitted. Exceptions may be made by an administrator for religious, medical, or safety reasons. Headwear of any type that obstructs one's identity or makes it difficult to identify an individual will not be allowed.
- Hooded articles of clothing may be permitted at the high school only but only if hoods are down and not worn on the head.
- Clothing or accessories that could be interpreted as promoting hate or communicating negative, profane, or vulgar messages, or which advertise or are in any way related to alcohol, tobacco drugs, or weapon; or have sexual, vulgar, suggestive, or objectionable messages (explicit or implied) are not permitted.

- Sleepwear including but not limited to pajamas, bonnets, blankets, and slippers is not permitted to be worn in school.
- Hair must be clean and groomed.
- Accessories that could be dangerous to persons or destructive to school property are not allowed.
- The presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang is not permitted.
- The length and style of hair (both facial and head) and jewelry shall be limited if it constitutes a health or safety hazard, a distraction, or harmful to the building or equipment. In both cases, the student may be required to wear a protective covering or remove jewelry.
- Clothing with large or inappropriately placed tears and holes are not allowed.  
All clothing must be appropriately sized.
  - Pants/skirts must be cut to fit and worn at the waist.
  - Pants should not drag on the ground.
  - Pants worn low are prohibited.
  - No skin-tight clothing.
- Wearing outdoor jackets/coats/hoodies in the building is not permitted in the middle school.

Violation of the dress code can result in exclusion from class until the violation can be resolved and/or disciplinary action is taken. In case of questionable dress (not explicitly covered in these guidelines), the problem will be discussed with the student, and appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action may be taken. When necessary, a home contact seeking parental cooperation and assistance will be made. Repeating infractions will result in appropriate discipline. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made by building principals for activities such as proms, physical education, and other special events.

## LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Whitehall City Schools is committed to ensuring that all families have meaningful access to school programs, services, and communications. Free interpretation and translation services are available for parents, guardians, and family members who need assistance with speaking, understanding, reading, or writing in a language other than English.

If you need language assistance for a school program, activity, meeting, or communication:

|                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>For Spanish language assistance:</b>                                                                                                 | <b>For all other languages:</b>                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nicolas Rosales</li><li>• Phone: (614) 417-5018</li><li>• Email: rosalesn@wcsrams.org</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mary Huggins</li><li>• Phone: (614) 417-5013</li><li>• Email: hugginsm@wcsrams.org</li></ul> |






Language assistance services are provided at no cost to families.

## PARENT RIGHT-TO-KNOW: TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

As a parent or guardian of a student attending a Title I school, you have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher(s) and instructional paraprofessional(s).

Upon request, the District will provide information regarding:

- Whether the teacher has met Ohio's licensing and certification requirements for the grade level and subject area(s) in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency, temporary, or alternative licensure status through which Ohio licensing requirements have been waived.
- The teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees, certifications, or credentials held by the teacher, including the field of study.
- Whether your child receives services from an instructional paraprofessional and, if so, the paraprofessional's qualifications.

Parents/guardians who wish to obtain this information may submit a written request to:

**Brian Seymour, Deputy Superintendent**

Whitehall City School District

625 South Yearling Road

Whitehall, OH 43213

Email: [seymourb@wcsrams.org](mailto:seymourb@wcsrams.org)

Please include the following information with your request:

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, : \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Whitehall City School District is committed to providing all students with access to highly qualified educators and maintaining open communication with families regarding their children's education.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

The Whitehall City School District is committed to providing an educational and work environment where every individual is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. The District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, religion, sex, economic status, age, disability, military status, or legally acquired genetic information in its educational programs, activities, employment practices, or operations.

### **District Compliance Officer**

The Board of Education has designated the following individual to coordinate the District's compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws:

Doug Shoemaker

Director of Employee Engagement, Partnerships & Legal Services

District Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator

625 South Yearling Road

Whitehall, OH 43213

Phone: 614-417-5119

Email: [nondiscrimination@wcsrams.org](mailto:nondiscrimination@wcsrams.org)

The Compliance Officer's contact information is published annually in District handbooks and on the District website.

The Compliance Officer is responsible for coordinating the District's compliance with applicable laws, including, but not limited to:

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)

The Compliance Officer also receives, investigates, and helps resolve reports and complaints of discrimination and retaliation in a prompt and equitable manner.

## **Reporting Discrimination or Retaliation**

Any student, parent, employee, applicant, or community member who believes they have experienced unlawful discrimination or retaliation is encouraged to report the concern as soon as possible. Reports may be made orally or in writing to the Compliance Officer or to any administrator or supervisor.

District employees who become aware of possible discrimination or retaliation are required to promptly report the matter to the Compliance Officer or another appropriate administrator. Any administrator or supervisor receiving a complaint must promptly forward it to the Compliance Officer.

The District has established complaint procedures that are available to all members of the school community. These procedures do not limit an individual's right to pursue remedies available under state or federal law, contact law enforcement, or file a complaint with agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Reports involving sexual harassment will be handled in accordance with the District's Title IX Sexual Harassment policy and procedures.

## **Interim Measures and Corrective Action**

When appropriate, the District may implement supportive or interim measures while a complaint is being reviewed. These measures are intended to maintain equal access to educational programs and activities, protect the safety of those involved, and prevent further discrimination or retaliation.

If an investigation determines that discrimination or retaliation has occurred, the District will take appropriate corrective action to stop the misconduct, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. Students or employees found to have violated District policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Confidentiality**

The District will make every reasonable effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved in a complaint or investigation, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with legal requirements.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

Retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment, participates in an investigation, or opposes conduct prohibited by District policy

## DESIGNATION OF REQUIRED TITLE IX COORDINATOR

The following individual has been designated to serve as the District's Title IX Coordinator[s]. Such Coordinator[s] is authorized to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX.

**Name:** Doug Shoemaker

**Title:** Director of Employee Engagement, Partnerships & Legal Services  
District Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator

**Address:** 625 S. Yearling Road, Whitehall, OH 43213

**Phone number:** 614-417-5119

**Email:** [shoemakerd@wcsrams.org](mailto:shoemakerd@wcsrams.org)

### Notification Of Policy

The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education program or activities, including admission and employment, and is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations not to discriminate in such a manner. Inquiries about the applicability of Title IX and its implementing regulations to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

### Notification Of Grievance Procedure

The District has adopted a grievance procedure to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX and its implementing regulations. This procedure describes how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a complaint of sexual harassment, and how the District will respond.

The District's Policy and Procedures can be found at: [BoardDocs® LT](#)

## **GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATELY FUNDED OR PRIVATELY PROVIDED PERSONNEL**

These guidelines apply to persons who provide services or supports to students in school or during related activities but who are privately funded or provided. Such persons are not school district employees or agents and are not in any way affiliated with the School District.

These guidelines apply to persons who provide services or supports to students in school or during related activities but who are privately funded or provided. Such persons are not school district employees or agents and are not in any way affiliated with the School District.

1. It is in the sole discretion of the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to permit or deny a request by a parent, guardian, or custodian [1] (hereinafter "parent") to allow the parent to privately provide or arrange for a person to provide services or supports to a student in school or during related activities.
2. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee can terminate any private provider arrangement at any time without cause and prohibit the private provider from continuing to provide services or supports to a student during the school day or on School District property.
3. The private provider will provide a written acknowledgment that they have read and will follow these guidelines and any other information/conditions as deemed appropriate by the School District.
4. Prior to providing services or supports to a student, the private provider and the parent will meet with the Principal and any other administrators, as determined by the School District (e.g., special education coordinator), to discuss the logistics of the services including where and when the service will be provided to the student.
5. A BCI criminal records check, including a fingerprint check, of the private provider must be conducted and shall be paid for by the parent or private provider. Private providers must meet the same criminal records check standards as School District teacher applicants.

6. The private provider shall not interfere or disrupt in any way with School District personnel or the provision of the student's educational program.
7. Private providers shall conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner and shall follow all relevant State and Federal laws and regulations and all relevant School District and school building policies, regulations, and requirements. A private provider shall interact and work cooperatively with all School District personnel.
8. The private provider is responsible for maintaining or assuring that he or she is covered by liability insurance in an amount deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. The private provider is responsible for maintaining or assuring that he or she is covered by medical insurance, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. Proof of insurance shall be submitted to the School District, upon request.
9. The private provider shall assume that risk of all accidents, injuries, or property damage caused by the private provider and related in any way whatsoever to the provision of services or supports to a student and shall sign a liability release, as requested by the School District. The parent shall also sign a liability release, as requested by the School District.
10. The parent shall assume all responsibility for any compensation paid to the private provider and for compliance with all legal requirements relating to tax withholding, payroll taxes, Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, and retirement or Social Security benefits.

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[1] All references to parent, guardian or custodian in these guidelines also incorporate a reference to a student who is 18 years of age or older. When a student is 18 years of age or older, the student, in addition to the parent, guardian, or custodian, assumes the responsibilities of the "parent" pursuant to these guidelines, unless otherwise specifically provided.

## PROMOTING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Board promotes parental involvement in the public school system. The Board directs the Superintendent/designee to develop procedures necessary to comply with the provisions of this policy. This policy is made publicly available and posted prominently on the District's website.

This policy does not prescribe all rights of parents or preempt or foreclose claims or remedies in support of parental rights that are available under the constitution, statutes or common law of Ohio.

Nothing in this policy requires disclosure or activity that is in conflict with or in violation of any of the following:

1. the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rule;
2. Revised Code (RC) Chapter 3798;
3. RC 2317.02, 4732.19 or 5122.04;
4. the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g;
5. the Ohio Constitution, Article I, Section 10a and any laws enacted to implement that section, including RC 2930.07 and 2930.10;

Nothing in this policy requires disclosure or activity in violation of any court order, including any of the following:

1. a condition of bond;
2. a protection order or consent agreement issued pursuant to RC 2151.34, 2903.213, 2903.214, 2919.26 or 3113.31 **or**
3. a condition of a community control sanction, post-release control sanction or parole;

Nothing in this policy requires disclosure or activity in violation of a specific request for nondisclosure made pursuant to a criminal investigation or grand jury subpoena in which the student is the victim and a parent is the alleged perpetrator.

Nothing in this policy prohibits or prevents mandatory reporting under RC 2151.421.

Nothing in this policy prohibits or limits the career and academic mentoring and counseling between teachers and students in the regular course of the school day.

## Definitions

The following definitions apply for the implementation of this policy:

“Biological sex:” the biological indication of male and female, including sex chromosomes, naturally occurring sex hormones, gonads and unambiguous internal and external genitalia present at birth, without regard to an individual's psychological, chosen or subjective experience of gender.

“HIPAA privacy rule:” has the same meaning as in RC 3798.01.

“IEP:” has the same meaning as in RC 3323.01.

“Parent:” has the same meaning as in RC 3313.98.

“Sexuality content:” any oral or written instruction, presentation, image or description of sexual concepts or gender ideology provided in a classroom setting. This does not include instruction or presentations required by State law in sexually transmitted infection education, sexually transmitted infection education emphasizing abstinence, child sexual abuse prevention, sexual violence prevention education or incidental references to sexual concepts or gender ideology occurring outside of formal instruction or presentations on such topics, including references made during class participation and in schoolwork.

“Student's mental, emotional or physical health or well-being:” includes, at a minimum, a student's academic performance; any significant sickness or physical injury, or any psychological trauma suffered by a student; any harassment, intimidation or bullying, as defined by State law, by or against a student in violation of school district policy; any request by a student to identify as a gender that does not align with the student's biological sex; and exhibition of suicidal ideation or persistent symptoms of depression, or severe anxiety, or other mental health issues.

“Age-appropriate content” and “developmentally appropriate content:” activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child, based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or age group.

## Sexuality Content

The District ensures any sexuality content is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for the age of the student receiving the instruction, regardless of age or grade level. The District provides parents the opportunity to review instructional materials that include sexuality content prior to providing instruction or permitting third parties to do so on

behalf of the District. Upon request of the parent a student is excused from instruction including sexuality content and is permitted to participate in an alternative assignment.

Instruction including sexuality content is not provided to students in kindergarten through third grade by the District or any third party acting on behalf of the district.

### **Student Health and Well-Being**

The District promptly notifies a student's parent of any substantial change in the student's services, including counseling services, or monitoring related to their mental, emotional or physical health or well-being or the school's ability to provide them a safe and supportive learning environment. The parental notice reinforces the fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding the upbringing and control of their children and that the District does not inhibit parental access to the student's education and health records maintained by the school.

Notice is provided through the methods the District generally communicates with parents including, but not limited to, email, phone call, letter or other direct forms of communication.

District personnel are prohibited from directly or indirectly encouraging a student to withhold information from a parent concerning the student's mental, emotional or physical health or well-being, or a change in related services or monitoring. District personnel are prohibited from discouraging or prohibiting parental notification of and involvement in decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional or physical health or well-being.

### **Parental Authorization for Student Health Care Services**

The District obtains parental authorization before providing any type of health care services to students, including physical, mental and behavioral health care services and parents can choose whether to authorize the District to provide health care services. The Board directs the Superintendent to adopt procedures to obtain necessary authorization from parents, which may include but is not limited to whatever means the District generally obtains parental authorization.

At the beginning of each school year, the District notifies parents of each health care service offered at, or facilitated in cooperation with, their student's school and their option to withhold consent or decline any specified service. Parental consent to health care services does not waive the parent's right to access the student's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in the student's services or monitoring.

Prior to providing a health care service to a student, the District notifies parents whether the service is required to be provided by the District under State law and if other options for a

student to access the service exist. This requirement and other notices outlined in this policy can be satisfied by an annual notice to parents at the beginning of the school year.

Provisions related to parental authorization for student health care services do not apply to emergency situations, first aid, other unanticipated minor health care services or health care services provided pursuant to a student's IEP or section 504 plan.

### **Concerns and Appeals Procedure**

A parent may file a written concern with a school principal or assistant principal regarding a topic addressed in this policy, which must be resolved within 30 days after receipt. Written concerns received by a school principal or assistant principal about this policy are investigated fully and fairly. Anonymous written concerns may not be investigated.

A parent may appeal a principal's or assistant principal's decision to the Superintendent. If a parent appeals a principal's or assistant principal's decision, the Superintendent/designee must conduct a hearing on the decision. Based on the findings of that hearing, the Superintendent decides whether to affirm the principal's or assistant principal's decision. If the Superintendent does not affirm the decision, they determine the resolution to the parent's concern.

A parent may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board. If a parent appeals the Superintendent's decision, the Board must review the Superintendent's decision and, if the Board determines it necessary, hold a hearing on the Superintendent's decision. Based on the findings of that hearing, the Board decides whether to affirm the Superintendent's decision. If the Board does not affirm the decision, it determines a new resolution to the parent's concern.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a parent from contacting a member of the Board regarding the parent's concerns with the operation of a school under its supervision.

The Board directs the Superintendent/designee to develop procedures to ensure prompt and fair attention to written concerns about this policy. The District notifies parents of their right to file a written concern by whatever means the District generally communicates with parents including, but not limited to, email, phone call or other direct forms of communication.

**Board Policy: IGBLA**



Dear Whitehall Families,

We are pleased to share that Whitehall City Schools will continue its partnership with OhioGuidestone to provide vital support services for our students and the broader Whitehall community. In collaboration with the ADAMH Board of Franklin County, OhioGuidestone will deliver prevention services designed to address and reduce behaviors that may place students at higher risk for future life challenges.

OhioGuidestone is Ohio's leading provider of community-based behavioral health care.

Their whole-person approach includes school-based and community prevention services, as well as mental health and substance use treatment through both in-person and telehealth options. By working with partners across the state, they connect children and families to the right supports, even when additional services outside their network are needed.

Prevention services may be provided in a variety of ways, including whole-classroom programs, small group sessions, and individual support. OhioGuidestone staff may also offer consultation, crisis intervention, and referrals for further care as needed.

In urgent or emergency situations, Whitehall City Schools may share limited parent/guardian contact information (such as name, phone number, address, and student name) with OhioGuidestone to ensure families can be reached and supported appropriately.

We are grateful for this ongoing partnership and look forward to continuing to support the health and well-being of all our students.



HEART OF OHIO FAMILY HEALTH



## School-Based Health Center

Heart of Ohio Family Health (HOFH) and Whitehall City Schools (WCS) have established a partnership to improve the overall health and wellness of students, staff, and families.

***As a WCS student, your child will automatically be enrolled with HOFH services.***

**School-Based Health Services** include and *are not limited to* the following:

- Referrals to and within HOFH specialties for both student and family
- Enrollment in HOFH's 340B Drug Discount Program
  - Provides a 20-95% discount on prescription drugs
- Sliding Fee Scale Discount Program
  - Places a cap on out-of-pocket payments
- HOFH Transportation and Telemedicine
  - Telemedicine is an alternative to traditional health care when a patient has time, transportation, or access constraints. These appointments are performed via telephone or video chat.
  - Transportation services to bring patients from other school locations to the Whitehall-Yearling clinic (or other HOFH clinics, if applicable) for care, and back to school when complete.
- Data Sharing between HOFH and WCS
  - Helps HOFH track health trends and intervention outcomes among the population
  - Can assist with improving the quality of care
- Mentoring and Internship pairings
  - Pairs students with HOFH providers and staff for hands-on educational opportunities through internships and mentor-mentee relationships
  - Ultimate Goal: to pique student interest in clinical careers post-high-school.
- Alternative Penalty Program
  - Utilizes HOFH Behavioral Health services in lieu of (or in addition to) traditional academic penalties such as suspension or expulsion

Parents and guardians have the right to **opt their child out** of the service agreement.

If you ***do not*** want your child enrolled with **Heart of Ohio Family Health**, you may request a ***School-Based Health Opt Out Form*** from WCS School Nurse: [saintj@wcsrams.org](mailto:saintj@wcsrams.org)



This health center is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b, and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n).

**Administration:** 5000 E. Main Street, Columbus, OH 43213 • Tel: (614) 235-5555 • Fax (614) 536-1994

# PROCEDURES FOR WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

At Whitehall City Schools, safety is our top priority when deciding whether to delay the start of school or close schools entirely. Our primary concern is ensuring that buses, staff, parents, and students can travel to schools safely, whether by driving or walking. The procedures outlined below are designed to prioritize safety while maintaining communication and providing essential services for students, staff, and families.

## General Guidelines

- **Normal Operation:** Schools will operate as scheduled if there is no announcement.
- **Communication Channels:** Information about school closures or delays will be shared via the Whitehall City Schools website, social media, local news outlets, and the district's automated calling system through Infinite Campus.

## Why Do We Strive To Keep Schools Open During Inclement Weather?

Along with fulfilling our primary promise and responsibility to our community of educating our young people, our schools serve an essential role in the community that goes beyond education. We understand that:

- **Supervision and Structure:** Schools offer a safe, supervised space. Unexpected closures can leave students unsupervised, as many families cannot adjust work schedules on short notice.
- **Warmth and Safety:** Schools provide a secure environment during challenging conditions.
- **Meals:** Many students rely on school-provided breakfast and lunch for nutritional needs.

## What Happens If Whitehall City Schools Close?

- Parents and staff will be notified via the phone dialer system.
- Parents and staff must ensure their contact information in the **Infinite Campus Parent Portal/Student Information System** is accurate.
- If access to the portal is an issue, email [techhelp@wcsrams.org](mailto:techhelp@wcsrams.org) to update contact details.

## Emergency Closure Planning

WCS families are encouraged to develop a plan for their children in case of school closures, delays, or early dismissals:

- **Elementary and Middle School Students:** These students will remain at school until parents or guardians are notified and arrangements are made for their safety.

- **High School Students:** High school students may be released to walk home at the Superintendent's discretion. Families will be notified and should make communication arrangements with their children to ensure they make it home safely.
- **Childcare and Supervision:** Families should prepare alternative childcare and supervision plans during adverse weather.

## **Weather Monitoring**

District administrators monitor weather conditions throughout the night and early morning:

- Consultations are made with the **National Weather Service, WCS Transportation Services, and area superintendents.**
- All administrators are informed promptly, and updates are communicated to the media, families, and staff as soon as possible.

Planning and communication ensure the safety and well-being of students while minimizing disruptions during challenging conditions.

## **Procedures for Severe Weather and Emergency Events**

When severe weather or other emergencies necessitate a school closure, delayed start, or early release, the following measures will be implemented:

### **Full-Day Closure Procedure**

1. **Decision Process**
  - a. When conditions necessitate, the Superintendent may decide to close/cancel school for the entire day.
2. **Notification Methods** The Superintendent will initiate these measures to ensure families and staff are informed quickly and efficiently:
  - a. Local radio and television stations will be notified promptly.
  - b. Updates will be posted on the Whitehall City Schools website and social media accounts.
  - c. Automated phone calls will be sent to households.

### **Early Release Due To Weather Or Other Emergency Situations**

These steps are designed to ensure timely communication and safety during unforeseen events.

1. **Decision Process**
  - a. If conditions warrant closing schools early, the Superintendent may authorize an early release.
  - b. This decision is reserved for extreme circumstances only.
2. **Notification Methods**

- a. Automated phone calls will be sent to households with accurate contact information.
- b. Updates will be posted on the Whitehall City Schools website and social media accounts.
- c. Local radio and television stations will be informed as early as possible.

### **Two-Hour Delayed Start**

- Schools will open **two hours later** than their usual start time.
- Buses will operate **two hours later** than their regular pick-up schedules.
- Morning preschool programs will be **canceled**.
- Midday pickups and field trips will be **canceled**.
- Breakfast programs will still be **offered**.

| School                | Normal Start Time | 2-Hr Delay Start Time | School Dismissal    |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| C. Ray Preschool AM   | 9:05 AM           | AM Classes Canceled   | AM Classes Canceled |
| C. Ray Preschool PM   | 12:50 PM          | 12:50 PM              | 3:35 PM             |
| Kae Avenue Elementary | 9:05 AM           | 11:05 AM              | 3:35 PM             |
| Etna Rd. Elementary   | 8:45 AM           | 10:45 AM              | 3:15 PM             |
| Beechwood Elementary  | 8:25 AM           | 10:25 AM              | 2:55 PM             |
| Rosemore Middle       | 7:45 AM           | 9:45 AM               | 2:35 PM             |
| WYHS                  | 8:30 AM           | 10:30 AM              | 3:20 PM             |

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What Factors Are Considered When Decisions Are Made To Close Schools?**

- **Building Conditions**
  - Does the state of the building hinder learning or safe operations?
  - Considerations include access to restrooms, water, acceptable temperatures, and electricity.
- **Ice and Snow Removal**
  - Can school parking lots and sidewalks be cleared for safe use?
- **Road and Sidewalk Conditions**
  - Feedback from transportation staff and local officials determines whether roads and sidewalks are safe for travel to and from school.

- **Weather Trends**
  - Will conditions worsen or improve throughout the day?
- **Temperature and Wind Chill**
  - Current and forecasted ambient temperature and wind chill are assessed.
- **Weather Forecasts**
  - Reliable forecasts help guide decisions.

By law, the Superintendent is responsible for making the final decisions regarding school closings or schedule adjustments.

### **Where Can Parents And Staff Receive Information About Closings?**

- Check local news channels (4, 6, or 10), Infinite Campus, the district website, and school communications for updates on school closings and delays. Notifications are promptly posted on the district's social media platforms and the School Messenger Notification System - Infinite Campus, typically between 5:30 am and 6:30 am.
- Sign up for Infinite Campus for automated alerts about weather-related closings and delays. If you don't have access to the parent portal, email [techhelp@wcsrams.org](mailto:techhelp@wcsrams.org) for assistance. Ensure your contact information in Infinite Campus is up-to-date.

### **How Can Students/Families Prepare For Weather Conditions?**

- Plan ahead, adjust your schedule, and check road conditions to ensure a safe and timely arrival at school.
- Take extra time to defrost and warm your vehicle, leave early, and drive cautiously.
- Stay warm by wearing hats, coats, boots, gloves, and extra socks. Dress in layers to stay dry and protected from the cold.



## Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Student Handbook which includes the Student Code of Conduct approved by the Whitehall City Schools Board of Education.

- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the Code of Conduct and other policies contained in said Handbook.
- I acknowledge that I am expected to conform to the rules contained in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.
- I understand the importance of respecting the rights and responsibilities of all students and staff within the building.
- I acknowledge that I understand the expectations of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and agree to abide by the policy.
- The above-mentioned Student Handbook and AUP describe important information and I understand that I should consult an Administrator regarding any questions about said handbook, AUP and their policies.

Therefore, I state, by evidence of my signature below, that I acknowledge receiving a copy of the Whitehall City Schools Student Handbook containing the policies and procedures of Whitehall City School District including, but not limited to, the Student Code of Conduct, Dress Code policy, Weapons in School policy, Student Conduct policy, Hazing and Bullying policy and the Technology Acceptable Use policy.

A copy of said handbook was provided to me by the Whitehall City School District.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (or written name)

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

625 South Yearling Road, Whitehall, Ohio 43213 614/417-5000