



SUMTER COUNTY
— HIGH SCHOOL —

STUDENT & FAMILY

Handbook

2026-2027

EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY DAY.
EVERY OPPORTUNITY.



LEARN
STRIVE FOR
EXCELLENCE



LEAD
INSPIRE
OTHERS



BELONG
BUILD
CONNECTIONS



SUCCEED
ACHIEVE
YOUR GOALS



PANTHER PRIDE
WE ARE
SUMTER



HOME OF THE *Panthers!*

www.sumterschools.org



PREPARING TODAY'S PANTHERS FOR TOMORROW'S *Opportunities.*

Thank you for being a valued part of
Sumter County High School.
Together, we create a safe,
supportive, and inspiring
environment where every
student can learn, grow,
and succeed.



SUMTER COUNTY
— HIGH SCHOOL —
— HOME OF THE PANTHERS —



QUICK CONTACTS



MAIN OFFICE
(229) 924-3653



ATTENDANCE
(229) 924-3653



SCHOOL NURSE
(229) 924-3653



GUIDANCE OFFICE
(229) 924-3653



TRANSPORTATION
(229) 931-8500

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X (Twitter)
[@sumterschools](https://twitter.com/sumterschools)



Download the SCHS App
Search "Sumter County Schools"

*Together,
we are
Stronger!*

SCAN FOR IMPORTANT RESOURCES



**PARENT
PORTAL**



**SCHOOL
CALENDAR**



**LUNCH
MENU**



**ATHLETICS
SCHEDULES**



**HANDBOOK
ONLINE**



**ANONYMOUS
TIP LINE**



903 South GA Tech Parkway
Americus, GA 31709



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EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY. EVERY OPPORTUNITY.



STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-2027



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Affirmation of Knowledge	Opt-Out of Club Participation
Attendance Law Requirement	Medication Authorization
Transportation Acknowledgement	Media Release





SUMTER COUNTY

— HIGH SCHOOL —



WELCOME



A Message from the **PRINCIPAL**



Dear Students, Families, and the Sumter County High School Community,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year!

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as the new principal of Sumter County High School. As I begin this exciting journey with you, I do so with great enthusiasm, deep respect for the traditions that make Panther Nation special, and an unwavering commitment to the success of every student who walks through our doors.

At Sumter County High School, we believe every student deserves an environment where they are challenged academically, supported personally, and encouraged to discover their unique talents and potential. Whether you are entering our halls for the first time or returning for another year, know that you are an important part of our school family.

Our dedicated faculty and staff are committed to providing rigorous instruction, meaningful opportunities, and positive relationships that prepare students for success beyond high school. We want every Panther to graduate equipped with the knowledge, skills, character, and confidence needed to thrive in college, careers, military service, and life.

This handbook is designed to help students and families understand the expectations, opportunities, and resources available throughout the school year. I encourage you to review it together and use it as a guide as we work in partnership to support student achievement.

Panther Pride is more than a slogan—it reflects who we are. It means showing respect, taking responsibility, demonstrating integrity, serving others, and striving for excellence in everything we do. Together, we will continue building a school culture where every student feels welcomed, valued, challenged, and inspired.

As your principal, my door is always open. I believe that strong schools are built through collaboration between students, families, staff, and our community. I look forward to celebrating accomplishments, overcoming challenges together, and making this school year one of growth, achievement, and lasting memories.

Thank you for entrusting us with your education. I am excited to begin this journey with you and cannot wait to see all that our Panthers will accomplish.

Welcome to another great year at Sumter County High School!

Calandra Parker

CALANDRA PARKER
Principal
Sumter County High School

**“ EVERY STUDENT
DESERVES TO BE
KNOWN, CHALLENGED,
SUPPORTED, AND INSPIRED
to reach their
highest potential. ”**

— MEET YOUR PRINCIPAL —



FIRST YEAR
as Principal



HOME OF
the Panthers



COMMITTED TO
Excellence



EVERY STUDENT.
*Every Day.
Every Opportunity.*





SUMTER COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL
— HOME OF THE PANTHERS —

LEADERSHIP TEAM



Great **LEADERS**
DON'T JUST LEAD THE WAY—
THEY *Inspire*
THE JOURNEY.
— TOGETHER, WE **ROAR.** —

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Jeffery Boges

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Daniel Porter

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Shirley A. Williams

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP



Alicia Green

CTAE DIRECTOR



William Rogers

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR



Reagan Beamon

COUNSELOR



Kimberly Barrett

COUNSELOR



Taria Willis

COUNSELOR



Cynthia Demott

ACADEMIC COACH



A complete and current faculty and staff directory is available on the Sumter County Schools website.



LEARN • LEAD • BELONG • SUCCEED

Every Panther. Every Day.



SUMTER COUNTY

HIGH SCHOOL

HOME OF THE PANTHERS



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



OUR MISSION

The mission of Sumter County Schools is to ensure all students receive an equitable education equipped with 21st Century Skills through transformational learning experiences.



OUR VISION

The Vision of Sumter County Schools is to graduate all students college and career ready who are productive citizens empowered to be competitive in a global society.



OUR CORE VALUES

- Student-Centered
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Accountability
- Innovation

ABOUT SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sumter County School District is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment for all students. Through dedicated educators, engaged families, and community partnerships, we prepare students to excel academically, grow personally, and lead confidently in a dynamic world.



ONE DISTRICT

Proudly serving the students of Sumter County



STUDENT FOCUSED

Building strong foundations for lifelong success



FUTURE READY

Preparing students for college, careers, and life



COMMUNITY STRONG

Together, we build a brighter future for all

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL



Sumter County High School is a place where students are challenged to think critically, lead courageously, and serve with purpose. With a focus on academic excellence, character development, and real-world readiness, we provide a well-rounded education that prepares our students for today and empowers them for tomorrow.

SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL MISSION



The mission of Sumter County High School is to create a culture of learning that inspires leadership, encourages collaboration, and celebrates successes.

PANTHER PRIDE

We Are Sumter. We Are Panthers.



PREPARED

We come ready to learn and succeed.



RESPECTFUL

We treat everyone with kindness and dignity.



INTEGRITY

We do what is right, even when no one is watching.



DETERMINED

We persevere through challenges and never give up.



EXCELLENT

We strive for our best in everything we do.



ENGAGED

We serve our school and community with pride.



EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.
EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

LEARN • LEAD • BELONG • SUCCEED

SECTION

1



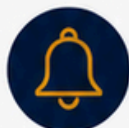
GETTING STARTED

— at SCHS —

A great year begins with preparation, purpose, and Panther Pride. This section will help you get acclimated, connected, and ready for success!

In This Section

Everything you need to know to begin your journey as a Panther!



BELL SCHEDULE

Daily schedules and important times to know.



ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Procedures for arriving to and leaving school.



BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Information about meal service and payment options.



CAMPUS HOURS

School hours, office hours, and important contact information.



PARKING

Student parking information and expectations.



WHAT TO BRING

Required and recommended items for school success.

HOME OF THE *Panthers!*



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SUMTER COUNTY

SCHOOL SYSTEM

Excellence.
EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY DAY.

2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR



IMPORTANT DATES

DATE(S)	EVENT
July 23-24 & 27-29, 2026	Pre-Planning
July 28, 2026	Open House
July 30, 2026	1st Day of School
September 7, 2026	Labor Day Holiday
September 9, 2026	Progress Reports
September 11, 2026	Early Release/Parent Teacher Conferences
October 1, 2026	End of 1st Nine Weeks
October 2, 2026	W.I.N. Learning Day/Curriculum Planning
October 12-16, 2026	Fall Break
October 21, 2026	Report Cards
November 6, 2026	Early Release/Mental Health Day
November 11, 2026	Progress Reports
November 20, 2026	Early Release/ Curriculum Planning-Job Embedded
November 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
December 17, 2026	Early Release/End of 2nd Nine Weeks/1st Semester Teacher Workday
December 18, 2026	Teacher Workday
December 21, 2026 - January 1, 2027	Winter Break
January 4, 2027	Teachers Return/Curriculum Planning
January 5, 2027	Students Return
January 13, 2027	Report Cards
January 18, 2027	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 10, 2027	Progress Reports
February 11, 2027	Early Release/Parent Teacher Conferences
February 12, 2027	Professional Learning Day
February 15, 2027	Mid-Winter Break/President's Day
February 26, 2027	Early Release/Mental Health Day
March 11, 2027	End of 3rd Nine Weeks
March 12, 2027	W.I.N. Learning Day/Curriculum Planning
March 15, 2027	Mid-Spring Break
March 24, 2027	Report Cards
April 5-9, 2027	Spring Break
April 21, 2027	Progress Reports
May 20, 2027	SCHS Baccalaureate
May 21, 2027	Last Day of School/Early Release/Report Cards K-8 End of 4th Nine Weeks/Teacher Workday/ SCHS Graduation
May 24-25, 2027	Post Planning
May 27, 2027	Report Cards (Grades 9-12)
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day

JULY 2026

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AUGUST 2026

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SEPTEMBER 2026

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OCTOBER 2026

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NOVEMBER 2026

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DECEMBER 2026

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JANUARY 2027

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FEBRUARY 2027

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MARCH 2027

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APRIL 2027

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MAY 2027

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JUNE 2027

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CALENDAR KEY

- HOLIDAY
- SCHOOL CLOSED
- PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAY
- PROGRESS REPORTS ISSUED
- REPORT CARDS ISSUED
- GRADUATION EVENT
- PARENT / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- CURRICULUM PLANNING / W.I.N. LEARNING DAY
- EARLY RELEASE / SPECIAL DAY



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The Sumter County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap in any educational program/activities or in employment practices.





SUMTER COUNTY — HIGH SCHOOL —

Excellence.
EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY DAY.

BELL SCHEDULE

2026–2027 SCHOOL YEAR



Every minute of the school day matters. Students are expected to arrive on time, report promptly to each class, and remain engaged throughout the instructional day. The bell schedule below outlines the daily instructional periods, transitions, lunch schedule, and dismissal procedures.

PERIODS	TIME	INSTRUCTIONAL TIME
Doors Open / Breakfast	7:30 – 7:55 AM	—
First Bell	7:55 AM	—
1 st Block	8:00 – 9:30 AM	90 minutes
Transition	9:30 – 9:35 AM	5 minutes
Panther Period	9:35 – 10:25 AM	50 minutes
Transition	10:25 – 10:30 AM	5 minutes
2 nd Block	10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	120 minutes*
1 st Lunch	11:05 – 11:30 AM	
2 nd Lunch	11:35 AM – 12:00 PM	
3 rd Lunch	12:05 – 12:30 PM	
Transition	12:30 – 12:35 PM	5 minutes
3 rd Block	12:35 – 2:05 PM	90 minutes
Transition	2:05 – 2:10 PM	5 minutes
4 th Block	2:10 – 3:40 PM	90 minutes

*Students attend one of three assigned lunch periods during 2nd Block.



ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

- School doors open at 7:30 AM.
- Breakfast is served from 7:30 – 7:55 AM.
- Students should report directly to their designated area upon arrival.
- The first bell rings at 7:55 AM.
- Instruction begins promptly at 8:00 AM. Students not in class by this time may be considered tardy according to school policy.



PANTHER PERIOD

Panther Period provides students with opportunities for:

- Academic intervention and enrichment
- Tutoring and extra help
- Student support services
- School-wide announcements
- Advisory and character-building activities

Students are expected to participate actively and follow their assigned Panther Period schedule.



DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

To ensure a safe and orderly dismissal, students will be released according to the following schedule:



STUDENT DRIVERS

3:40 PM



CAR RIDERS

3:45 PM



BEYOND THE BELL PARTICIPANTS

3:50 PM



BUS RIDERS

Released once all buses have arrived on campus.



SAFETY REMINDER

Students should remain in their assigned dismissal location until released by school personnel. Bus riders should not leave the bus loading area without administrative permission.



BE PRESENT. | BE PREPARED. | BE PROMPT.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to academic success. Every class period provides valuable learning opportunities, and students are expected to maximize instructional time each day.





SUMTER COUNTY — HIGH SCHOOL —

★ EXCELLENCE. COMMITMENT. ACHIEVEMENT. ★

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST



OPEN HOUSE

TUESDAY,
JULY 28, 2026



FIRST DAY
OF SCHOOL

THURSDAY,
JULY 30, 2026

- ✓ Clear or Mesh Bookbag (required for all students)
- ✓ #2 Pencils (2 packs)
- ✓ Blue/Black Ink Pens
- ✓ Composition Notebooks (4)
- ✓ 2" Ring Binders (2)
- ✓ Binder dividers
- ✓ Loose-leaf Notebook Paper (2 packs or more)
- ✓ Highlighters
- ✓ Colored Pencils
- ✓ Pocket Folders with Clasp
- ✓ Pencil Pouch
- ✓ Glue Stick
- ✓ 3 oz–12 oz hand sanitizer
- ✓ Earbuds - Corded Only (wireless not allowed)
- ✓ Index Cards (Science classes)
- ✓ Basic Calculator (Chemistry classes)
- ✓ Wireless Mouse (optional)
- ✓ Stylus (optional)
- ✓ Kleenex





Getting Started



Welcome to Panther Nation!

Whether you're joining Sumter County High School for the first time or returning for another exciting year, we're glad you're here. High school is more than attending classes—it's about discovering your strengths, building lasting relationships, preparing for your future, and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

This section is designed to help you begin the year with confidence. Inside you'll find the essential information every Panther needs to navigate the school day—from arrival procedures and bell schedules to campus expectations, parking, meals, student identification, and important contacts.

Understanding how our school operates allows you to spend less time worrying about logistics and more time focusing on learning, participating, and making the most of every opportunity.

At Sumter County High School, we encourage every student to:

- **Be Ready** by arriving prepared each day.
- **Be Respectful** to classmates, staff, and our campus.
- **Be Responsible** for your learning and your choices.
- **Be Safe** in every classroom, hallway, and activity.
- **Take Pride** in being a Panther and representing our school with excellence.

We're excited to partner with you on a successful school year. Welcome to a community where every student belongs, every day matters, and every opportunity counts.

School Calendar

The school calendar serves as an important guide for planning a successful school year. It includes key academic dates such as the first and last days of school, grading periods, progress reports, report cards, holidays, breaks, teacher planning days, early release days, and other significant school events. Students and families are encouraged to review the calendar regularly and plan appointments, vacations, and other activities around these important dates whenever possible. Staying informed about the school calendar helps students maintain consistent attendance, meet academic deadlines, and participate fully in the opportunities offered throughout the year.



Panther Tip: *Keep a copy of the school calendar at home or save it to your phone so you never miss an important date, deadline, or school event.*

Bell Schedule

The daily bell schedule is designed to maximize instructional time while providing students with opportunities to learn, collaborate, and stay engaged throughout the school day. Students are expected to arrive on time, transition promptly between classes, and report to each class prepared to learn. Following the bell schedule helps maintain a safe, orderly learning environment and ensures that every student has the opportunity to benefit from the full instructional program. Students should become familiar with the schedule, including lunch periods and Panther Period, and are encouraged to manage their time responsibly throughout the day.



Panther Tip: *Being on time is one of the simplest ways to demonstrate responsibility, respect your teachers and classmates, and set yourself up for success each day.*

Arrival & Dismissal

A safe, organized arrival and dismissal process helps ensure that every school day begins and ends successfully. School doors open at 7:30 a.m., with breakfast served from 7:30–7:55 a.m. Students should arrive no earlier than 7:30 a.m. unless participating in a supervised school activity and should report directly to the cafeteria if they plan to eat breakfast or to their designated supervised area upon arrival. Students are expected to be in class when the first bell rings at 7:55 a.m. Instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m., and students who are not in class by that time may be considered tardy according to school policy.

To help ensure a smooth dismissal, students and families should make transportation arrangements before the end of the school day. At the conclusion of the school day, students are expected to report immediately to their assigned dismissal location. Student drivers are dismissed at 3:40 p.m., car riders at 3:45 p.m., Beyond the Bell participants at 3:50 p.m., and bus riders are dismissed once all buses have arrived on campus. Bus riders should report directly to the bus loading area on the side of the school, student drivers should proceed directly to the student parking lot, and car riders should report to the designated pickup area. Car riders should be picked up no later than 3:55 p.m. from the designated pickup area. After 3:55 p.m., any remaining car riders should report to the Front Office area and be picked up from the front of the school no later than 4:15 p.m.

If a student needs to ride a bus other than their regularly assigned bus, a written request from the parent or guardian must be submitted to the school office before 10:30 a.m. The request must include a telephone number where the parent or guardian can be reached for verification. Bus transportation changes cannot be approved if the school is unable to verify the request with the parent or guardian. Once approved, students may pick up their bus pass from Student Services in the Front Office during lunch.

Students are expected to leave campus promptly after dismissal unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity or are under the direct supervision of a teacher or staff member. All students should be out of the building and off campus by 4:15 p.m. unless participating in an approved, supervised activity. The school cannot assume responsibility for students who remain on campus without appropriate adult supervision after dismissal.

For the safety and security of everyone on campus, students may not leave school during the instructional day without proper authorization through the Front Office. Following arrival and dismissal procedures, remaining in designated areas, respecting staff directions, and exercising patience and courtesy during high-traffic times help maintain a safe, orderly environment for all members of Panther Nation.



Panther Tip: *Every great school day begins with arriving on time and ends with a safe dismissal. Be prompt, be prepared, be patient, and help keep our campus safe by following all arrival and dismissal procedures.*

School Nutrition: Breakfast & Lunch

Sumter County High School is committed to providing students with access to nutritious, balanced meals that support healthy minds and successful learning. Breakfast and lunch are provided free of charge to all students each school day, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or ability to pay. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these healthy meal options as part of a successful school day.

Breakfast is served each morning beginning at 7:30 a.m. and remains available until 30 minutes prior to the first lunch period. Students should report directly to the cafeteria upon arrival if they plan to eat breakfast. Students are not permitted to leave campus for breakfast or lunch once they have arrived at school.

The cafeteria is an extension of the classroom, and students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, quiet, and orderly manner. Students should follow staff directions, use appropriate table manners, keep their dining area clean, return trays and utensils, and dispose of all trash before leaving the cafeteria. These simple acts of responsibility help create a welcoming environment for everyone.

Students may bring a lunch from home if they choose; however, outside food deliveries, restaurant deliveries, fast food, and soft drink containers are not permitted on campus or in the cafeteria. Students are required to remain on campus during the school day and eat in the designated cafeteria area. Food and beverages may not be removed from the cafeteria unless approved by school administration. In accordance with Georgia School Nutrition Program guidelines, students may not give or accept food from other students while in the cafeteria.

Parents and family members are welcome to join their student for lunch. Visitors should check in through the Front Office upon arrival. Families are encouraged to contact the school in advance regarding visitor procedures and the cost of an adult meal.

Students with food allergies or special dietary needs should notify the school as early as possible. Parents or guardians should provide written documentation of any food allergies to the school nurse or designated school personnel. When a medical dietary accommodation is required, documentation from a licensed healthcare provider may be necessary in accordance with School Nutrition Program guidelines.



Panther Tip: *Healthy meals fuel healthy minds. Eat well, clean up after yourself, and show Panther Pride by helping keep our cafeteria welcoming for everyone.*

Campus Hours

Sumter County High School is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment throughout the school day. The school building is open to students beginning at 7:30 a.m., and students should not arrive on campus before that time unless participating in an approved, supervised activity. Upon arrival, students should report directly to breakfast or their designated supervised area until the instructional day begins.

The official school day runs from 7:30 a.m. to 3:55 p.m., with instruction beginning promptly at 8:00 a.m. Students are expected to arrive on time, remain engaged throughout the school day, and follow all school procedures during arrival, dismissal, and transitions. At the conclusion of the school day, students should leave campus promptly unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity or are under the direct supervision of a teacher or staff member.

For the safety of all students, supervision is not available before 7:30 a.m. or after the conclusion of the school day unless students are participating in an approved school activity.



Panther Tip: *Arriving on time and following school hours helps create a safe, organized, and successful learning environment for everyone in Panther Nation.*

Student Parking & Parking Permits

Driving to school is a privilege that carries significant responsibility. Students who choose to drive to campus are expected to operate their vehicles safely, follow all traffic laws, and comply with school parking regulations. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, suspension or revocation of parking privileges, vehicle towing at the owner's expense, or other consequences as determined by school administration.

Students who drive to school must register their vehicle and obtain a valid parking permit before parking on school property. Parking permits are available in the Front Office for the established annual fee. Students must purchase a permit within two (2) school days after the beginning of classes or within two (2) school days of enrollment if registering after the school year begins. If a student changes vehicles during the school year, the Front Office must be notified so parking records can be updated.

All student vehicles must display a valid parking permit and be parked only in designated student parking areas. Vehicles parked without a permit or in unauthorized or restricted areas are subject to ticketing and/or towing at the owner's expense. Students are expected to proceed directly to and from their vehicles, as loitering or visitation in the parking lot is prohibited. The Sumter County School System is not responsible for theft of or damage to vehicles or personal property while parked on school grounds.

Student vehicles parked on school property may be searched whenever school officials have reasonable suspicion that the vehicle contains prohibited, unauthorized, or illegal items. Reckless driving, excessive speed, or other unsafe operation of a vehicle on school property will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action and the loss of parking privileges.

Parking privileges are contingent upon responsible behavior and satisfactory attendance. Parking privileges may be revoked upon a student's tenth (10th) tardy to school during a nine-week grading period. Parking violations are subject to fines of \$5 for the first violation, \$10 for the second violation, and \$20 for each subsequent violation, in addition to other disciplinary consequences when appropriate.



Panther Tip: *Driving to school is a privilege. Drive safely, park responsibly, display your permit, and help keep Panther Nation safe by following all parking regulations.*

Student Identification (ID) Cards

Student identification (ID) cards help maintain a safe and secure school environment while allowing staff to quickly identify students on campus. All students are expected to have their school-issued ID card in their possession during the school day and present it when requested by school personnel. Student IDs may be required for campus entry, checking out library materials, purchasing meals, attending school events, participating in extracurricular activities, and other school-related services.

Students are responsible for keeping their ID cards in good condition and should report lost or damaged cards to the Front Office as soon as possible so a replacement can be issued. Replacement fees may apply in accordance with school procedures. Student ID cards are school property and may not be altered, shared, or used by anyone other than the student to whom they were issued.



Panther Tip: *Your student ID is your passport to campus life. Keep it with you, protect it, and be ready to present it whenever requested by a school employee.*

Visitors

Sumter County High School values the partnership between families, schools, and the community. Parents, guardians, and approved visitors are encouraged to visit the school, attend school events, and remain actively involved in their student's education. To ensure a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff, all visitors must report directly to the Front Office upon entering the building. Visitors are required to present identification, sign in through the school's visitor management system, and obtain an official Visitor Badge before proceeding to any area of the campus. Visitors must wear their badge at all times while on school property and return it upon leaving. Individuals who enter the building without checking in or who remain on campus without authorization may be considered trespassing and will be asked to leave. Classroom visits should be scheduled in advance through the school office to minimize disruptions to the instructional day.



Panther Tip: Every visitor check-in helps keep Panther Nation safe. Thank you for partnering with us to provide a secure and welcoming learning environment for all.

School Supplies

Being prepared each day is one of the first steps toward academic success. Students are expected to come to school with the materials and supplies necessary for learning, including notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, calculators, and any other items required by their teachers. Individual teachers may provide additional supply lists based on the specific needs of their courses.

Students are responsible for bringing their own classroom materials each day. While teachers may occasionally have limited supplies available, students should not rely on teachers or classmates to provide everyday learning materials. Being prepared helps maximize instructional time and demonstrates responsibility and readiness to learn. Basic school supplies are available for purchase through the School Store for students who need to replace or replenish materials during the school year.



Panther Tip: Success starts with preparation. Arriving each day with the supplies you need helps you stay organized, focused, and ready to learn.

Important Contacts

Communication is essential to a successful school experience. Sumter County High School encourages students and families to reach out whenever questions, concerns, or needs arise. Whether you need academic support, attendance assistance, counseling services, transportation information, or help with school programs, our staff is committed to providing timely assistance and connecting you with the appropriate resources.

Page one of this handbook contains the most frequently used school and district contacts to help students and families quickly find the information they need. We encourage parents and guardians to keep these contact numbers readily available and to maintain open communication with teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff throughout the school year. Working together, we can ensure every Panther has the support needed to succeed.



Panther Tip: Don't wait until there's a problem to ask for help. Your teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff are here to help you succeed every step of the way.

SECTION

2



ACADEMIC SUCCESS

— *Learn. Lead. Succeed.* —

At Sumter County High School, we are committed to providing a rigorous and supportive learning environment where every student is challenged to achieve their highest potential.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Explore the programs and opportunities available to help you reach your goals.



COURSE INFORMATION

Learn about graduation requirements, course offerings, and scheduling.



GRADING & ASSESSMENT

Understand how grades are calculated and academic progress is measured.



ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Resources and services to support your learning and achievement.



HONORS & RECOGNITION

Celebrate excellence through academic honors, awards, and scholarships.



TECHNOLOGY & LEARNING TOOLS

Devices, digital resources, and tools that enhance the learning experience.



Academic Success



Academic success is the foundation of everything we do at Sumter County High School. Every classroom, course, and learning experience is designed to prepare students for success in college, careers, military service, and life beyond graduation. Through high expectations, engaging instruction, meaningful learning opportunities, and personalized support, we challenge every Panther to grow academically, think critically, and reach their fullest potential.

This section provides important information about academic programs, graduation requirements, grading practices, schedules, testing, academic support services, and opportunities that will help students achieve their goals. Whether you are striving for honor roll, earning college credit, preparing for a career pathway, or exploring your future, the resources in this section will help you stay informed, organized, and focused on success.

At Sumter County High School, academic excellence begins with preparation, perseverance, and Panther Pride. Every lesson learned, every assignment completed, and every challenge overcome brings you one step closer to your future.



Panther Tip: *Success isn't about being perfect—it's about showing up, working hard, asking for help when you need it, and giving your best every day. Your future starts in today's classroom.*

Graduation

Graduation from Sumter County High School represents the successful completion of all state and local requirements for earning a high school diploma. Students must satisfy all graduation requirements established by the Georgia Department of Education and the Sumter County Board of Education in order to receive a diploma and participate in commencement exercises.

Students and parents are encouraged to meet regularly with the school counselor to monitor graduation progress, review earned credits, and ensure all graduation requirements are met. Participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege that is contingent upon meeting all academic, financial, and behavioral expectations established by the school and district.

Detailed graduation requirements, diploma requirements, and applicable Board policies are included in the Appendix of this handbook.

Graduation Speeches

The Valedictorian, Salutatorian, Class President, and Student Government Association (SGA) President automatically receive speaking roles during graduation ceremonies. Additional student speakers are nominated by the graduating class honor graduates and selected by a faculty vote.

All graduation and baccalaureate speeches must be submitted to the Graduation Committee by the first Friday in May. Speeches will be reviewed by an English teacher for grammar and sentence structure and must receive final approval from the Graduation Committee prior to the ceremony. Students are expected to present only the approved version of their speech. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including the temporary withholding of the student's diploma until the matter has been reviewed by school administration.

Graduation Practice

Participation in graduation practice is mandatory. Seniors are required to attend all scheduled graduation rehearsals during the final week of school. Students who miss practice without an approved excuse or who create disciplinary problems during rehearsal may lose the privilege of participating in the graduation ceremony.

Following each graduation practice session, seniors may leave campus with documented parent or guardian permission. Students who do not have permission to leave must remain on campus under school supervision until the regular dismissal time.

Graduation Expectations

Graduation is a privilege as well as a celebration of academic achievement. Students are expected to meet all academic, behavioral, financial, and attendance obligations prior to commencement.

A detailed Senior Graduation Checklist outlining important dates, deadlines, attire requirements, rehearsal schedules, senior obligations, and ceremony expectations will be distributed to all seniors by the end of October. Students participating in Dual Enrollment or Move On When Ready (MOWR) programs remain responsible for staying informed by reviewing school announcements, checking the school website, and communicating regularly with school personnel.

Students who fail to meet graduation expectations, violate school rules, fail to attend required graduation activities, or engage in behavior that disrupts graduation events may be prohibited from participating in the graduation ceremony. In such cases, the student's diploma may be temporarily withheld pending an administrative review and appeal. Following the appeal process, school administration will determine any disciplinary consequences and when the diploma will be released.

The Graduation Committee, appointed annually by school administration, is responsible for overseeing commencement activities, reviewing graduation speeches, coordinating senior expectations, and ensuring that all graduation procedures are followed.



Panther Tip: *Graduation is earned through years of dedication and hard work. Finish strong by meeting every deadline, attending every practice, following school expectations, and representing Panther Nation with pride.*

CTAE Pathways

Sumter County High School's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) program prepares students for success beyond graduation by connecting classroom learning with real-world experiences. CTAE pathways allow students to explore career interests, develop technical and employability skills, earn industry-recognized credentials, and prepare for college, the workforce, military service, or entrepreneurship.

Students may choose from a variety of career pathways designed to match their interests and future goals. Many CTAE courses provide opportunities for hands-on learning, work-based learning experiences, career and technical student organizations (CTSOs), dual enrollment opportunities, and industry certifications that give students a competitive advantage after graduation.

Students are encouraged to work closely with their school counselor and CTAE instructors when selecting courses and developing an Individual Graduation Plan that aligns with their career aspirations. Completion of a CTAE pathway demonstrates a student's commitment to career readiness and provides valuable knowledge and skills that can lead directly to employment or continued education.

End of Pathway Assessment (EOPA)

As part of Georgia's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education program, students who complete a CTAE pathway may be required to participate in an End of Pathway Assessment (EOPA). The EOPA is a state-required assessment designed to measure the technical knowledge and skills students have gained through their pathway coursework and serves as an important indicator of career readiness.

Students are eligible to participate in EOPA testing after successfully completing the required pathway courses or while enrolled in the final course of a pathway and on track for successful completion. Depending on the pathway, the EOPA may include a written examination, a performance assessment, an industry credential examination, or a combination of these measures. Students are encouraged to prepare for the EOPA by actively participating in coursework, completing hands-on learning experiences, and taking advantage of review opportunities provided by their instructors.



Panther Tip: *CTAE is more than a class—it's a pathway to your future. Take advantage of every opportunity to earn industry credentials, gain real-world experience, and demonstrate your skills through the End of Pathway Assessment.*

Dual Enrollment

Dual Enrollment provides eligible high school students with the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit simultaneously by taking approved college-level courses while enrolled at Sumter County High School. This program allows students to challenge themselves academically, explore career interests, reduce the time and cost of earning a college degree, and gain valuable experience in a college learning environment.

Students interested in Dual Enrollment should meet with their school counselor to determine eligibility, discuss course options, and develop an academic plan that aligns with their graduation requirements and postsecondary goals. Participation in the program requires students to meet admission requirements established by the partnering college or university, as well as all applicable state and local program guidelines.

Students enrolled in Dual Enrollment are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and comply with the attendance, academic integrity, and behavioral expectations of both Sumter County High School and the postsecondary institution. Because college courses become part of a student's permanent college transcript, students should carefully consider course selections and commit to successfully completing all enrolled courses.

Students who withdraw from a Dual Enrollment course after enrollment will receive a failing grade of 69 for the course in accordance with district policy. Dual Enrollment courses remain unweighted and are calculated as standard courses for high school grade point average purposes. Final grades for Dual Enrollment courses are verified by the college instructor and submitted directly to the Sumter County High School Registrar, where they are recorded on the student's high school transcript and calculated into the student's Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA).

Dual Enrollment opportunities vary based on student eligibility, course availability, and partnerships with participating colleges and universities. Students and families are encouraged to work closely with the school counselor to explore available options and ensure courses meet both high school graduation requirements and future college or career goals.



Panther Tip: *Dual Enrollment is a college commitment. Choose your courses carefully, stay engaged, and remember that the grades you earn become part of both your high school and permanent college transcript.*

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Services

Sumter County High School is committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to a high-quality education. The English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program provides specialized instructional support for students whose primary language is not English. The goal of the ESOL program is to help multilingual learners develop English language proficiency while successfully participating in academic coursework and school activities.

Students who qualify for ESOL services receive language instruction and classroom support based on their individual English proficiency levels, as determined by state-approved screening and assessment procedures. ESOL teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide instructional strategies and accommodations that promote language development and academic achievement.

Students receiving ESOL services participate annually in the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment, which measures progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. Results from this assessment help determine students' language growth and continued eligibility for ESOL services.

Parents and guardians are valued partners in the educational process and are encouraged to communicate regularly with school staff regarding their child's progress. Translation and interpretation services are available, when appropriate, to help families access school information and participate fully in their child's education.



Panther Tip: *Learning a new language is a journey. Ask questions, participate in class, and take advantage of the support available—every step brings you closer to success.*

Migrant Education Services

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) provides additional educational support and resources for eligible students whose families have moved to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agriculture or fishing. The program is designed to help ensure that migratory students have access to the same high-quality educational opportunities as all other students and are able to succeed academically despite the challenges associated with frequent moves.

Eligible students may receive a variety of support services, including academic assistance, educational resources, school supplies, referrals to health and community services, assistance with school transitions, graduation planning, and college and career readiness support. The specific services provided are based on individual student needs and program eligibility.

Parents and guardians who believe their family may qualify for Migrant Education services are encouraged to contact the school counselor or the district Migrant Education Program representative for additional information. All eligibility determinations are made in accordance with federal and state guidelines.



Panther Tip: *If your family moves for seasonal or temporary agricultural or fishing work, you may qualify for additional educational support. Contact your school counselor to learn more about available services.*

Gifted Education Services

Sumter County High School is committed to challenging and supporting students who demonstrate exceptional academic potential through its Gifted Education Program. Gifted services are designed to provide advanced learning opportunities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and intellectual growth while preparing students for success in college, careers, and lifelong learning.

Students may be referred for gifted eligibility by teachers, parents or guardians, counselors, administrators, peers, community members, or through self-referral. Students may also be automatically referred based on qualifying achievement data or when transferring from another school district. Students who have been identified as gifted in another Georgia public school system will continue to receive gifted services upon verification of eligibility documentation. Students transferring from out-of-state districts may be referred for evaluation in accordance with Georgia Department of Education guidelines.

Eligibility for gifted services is determined using the Georgia Department of Education's multiple-criteria process, which considers evidence in the areas of mental ability, academic achievement, creativity, and motivation. Students must meet the state-established eligibility requirements before services can begin.

The district's Gifted Eligibility Committee reviews referrals and evaluation data throughout the school year to determine eligibility and placement. Parents and guardians who would like additional information about the Gifted Education Program or wish to refer a student for consideration should contact the school counselor, gifted education teacher, or principal.



Panther Tip: *Gifted education isn't about being the smartest student—it's about providing the right level of challenge so every student can continue to learn, grow, and reach their full potential.*

Special Education Services

Sumter County High School is committed to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and applicable state and federal laws. Special education services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of eligible students and to provide the support necessary for them to access and make progress in the general education curriculum.

Students who qualify for special education services receive individualized instruction, accommodations, modifications, related services, and supports as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is developed collaboratively by a team that includes the student's parents or guardians, teachers, special education staff, school administrators, and, when appropriate, the student.

Promotion, placement, graduation requirements, and educational services for students receiving special education are determined by the student's IEP Team and are based on individual needs, progress, and compliance with state and federal requirements. The IEP Team also reviews student progress regularly and meets at least annually to evaluate services, revise goals, and ensure the student continues to receive an appropriate educational program.

Parents and guardians are valued partners throughout the special education process and are encouraged to participate actively in meetings, communicate regularly with school staff, and advocate for their child's educational success. Families who have questions about special education services or believe their child may need additional support should contact the school counselor, special education teacher, or school administrator.



Panther Tip: *Every Panther learns differently. Our goal is to provide every student with the support, encouragement, and opportunities needed to achieve success and reach their fullest potential.*

Section 504 Services

Sumter County High School is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all students. Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with qualifying physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities may be eligible to receive accommodations and supports through a Section 504 Plan.

A Section 504 Plan is designed to provide eligible students with reasonable accommodations that allow them to participate fully in school programs and activities. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis and may include instructional supports, classroom accommodations, testing accommodations, health-related services, or other assistance necessary to ensure equal access to education.

Parents, guardians, teachers, counselors, or other school personnel may refer a student for consideration under Section 504. Eligibility is determined by a school-based team that reviews evaluation data and other relevant information to determine whether the student meets the requirements established by federal law. Section 504 Plans are reviewed periodically and revised as needed to ensure that accommodations continue to meet the student's educational needs.

Parents and guardians have the right to participate in the Section 504 process and are entitled to procedural safeguards, including the right to review educational records, request meetings, file grievances, and request an impartial hearing regarding decisions related to identification, evaluation, educational placement, or services provided under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing may be made through the district's Section 504 Coordinator. Copies of the Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Parent and Student Rights are available from the school, the district office, and are included in the Appendix of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *If you believe you or your child may need accommodations to fully participate in school, talk with your school counselor or administrator. We're here to help every Panther succeed.*

Grading, Promotion & Retention

Student grades are intended to communicate academic progress and mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Sumter County High School believes that regular communication between school and home is essential to student success. Report cards are issued at the end of each nine-week grading period, and progress reports are provided midway through each grading period to keep students and families informed of academic performance. Teachers may also provide additional progress updates through Infinite Campus, email, phone calls, conferences, or other communication methods.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to monitor student grades regularly and communicate with teachers whenever concerns arise. If a student is experiencing academic difficulty or is in danger of failing a course, families are encouraged to schedule a conference with the student's teacher, counselor, or administrator to develop a plan for improvement.

Academic Grading Scale

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Average</u>
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
F	Below 70
I	Incomplete

An Incomplete may be assigned when a student has not completed required coursework due to extenuating circumstances. Incomplete grades must be resolved within the timeframe established by the school or the grade may be converted to the appropriate earned grade.

Weighted Courses

To recognize the rigor of advanced coursework, Advanced Placement (AP) courses receive a 10-point weight, while Honors courses receive a 5-point weight when calculating course averages. All other courses are calculated using the standard grading scale unless otherwise approved by the Sumter County Board of Education.

Promotion & Retention

Promotion to the next grade level is based on successful completion of required coursework, earned credits, attendance, and demonstrated academic progress. Students are expected to meet all local and state academic requirements in order to advance to the next grade level and remain on track for graduation.

When a student experiences academic difficulty, the school will work proactively with the student and family by providing academic interventions, monitoring progress, and offering opportunities for additional support. Parents or guardians will be notified if a student is in danger of failing a course or being retained. Formal notification will be provided at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the third nine-week grading period, and conferences may be scheduled to develop an intervention plan and discuss available supports.

The decision to promote or retain a student is made after careful consideration of the student's academic performance, attendance, assessment data, and other relevant information. School administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and other appropriate staff members work together to determine the educational placement that best supports the student's continued growth and long-term success. Students who do not successfully complete the required coursework or earn the credits necessary for promotion may be retained in accordance with Sumter County Board of Education policy.

Detailed promotion and retention requirements are available in Section 10 of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *Your grades tell your story one assignment at a time. Attend school regularly, complete your work, ask questions, and seek help early—small steps today lead to success tomorrow.*

Honor Roll

Sumter County High School recognizes and celebrates students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement through the Honor Roll program. Honor Roll recognition is awarded at the conclusion of each nine-week grading period and reflects a student's commitment to academic excellence, responsibility, and consistent effort in the classroom.

Students may earn one of the following Honor Roll distinctions:

- A Honor Roll – Students who earn all A's on their report card for the nine-week grading period.
- A/B Honor Roll – Students who earn only A's and B's on their report card for the nine-week grading period.

Students who earn Honor Roll recognition may be recognized through school announcements, certificates, awards programs, or other school-sponsored celebrations. Honor Roll serves as an opportunity to acknowledge the hard work, perseverance, and dedication demonstrated by our students throughout the grading period.



Panther Tip: *Academic excellence is achieved one assignment, one test, and one class at a time. Set goals, stay organized, and strive to do your best every day!*

Honor Graduates

Sumter County High School proudly recognizes students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement throughout their high school career by awarding Honor Graduate status. This distinction reflects a sustained commitment to academic excellence, perseverance, and high achievement across the student's high school coursework.

Honor Graduate status is determined using a student's Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA), which is calculated in accordance with Sumter County Board of Education Policy IHC governing class rank. Final Honor Graduate determinations are made after all grades have been verified and student academic records have been reviewed. Students who qualify will be recognized during graduation activities and other school-sponsored honors programs.

Additional information regarding the calculation of the Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA) and class ranking procedures is available in Board Policy IHC, located in the Appendix of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *Honor Graduate recognition is earned through consistent academic excellence over four years. Every class, every assignment, and every grade contributes to your success.*

Valedictorian/Salutatorian

The titles of Valedictorian and Salutatorian represent the highest academic honors awarded to graduating seniors at Sumter County High School. These honors recognize students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement, dedication, and excellence throughout their high school careers.

Class rank is determined using each student's Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA) at the conclusion of the third nine-week grading period of the senior year, in accordance with Sumter County Board of Education Policy IHC. The student with the highest class rank is recognized as the Valedictorian, and the student with the second-highest class rank is recognized as the Salutatorian.

To be eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian honors, students—including those participating in Dual Enrollment—must be enrolled in the Sumter County School System for a minimum of four (4) consecutive semesters immediately preceding graduation. Transfer credits used in the calculation of class rank must be earned from a high school or college accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the Georgia Department of Education.

Ties for Valedictorian/Salutatorian

If a tie exists in the determination of the Valedictorian, each student earning the highest CNGA will be publicly recognized as Valedictorian. In this circumstance, a Salutatorian will not be publicly recognized.

If there is no tie for Valedictorian but a tie exists for Salutatorian, each qualifying student will be publicly recognized as Salutatorian.

Scholarship Tie-Breaking Procedures

When scholarships, grants, or other awards require the designation of a single Valedictorian or Salutatorian and a tie exists, the following criteria will be used in the order listed to determine the recipient:

1. Highest Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA)
2. Greatest number of college preparatory courses completed
3. Highest combined SAT or ACT scores

If a tie cannot be broken using the criteria above, the Principal will appoint a committee to determine the recipient(s) of the scholarship or financial award.

Complete procedures governing class rank, Valedictorian and Salutatorian selection, and scholarship determinations are available in Board Policy IHC, located in the Appendix of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *The race for Valedictorian and Salutatorian begins on the first day of high school. Every class, every grade, and every opportunity to challenge yourself contributes to your academic success.*

STAR Student

Sumter County High School is proud to participate in Georgia's Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) Program, one of the state's oldest and most prestigious academic recognition programs. Sponsored by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE), the STAR Program honors outstanding high school seniors for exceptional academic achievement while also recognizing the teacher who has had the greatest influence on the student's educational success.

To be named the STAR Student, a graduating senior must earn the highest SAT score earned on a single test administration through the November test date of the senior year and rank among the top 10 percent or top 10 students of the graduating class, while meeting the minimum SAT score established by the STAR Program. The selected STAR Student has the honor of choosing a STAR Teacher—the educator who has made the most significant contribution to the student's academic growth and success.

The Sumter County High School STAR Student and STAR Teacher advance to regional competition with students from across Georgia. Regional winners are recognized by PAGE and compete for state honors and scholarships. Students selected for this distinction represent the highest standards of academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to learning.

Additional information about the STAR Program and current eligibility requirements is available through the school counseling office or at PAGE's STAR Program.



Panther Tip: *Academic excellence opens doors. Challenge yourself in every class, prepare for college entrance exams, and strive to become the next Sumter County High School STAR Student.*

Class Rank

Class rank is used to compare a student's academic performance with that of other students in the graduating class. At Sumter County High School, class rank is determined using a student's Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA), which is calculated to three decimal places in accordance with Sumter County Board of Education Policy IHC. The CNGA includes all eligible academic coursework completed during high school, including summer school courses. To recognize the rigor of advanced coursework, 10 points are added to the yearly average for each Advanced Placement (AP) course, and 5 points are added to the yearly average for each Advanced/Honors core course. For graduating seniors, these weighted points are applied at the conclusion of the third nine-week grading period to determine final class rankings.

Students enrolled in Dual Enrollment courses who withdraw from a course will receive a failing grade of 69 in accordance with district policy. Dual Enrollment courses are not weighted, and final grades are verified by the college instructor before being submitted to the Sumter County High School Registrar for inclusion in the student's Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA).

Class rank is used to determine academic honors, including Valedictorian, Salutatorian, Honor Graduates, and other recognitions as established by Board policy.



Panther Tip: *The race for Valedictorian and Salutatorian begins on the first day of high school. Every class, every grade, and every opportunity to challenge yourself contributes to your academic success.*

Grade Point Average (GPA)

A student's Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated using a traditional 4.0 scale and is commonly used for college admissions, scholarships, and eligibility requirements. GPA is calculated as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Average</u>
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
F	Below 70
I	Incomplete

Students who successfully complete an Advanced Placement (AP) course receive one additional quality point for passing grades:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>AP Grade Points</u>
A	5.0
B	4.0
C	3.0

Dual Enrollment courses do not receive additional quality points in the GPA calculation. Summer school grades are included in the student's cumulative GPA.

Please note: GPA is not used to determine class rank. Class rank is determined solely by the student's Cumulative Numeric Grade Average (CNGA) as outlined in Board Policy IHC.

Complete procedures governing class rank and GPA calculations are available in the Appendix of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *Every grade counts. Consistent effort throughout all four years of high school is the key to earning a strong GPA, a competitive class rank, and opportunities after graduation.*

Assessment & Evaluation

Assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process at Sumter County High School. A variety of assessments are used throughout the school year to measure student learning, monitor academic progress, guide instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs. Assessments help teachers identify student strengths, address learning gaps, and provide timely interventions and enrichment opportunities.

Students may participate in a variety of classroom, district, and state assessments, including formative assessments, summative assessments, benchmark assessments, common unit assessments, performance tasks, college and career readiness assessments, and the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS), including required End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments. In accordance with Georgia Department of Education requirements, students enrolled in courses with an associated Georgia Milestones End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment are required to participate in the assessment, and the EOC score will count as 20% of the student's final course grade.

Additional assessments may be administered throughout the school year to monitor student growth, inform instructional decisions, and meet state and federal accountability requirements. Parents and guardians are encouraged to review assessment results with their child and maintain regular communication with teachers regarding academic progress. Assessment data is one of many tools used to support student success and ensure that every Panther is progressing toward graduation and postsecondary readiness.



Panther Tip: Every assessment is an opportunity to show what you've learned and identify where you can continue to grow. Give your best effort, ask questions, and use feedback to improve.

Final Exam Exemptions

Sumter County High School recognizes students who consistently demonstrate academic excellence, positive behavior, and strong attendance by offering opportunities to earn final exam exemptions. Final exam exemptions are a privilege and are intended to reward students who have maintained high academic standards and exemplary citizenship throughout the semester.

To qualify for a final exam exemption, students must meet all of the following requirements:

Seniors

- Maintain a 90 or higher course average.
- Have no discipline referrals during the semester.
- Have three (3) or fewer excused absences in the course.
- Have no unexcused absences in the course.

Underclassmen (Grades 9–11)

- Maintain a 95 or higher course average.
- Have no discipline referrals during the semester.
- Have three (3) or fewer excused absences in the course.
- Have no unexcused absences in the course.

Students must satisfy all exemption criteria to qualify. Final exam exemption eligibility is determined by school administration based on academic records, attendance, and student discipline data. The administration reserves the right to modify exemption procedures as necessary to comply with district or state requirements.



Panther Tip: Final exam exemptions are earned through consistent effort all semester long. Excellent attendance, positive behavior, and strong academic performance can reward you with one less exam at the end of the term.

Make-Up Work

Regular attendance is essential for academic success, as classroom instruction, discussions, and hands-on learning experiences cannot always be fully replicated through make-up assignments. When students are absent, they are responsible for obtaining and completing all missed assignments in a timely manner.

Students should communicate with their teachers as soon as possible after returning to school to arrange for make-up work and establish completion deadlines. Except in cases of extended absences or other approved circumstances, make-up work will not be provided in advance without sufficient prior notice. Students will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete missed assignments based on the length of the absence. As a general guideline, students will be allowed one school day to complete make-up work for each day of excused absence, unless otherwise determined by the teacher due to the nature of the assignment or the circumstances surrounding the absence.

Teachers may establish reasonable deadlines for assignments, projects, laboratories, presentations, or assessments that require additional instructional time or classroom participation. Students who fail to complete assigned make-up work within the established timeframe may receive a reduced grade or a failing grade for the missed assignment.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate with teachers regarding extended absences or unusual circumstances that may affect a student's ability to complete make-up work.



Panther Tip: Missing school doesn't have to mean falling behind. Communicate with your teachers, stay organized, and complete make-up work as soon as possible to stay on track.

Media Center

The Sumter County High School Media Center serves as a hub for learning, research, reading, collaboration, and technology. Students are encouraged to utilize the Media Center to access print and digital resources, conduct research, complete assignments, and explore materials that support both academic success and personal interests.

The Media Center is open during the regular school day and may also be available before school, after school, and during lunch, as determined by the school's operating schedule. During instructional hours, students must have a teacher-issued pass to visit the Media Center unless they are accompanied by a class.

Students may check out up to two books at a time for a two-week loan period, with one renewal permitted unless otherwise arranged with the Media Specialist. Students are responsible for all materials checked out in their name. Lost or damaged books and other library materials must be paid for at the current replacement cost before the end of the school year or prior to withdrawal from the school.

Students are expected to help maintain a quiet, respectful, and productive learning environment by following Media Center procedures, using technology responsibly, and treating all resources with care.



Panther Tip: *The Media Center is more than a library—it's your place to read, research, create, collaborate, and discover new opportunities for learning.*

Textbooks & Instructional Materials

Textbooks, digital resources, and other instructional materials are valuable learning tools provided to support student success. Students are expected to bring the materials required for each class each day and are responsible for the proper care and use of all textbooks and school-issued instructional resources.

Students are responsible for any textbook or instructional material issued to them. Lost, stolen, or damaged textbooks must be paid for according to the replacement cost established by the Georgia Department of Education and the Sumter County Board of Education. Students with outstanding textbook obligations may not be issued replacement textbooks or other instructional materials until the appropriate fees have been paid or other arrangements have been approved by the school.

Students are encouraged to protect textbooks by keeping them clean, avoiding unnecessary damage, and returning all school-issued materials promptly at the end of the course or school year.



Panther Tip: *Treat your textbooks like they're your own. Taking good care of school materials helps ensure they remain available for future Panthers and saves you the cost of replacement.*

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of the classroom and provide students with meaningful opportunities to apply what they have learned through real-world experiences. These educational activities are designed to enrich classroom instruction, promote student engagement, and expose students to new learning opportunities beyond the school setting.

Participation in field trips requires a completed and signed parent/guardian permission form submitted by the established deadline. Students who do not return a signed permission form or who are otherwise ineligible to participate will remain at school and be assigned appropriate educational activities. Only students who are actively enrolled at Sumter County High School may participate in school-sponsored field trips.

Participation in field trips is a privilege. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, follow all school rules, comply with directions from school staff and chaperones, and represent Sumter County High School with pride while participating in any school-sponsored activity. Students whose behavior or disciplinary history raises concerns regarding safety or supervision may be denied participation in a field trip.

All field trips are planned to provide educational value and appropriate student supervision. Field trips require approval by the school principal and Superintendent. Out-of-state and overnight field trips must also receive approval from the Sumter County Board of Education. Transportation will be provided by the school when the field trip is directly related to an approved educational purpose.



Panther Tip: *Field trips are learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Represent Panther Nation with respect, responsibility, and good citizenship wherever you go.*



SECTION

3



STUDENT LIFE

— *Connect. Engage. Belong.* —

High school is about more than academics—it's about discovering your passions, building relationships, and creating memories that will last a lifetime. Get involved. Get connected. Be a Panther.



CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Explore a variety of clubs and activities that match your interests.



ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

Join a team, cheer on our Panthers, and show your school spirit!



STUDENT SUPPORT

Resources and services to help you thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Make a difference through service and leadership in our community.



EVENTS & TRADITIONS

Celebrate traditions and make the most of school events all year long.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We value every student and are stronger together as one Panther family.



Student Life



At Sumter County High School, learning extends far beyond the classroom. Student life is an important part of the high school experience, offering opportunities to discover new interests, develop leadership skills, build lifelong friendships, and create lasting memories. Whether participating in athletics, fine arts, clubs, student organizations, academic competitions, or school traditions, every Panther is encouraged to get involved and make the most of their high school years.

Research consistently shows that students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to experience academic success, develop strong character, improve leadership and teamwork skills, and build meaningful connections with their school community. Sumter County High School believes that every student has unique talents and interests, and we encourage all students to explore opportunities that help them grow both inside and outside the classroom.

This section highlights the many programs, activities, traditions, and events that make Panther Nation a vibrant and welcoming community. We encourage every student to take pride in their school, serve others, celebrate accomplishments, and leave a positive legacy during their time at Sumter County High School.



Panther Tip: *Some of the best high school memories happen outside the classroom. Join a club, cheer on your classmates, attend school events, and make your mark as a proud member of Panther Nation!*

Athletics

Athletics are an important part of the educational experience at Sumter County High School, providing students with opportunities to develop leadership, discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, and school pride. Participation in interscholastic athletics encourages students to excel both on the field and in the classroom while representing Panther Nation with integrity and character.

Student-athletes are expected to maintain academic eligibility, demonstrate positive behavior, attend practices and competitions, and comply with all rules established by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA), the Sumter County Board of Education, and Sumter County High School. Participation in athletics is a privilege, and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of citizenship, respect, and responsibility both on and off campus.

A variety of athletic programs are offered throughout the school year, providing opportunities for students to compete, develop their skills, and represent Sumter County High School in regional and state competition. Students interested in participating should contact the appropriate coach or the Athletic Director for information regarding eligibility requirements, physical examinations, required forms, and team expectations.

At Sumter County High School, we believe athletics build more than champions—they build leaders, teammates, and responsible citizens who exemplify Panther Pride in everything they do.



Panther Tip: *Whether you're competing on the field, cheering from the stands, or supporting your teammates, every Panther plays a role in building a culture of excellence, sportsmanship, and school pride.*

School-Sponsored Clubs, Organizations & Activities

Getting involved in school is one of the best ways to make the most of the high school experience. Sumter County High School offers a wide variety of clubs, organizations, leadership groups, honor societies, career and technical student organizations, performing arts programs, and service organizations that allow students to explore their interests, develop new skills, build friendships, and contribute to the school and community.

Participation in extracurricular activities encourages students to become well-rounded individuals by promoting leadership, teamwork, responsibility, creativity, communication, and civic engagement. Students are encouraged to explore opportunities that match their interests and talents while maintaining the academic and behavioral expectations required for participation.

Membership requirements, selection procedures, and participation expectations vary by activity and are established in accordance with local, regional, state, and national governing organizations. Additional information regarding eligibility, tryouts, meetings, dues, or participation requirements may be obtained from the activity sponsor, coach, or the school office.

Membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations is a privilege. Students are expected to represent Sumter County High School with integrity and demonstrate appropriate behavior at all meetings, activities, competitions, and events. Hazing, initiation activities, or any conduct that threatens the health, safety, or dignity of another student are strictly prohibited. Any student or organization found participating in hazing or unauthorized initiation activities will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with state law and Board policy.

Participation in extracurricular activities is considered a privilege and carries both academic and behavioral expectations. In accordance with Georgia High School Association (GHSA) and local Board of Education requirements, students must have passed five (5) of seven (7) traditional courses or three (3) of four (4) block courses (or earned the equivalent of 2.5 credits) during the previous semester to be academically eligible for participation. Additionally, students must be in attendance for at least 50% of the instructional day on the day of an event or activity in order to participate unless the absence is school-approved.

Students assigned to After School Intervention (ASI), In-School Intervention (ISI), or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) are not permitted to participate in or attend extracurricular activities or events on any Sumter County School campus until the assigned consequence has been successfully completed. Sponsors and coaches are responsible for verifying the eligibility of all participants and ensuring compliance with state and local requirements.

Participation in school-sponsored activities is a privilege earned through responsible behavior, regular attendance, academic effort, and good citizenship. Students are encouraged to represent Panther Pride with integrity, respect, and excellence both on and off campus.

Annual Activity Disclaimer--The clubs, organizations, athletic teams, advisors, and sponsors listed in this handbook reflect those anticipated to be offered during the current school year. Opportunities for student involvement may change based on student interest, advisor availability, funding, scheduling, or other operational considerations. Additional clubs or organizations may be established, and some listed activities may be modified, suspended, or discontinued during the school year with administrative approval. Students are encouraged to contact the appropriate sponsor or the school office for the most current information regarding extracurricular opportunities and eligibility requirements.



Panther Tip: Don't just attend school—be a part of it! Joining a club or organization is a great way to discover new interests, develop leadership skills, make lifelong friends, and create memories that last well beyond graduation.

SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVITIES

GET INVOLVED • MAKE CONNECTIONS • BUILD LEADERSHIP • LEAVE YOUR LEGACY

CLUB / ORGANIZATION	
	Anchor Club / History Club
	Art Club
	Band
	Baseball
	Basketball (Boys)
	Basketball (Girls)
	BETA Club
	Cheerleading
	Cross Country
	DECA
	Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
	Flag Football
	Football
	Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)
	Future Farmers of America (FFA)

CLUB / ORGANIZATION	
	HOSA
	JROTC
	Literary Team
	Math Team
	One Act Play
	Parking Committee
	Prom Committee
	Science Club
	SCHS Student Business Association
	Senior Class Sponsors
	SkillsUSA

CLUB / ORGANIZATION	
	Soccer (Boys)
	Soccer (Girls)
	Softball
	Spanish Club
	Sumter County High School Chorus
	Technology Student Association (TSA)
	Tennis (Boys)
	Tennis (Girls)
	Track & Field (Boys & Girls)
	Volleyball
	Wrestling
	Yearbook



ANNUAL ACTIVITY DISCLAIMER

The clubs, organizations, athletic teams, advisors, and activities listed above reflect those anticipated to be offered during the current school year. Opportunities for student involvement may change based on student interest, advisor availability, funding, scheduling, or other operational considerations. Additional clubs or organizations may be established, and some listed activities may be modified, suspended, or discontinued during the school year with administrative approval. Students are encouraged to contact the appropriate school office for the most current information.

**ONE TEAM.
ONE SCHOOL.
PANTHER NATION.**



Student Government

The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the official voice of the student body and provides students with opportunities to develop leadership skills, promote school spirit, and positively impact the school community. Through service projects, school activities, and student advocacy, SGA members work collaboratively with school administrators, faculty, and fellow students to enhance the educational experience and foster Panther Pride.

Student Government is composed of elected representatives from each grade level. Elections are held annually, and students seeking office are expected to demonstrate strong leadership, responsibility, integrity, and a commitment to serving others.

To be eligible to serve as Student Government Association President, a student must:

- Be a senior;
- Maintain a minimum 85 cumulative average;
- Receive four teacher recommendations or references; and
- Have no serious disciplinary referrals.

To be eligible for class officer positions, students must:

- Maintain a minimum 80 cumulative average;
- Receive three teacher recommendations or references; and
- Have no serious disciplinary referrals.

All Student Government officers are expected to model exemplary behavior, maintain academic eligibility, and represent Sumter County High School with professionalism, respect, and Panther Pride throughout their term of office.



Panther Tip: *Leadership isn't about having a title—it's about serving others, setting a positive example, and making your school better for everyone. If you have ideas and a passion for serving, SGA is a great place to lead!*

Fine Arts

The Fine Arts Program at Sumter County High School provides students with opportunities to explore creativity, develop artistic talents, and express themselves through music, visual arts, theater, and performance. Fine arts education fosters critical thinking, collaboration, communication, discipline, and confidence while encouraging students to appreciate diverse cultures and perspectives.

Students may participate in a variety of fine arts courses and extracurricular opportunities, including Band, Chorus, Visual Arts, One Act Play, Literary Competition, and other performing arts experiences as offered. These programs allow students to showcase their talents through concerts, performances, exhibitions, competitions, and community events while representing Panther Nation with pride.

Participation in fine arts activities requires dedication, regular attendance, and a commitment to maintaining academic and behavioral expectations. Students are expected to represent Sumter County High School with professionalism, respect, and good sportsmanship during all performances, rehearsals, competitions, and public appearances.

The Fine Arts Program plays a vital role in developing well-rounded students by inspiring creativity, building confidence, strengthening leadership skills, and creating lifelong appreciation for the arts.



Panther Tip: *The arts help students discover their voice, build confidence, and inspire creativity. Whether you're performing on stage, creating artwork, or making music, your talents help tell the story of Panther Nation.*

Homecoming & Prom

Homecoming and Prom are two of the most anticipated traditions at Sumter County High School and provide students with opportunities to celebrate school spirit, build lasting memories, and enjoy special events with their classmates. These activities are designed to recognize Panther traditions while promoting positive student involvement and community.

Homecoming is a school-wide celebration that may include spirit week activities, athletic events, student recognition, and the Homecoming Dance. Students are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored activities, demonstrate Panther Pride, and represent Sumter County High School with respect and good sportsmanship throughout the week's events.

Prom is a formal event traditionally held for juniors and seniors and is intended to celebrate the accomplishments of our upperclassmen in a safe, enjoyable, and memorable environment. Attendance at Prom is a privilege, and all participants are expected to adhere to school rules, event guidelines, and established dress code expectations. Students who invite guests from other schools must obtain prior administrative approval and ensure their guests comply with all school policies and event procedures. Students who are suspended, assigned to an alternative school setting, or otherwise deemed ineligible due to disciplinary concerns may be prohibited from attending school-sponsored dances and special events.

The administration reserves the right to establish eligibility requirements, guest procedures, security measures, and behavioral expectations for Homecoming, Prom, and other school-sponsored social events to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants.



Panther Tip: School traditions create lifelong memories. Celebrate responsibly, make positive choices, and represent Panther Nation with class, respect, and Panther Pride at every event.

School Traditions

School traditions are an important part of what makes Sumter County High School a special place to learn, grow, and belong. These events celebrate the history, achievements, and spirit of Panther Nation while bringing students, families, faculty, staff, and the community together. Through shared traditions, students build school pride, strengthen relationships, and create memories that last long after graduation.

Throughout the school year, students have opportunities to participate in a variety of school traditions and special events, including pep rallies, spirit weeks, Homecoming, athletic rivalries, fine arts performances, senior celebrations, awards programs, graduation activities, and other school-sponsored events. Students are encouraged to participate, demonstrate enthusiasm, and represent Sumter County High School with integrity, respect, and sportsmanship.

Participation in school traditions is a privilege. Students are expected to follow all school rules, demonstrate appropriate behavior, and contribute to a positive, welcoming atmosphere for everyone. Activities that disrupt events, endanger others, or detract from the purpose of a school tradition are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action or loss of participation privileges.

At Sumter County High School, our traditions connect generations of Panthers and reinforce the values of excellence, leadership, service, and community that define Panther Nation.



Panther Tip: Traditions don't just celebrate where we've been—they inspire where we're going. Get involved, show your Panther Pride, and help create traditions that future Panthers will remember.





SECTION

4

ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT

— *Every Day. Every Choice. Every Opportunity.* —

Your success starts with showing up and staying engaged. Every day and every choice you make create opportunities for growth, achievement, and a brighter future.



BE PRESENT

Attend school regularly and arrive on time ready to learn.



BE ENGAGED

Participate in class, ask questions, and take an active role in your education.



KNOW THE EXPECTATIONS

Understand the attendance policies and academic responsibilities.



BUILD CONNECTIONS

Develop positive relationships with teachers, peers, and staff.



STAY ON TRACK

Monitor your progress and seek support when needed.



YOUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT

Good attendance and engagement lead to more opportunities.





Attendance & Engagement



At Sumter County High School, we believe that every day in school is an opportunity to learn, grow, and prepare for the future. Regular attendance and active classroom engagement are among the strongest predictors of academic success, graduation, and postsecondary readiness. Students who attend school consistently, arrive on time, participate actively in class, and remain engaged in learning are more likely to earn higher grades, stay on track for graduation, and be prepared for college, careers, military service, and life beyond high school.

Research consistently demonstrates the importance of daily attendance. Students who are chronically absent—missing 10% or more of the school year (approximately 18 days)—are significantly more likely to struggle academically, fail courses, and fall behind their peers. Even missing just two days of school each month can place a student at risk for chronic absenteeism. By high school, chronic absenteeism is one of the strongest indicators that a student may not graduate on time.

Attendance is about more than simply being present in a classroom. True success requires students to be engaged—participating in discussions, completing assignments, collaborating with classmates, asking questions, and taking advantage of every learning opportunity. Many classroom experiences, including hands-on activities, laboratories, collaborative projects, teacher feedback, and class discussions, cannot be fully recreated through make-up work alone.

Families play a critical role in promoting positive attendance habits. Establishing consistent routines, scheduling appointments outside of school hours whenever possible, ensuring students arrive on time, and reinforcing the importance of daily attendance help students build habits that lead to lifelong success. Likewise, students are expected to take responsibility for attending school regularly, arriving prepared, and actively participating in every class.

This section outlines the district's expectations, procedures, and Board policies regarding attendance, excused and unexcused absences, tardiness, make-up work, early checkouts, and student engagement. By working together, families and schools can ensure that every Panther has the opportunity to learn, achieve, and reach their full potential.

Panther Facts

- Missing 18 days during a school year (just 10% of the school year) is considered chronic absenteeism.
- Missing only 2 days each month—whether excused or unexcused—can place a student at risk of falling behind academically.
- Students with strong attendance are more likely to earn higher grades, graduate on time, and enroll in college or career training.
- Good attendance teaches lifelong habits of responsibility, punctuality, accountability, and perseverance that employers and colleges value.



Panther Tip: Success begins with showing up—and making every moment count. Attend every day, arrive on time, stay engaged, and take advantage of every opportunity to learn. Every class. Every student. Every day.



ATTEND TODAY.
ACHIEVE TOMORROW.



180
SCHOOL DAYS

Every school day is a chance to **LEARN, GROW, and SUCCEED.**



18
DAYS MISSED

Missing just 18 days (10% of the school year) is **CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM.**

 Just 2 days a month can put your child **at risk!**

WHAT IT COSTS YOUR CHILD

-  Harder to keep up in class
-  Lower grades and test scores
-  Missed learning and important class activities
-  Higher risk of failing courses and not graduating on time

BETTER ATTENDANCE BETTER FUTURES



-  Higher grades
-  Stronger skills
-  More opportunities
-  Higher graduation rates
-  Ready for college, career, military, and life!



PANTHER PRIDE

SHOW UP. STAND OUT. SUCCEED.



EVERY DAY IN SCHOOL TODAY **BUILDS A BETTER TOMORROW.**

Excused Absences

Regular school attendance is essential to academic success, and the Sumter County School System encourages students to attend school every day unless prevented by illness, injury, or other circumstances recognized by Georgia law or Board policy. Sumter County High School recognizes that there are occasions when students must be absent from school for legitimate reasons. In accordance with Georgia law and Sumter County Board of Education policy (See Board Policy JBD), absences may be excused for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Personal illness or circumstances in which attendance would endanger the student's health or the health of others;
- Serious illness or death of an immediate family member;
- Court orders or other governmental mandates;
- Observance of recognized religious holidays;
- Conditions that make attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety;
- Registering to vote or voting, as permitted by state law;
- Participation in approved 4-H activities;
- Military-related family leave as provided by Georgia law; and
- Other circumstances approved in advance by the principal, such as college visits, serving as a legislative page, or other educational or special family events.

Parents or guardians must submit a written excuse to the school within five (5) school days of the student's return. Documentation may be submitted in writing, by email, or by fax. Parents/guardians may submit up to three (3) parent-written excuses per semester. Any additional absences must be supported by appropriate documentation from a licensed physician, dentist, mental health professional, court, social service agency, or other approved agency. The principal or designee reserves the right to request additional documentation when necessary to determine whether an absence qualifies as excused.

Students with excused absences will be provided a reasonable opportunity to complete missed assignments and assessments in accordance with the school's make-up work procedures. However, families should understand that make-up work cannot fully replace the valuable classroom instruction, discussions, collaborative learning, and hands-on experiences that occur each day.

In accordance with Sumter County Board of Education policy, students are expected to attend school regularly to earn course credit. Students must be in attendance at least 165 of the 180 instructional days. Any student who accumulates seven (7) or more excused or unexcused absences in any class during a semester may receive No Credit (NC) due to Lack of Attendance (LOA), unless an attendance appeal or waiver is approved in accordance with district procedures. Out-of-school suspensions are counted as unexcused absences for attendance purposes.

While attendance expectations are clearly established, the Sumter County School System is committed to partnering with families to support student success. When attendance concerns arise, the school will work collaboratively with students and families to identify barriers, provide appropriate supports, and connect families with available school and community resources whenever possible. Early communication between home and school is one of the most effective ways to promote student success and maintain regular attendance.



Panther Tip: *If your student must miss school, notify the school promptly, submit excuse documentation within five school days, and encourage your student to communicate with teachers about missed assignments. Together, we can keep every Panther on the path to success.*

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any absence that does not meet the criteria established by Georgia law or Sumter County Board of Education policy, or for which appropriate documentation is not submitted within five (5) school days of the student's return to school. Absences for reasons not recognized by state law or Board policy, as well as absences without proper documentation, will be recorded as unexcused.

Regular attendance is required by Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1). Students who accumulate excessive unexcused absences may be considered truant and are subject to the district's attendance intervention process. In accordance with Board policy, out-of-school suspensions are recorded as unexcused absences and count toward attendance requirements.

Students with unexcused absences may not automatically receive credit for missed assignments or assessments. Opportunities to make up work resulting from an unexcused absence are granted at the discretion of the principal or the principal's designee. Students and parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers immediately upon returning to school to determine any available opportunities for completing missed work.

The Sumter County School System is committed to addressing attendance concerns early through a graduated system of interventions. As attendance concerns develop, families may receive parent contacts, attendance notification letters, conferences, referrals to the Attendance Support Team (AST), individualized attendance improvement plans, and connections to school or community resources designed to remove barriers to attendance. The district believes that partnering with families is the most effective way to improve attendance and support student success.

Students and parents should also understand that excessive absences—whether excused or unexcused—may affect the awarding of course credit. Students who are absent seven (7) or more days in any class during a semester may receive No Credit (NC) for Lack of Attendance (LOA), unless an attendance waiver is granted through the district's attendance appeal process. Students must be in attendance at least 165 of the 180 instructional days to meet district attendance requirements for earning course credit.

Continued unexcused absences may result in additional interventions, referrals to the school social worker or attendance personnel, truancy proceedings, and other actions authorized by Georgia law. The district encourages parents and guardians to communicate with the school as soon as attendance concerns arise so that appropriate supports can be provided before attendance problems become chronic.



Panther Tip: *Every missed day is a missed opportunity. If attendance challenges arise, don't wait—contact the school early. Together, families and schools can remove barriers, improve attendance, and keep every Panther on the path to graduation.*

Attendance Requirements & Loss of Credit (LOA)

The Sumter County Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is essential for academic success. While students are expected to master course content, they are also expected to be present for classroom instruction, discussions, collaborative activities, laboratory experiences, and other learning opportunities that cannot be fully replicated through make-up work. Therefore, both academic performance and attendance are considered when awarding course credit.

To meet district attendance requirements, students must be in attendance at least 165 of the 180 instructional days during the school year. In addition, any student who accumulates seven (7) or more excused or unexcused absences in any class during a semester may receive No Credit (NC) due to Lack of Attendance (LOA). This policy applies regardless of the student's academic average. Out-of-school suspensions are counted as unexcused absences for attendance purposes.

Students and families are encouraged to communicate with the school promptly whenever circumstances arise that may affect attendance. The district recognizes that unexpected situations can occur and is committed to working collaboratively with families to identify appropriate supports and interventions whenever possible.

Students who are denied course credit due to Lack of Attendance (LOA) have the opportunity to appeal through the district's established attendance appeal process. The Attendance Appeal Committee will review each case individually, taking into consideration documentation, extenuating circumstances, academic performance, and compliance with district attendance procedures before making a final determination. Information regarding the appeal process and applicable deadlines will be provided by the school.

The goal of the district's attendance policy is not simply to enforce attendance requirements, but to ensure that every student has the opportunity to fully participate in the instructional program and remain on track for graduation.



Panther Tip: *Every missed day is a missed opportunity. If attendance challenges arise, don't wait—contact the school early. Together, families and schools can remove barriers, improve attendance, and keep every Panther on the path to graduation.*

Attendance Intervention & Support

The Sumter County School System is committed to helping every student develop positive attendance habits and recognizes that barriers to regular attendance may arise throughout the school year. Rather than waiting until attendance concerns become severe, the district uses a graduated, proactive approach that emphasizes early communication, family engagement, and individualized support to improve student attendance and academic success.

When attendance concerns are identified, school personnel will work collaboratively with students and families to determine the underlying causes of absences and develop appropriate interventions. Depending on the student's attendance history and individual circumstances, interventions may include parent or guardian contact, attendance notification letters, conferences, attendance improvement plans, referrals to the Attendance Support Team (AST), counseling services, mentoring, academic assistance, transportation problem-solving, school social work services, community agency referrals, or other wraparound supports designed to remove barriers to school attendance.

The Attendance Support Team (AST) is a multidisciplinary team that may include school administrators, counselors, teachers, attendance personnel, school social workers, nurses, behavioral support staff, and other professionals who work together with families to develop strategies that improve attendance and student engagement. Parents and guardians are encouraged to actively participate in this process, as strong partnerships between home and school are essential to student success.

While the district is committed to providing support and early intervention, continued excessive unexcused absences may result in additional actions as required by Georgia law and Board policy, including truancy referrals, attendance review hearings, or referrals to the appropriate legal authorities. The goal of every intervention is to help students remain engaged in school, remove barriers to attendance, and keep every Panther on the path toward graduation.

 **Panther Tip:** Attendance challenges are easier to solve when addressed early. If your family is experiencing circumstances that affect school attendance, please contact the school. We are here to partner with you and support every Panther's success.

ATTEND TODAY. ACHIEVE TOMORROW. 

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
We're here to support you every step of the way!

ATTENDANCE CONCERN		SCHOOL RESPONSE	
	2 ABSENCES (EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED)		PARENT CONTACT Parent contacted by teacher or school staff.
	3 ABSENCES (EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED)		ATTENDANCE LETTER SENT Attendance notification letter sent to parent/guardian.
	5 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES		AST MEETING & INTERVENTION PLAN Attendance Support Team (AST) meeting scheduled. Intervention plan developed with family.
	6 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES		STUDENT IDENTIFIED AS TRUANT Referral process begins with Attendance Officer or Truancy Officer.
	10 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES		COURT REFERRAL Court referral may be initiated in accordance with Georgia law.

 **PANTHER PRIDE**  **EVERY DAY. EVERY CLASS. EVERY OPPORTUNITY.**

Attendance Appeals Process

The Sumter County Board of Education recognizes that unforeseen or extenuating circumstances may occasionally affect a student's attendance. Students who are denied course credit due to Lack of Attendance (LOA) may request an attendance appeal in accordance with Board policy and district procedures.

Attendance appeals are reviewed by the district's Attendance Appeal Committee, which considers each case individually. In reviewing an appeal, the committee may consider factors such as the student's attendance record, academic performance, documentation supporting the absences, medical or family circumstances, participation in attendance interventions, and any other relevant information presented by the student or parent/guardian. Approval of an appeal is not automatic and is based on the merits of each individual case.

Students or parents/guardians wishing to appeal a Loss of Attendance (LOA) decision must submit the required appeal request and supporting documentation within the timelines established by the school. The decision of the Attendance Appeal Committee shall be communicated to the student and parent/guardian after the review process is complete.

Families are encouraged to communicate with school personnel as soon as attendance concerns arise rather than waiting until course credit is in jeopardy. Early communication and participation in attendance interventions provide the greatest opportunity to resolve attendance concerns before an appeal becomes necessary.

 **Panther Tip:** If unexpected circumstances affect your student's attendance, stay in communication with the school and keep documentation. Working together early is the best way to protect your student's opportunity to earn course credit.

Attendance Law Notification

In accordance with Georgia House Bill 1190 and the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1), the Sumter County School System is required to notify parents/guardians and all students who are 10 years of age or older by September 1 of the legal requirements regarding school attendance and the possible consequences for excessive unexcused absences.

Georgia law requires students to attend school regularly and places responsibility on both students and parents/guardians to ensure consistent attendance. A student who accumulates five (5) or more unexcused absences during the school year may be considered truant. Parents, guardians, or other persons having control or charge of a child who violates the compulsory attendance law may be subject to legal penalties, including fines, imprisonment, community service, or a combination of these penalties, as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction. Each additional unexcused absence after proper notification may constitute a separate offense under Georgia law.

As required by state law, parents/guardians and students who are 10 years of age or older by September 1 must sign an acknowledgment indicating they have received this required attendance law notification. The official Attendance Law Requirement Acknowledgment Form is located in the Appendix of this handbook. The signed form must be returned to the student's homeroom teacher and will be maintained by the school for the duration of the school year.

The Sumter County School System encourages families to communicate with school personnel whenever attendance concerns arise. Our goal is to partner with families to remove barriers to attendance, support student success, and ensure compliance with Georgia's compulsory attendance laws.



Panther Tip: State law requires both parents and eligible students to acknowledge receipt of the Attendance Law Notification. Please complete, sign, and return the form found in the Appendix as soon as possible.

Driver's License & School Attendance Notification

Georgia law links school attendance, enrollment, and student conduct to a student's eligibility to obtain or maintain driving privileges. Under the Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TADRA), students under the age of 18 who apply for a Georgia driver's permit or driver's license must obtain a Certificate of School Enrollment (DDS Form DS-1) from their high school. This certificate verifies that the student meets the enrollment, attendance, and eligibility requirements established by Georgia law.

In accordance with TADRA, the Sumter County School System is required to report certain students to the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS). A student's driving privileges may be denied, suspended, or revoked if the student:

- Withdraws or drops out of school without graduating and remains out of school for ten (10) consecutive school days;
- Accumulates more than ten (10) consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a semester or a combination of two consecutive grading periods; or
- Is suspended for offenses involving:
 - Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school employee;
 - Possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property; or
 - Possession or use of a weapon on school property.

Students are encouraged to maintain regular attendance, satisfactory academic progress, good conduct, and active enrollment to remain eligible for driving privileges. Questions regarding eligibility, the Certificate of School Enrollment (DDS Form DS-1), or notarized attendance certificates should be directed to the school counseling office or the Front Office before scheduling an appointment with the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS).



Panther Tip: Good attendance doesn't just help you succeed in school--it can also affect your ability to earn and keep your Georgia driver's license. Attend school regularly, stay on track academically, and ask the school office if you need a DDS Certificate of School Enrollment.

Tardies & Late Check-ins

Arriving to school and to each class on time is an important part of academic success. Instruction begins promptly each day, and students who arrive late miss valuable learning opportunities, classroom discussions, and instructional activities. Students are expected to be in their assigned classroom and ready to learn when the tardy bell rings.

Students who arrive after the school day has begun must report directly to the Front Office to sign in and obtain a late check-in pass before reporting to class. Students who arrive late without following the required sign-in procedures may be subject to disciplinary action. Students who are tardy to an individual class should report directly to the classroom and follow the teacher's established tardy procedures.

Tardies and late check-ins are monitored throughout the school year and may be considered indicators of attendance concerns. Excessive tardies, repeated late arrivals, or patterns of late check-ins may result in parent conferences, attendance interventions, or other actions in accordance with district attendance procedures. Tardies accumulate on a nine-week basis, and students are encouraged to establish routines that ensure they arrive at school and to each class on time.

Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled outside of the school day to minimize instructional time lost. Students and families are reminded that punctuality is an important life skill that prepares students for success in college, careers, military service, and future employment.



Panther Tip: A few minutes late can mean missing important instruction. Arrive on time, be prepared, and start every class ready to learn because every minute matters.

Early Check-outs

Students are expected to remain at school for the entire instructional day. Early check-outs result in missed instructional time and may negatively impact academic achievement. Whenever possible, parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of the school day so students can remain in school for the entire instructional day.

When an early check-out is necessary, a parent, guardian, or other individual authorized through the school's student information system must report to the Front Office and present valid identification before a student will be released. Students will be called from class only after the authorized adult has arrived and the check-out process has been completed. To minimize disruptions to instruction, parents are encouraged to notify the school in advance whenever possible.

Students may not leave campus without properly checking out through the Front Office. Leaving campus without authorization or without following established check-out procedures may result in disciplinary action and the absence being recorded as unexcused.

The Sumter County School System monitors early check-outs as part of its comprehensive attendance program. Repeated or excessive early dismissals may be considered indicators of attendance concerns and may result in parent conferences, attendance interventions, or referrals to the Attendance Support Team (AST) in accordance with district attendance procedures. Students who are present for less than one-half of the instructional day may be considered absent for attendance purposes in accordance with Georgia law and Board policy.

Remaining at school for the entire instructional day allows students to benefit from uninterrupted instruction, classroom discussions, collaborative learning experiences, and other educational activities that support academic success.



Panther Tip: Every class period matters. Whenever possible, stay for the entire school day and schedule appointments outside of school hours to maximize learning and academic success.



ATTEND TODAY

== EVERY DAY. EVERY CLASS. EVERY PANTHER. ==

Your presence today builds your future.
BE HERE. BE READY. BELONG.



WHY BEING PRESENT MATTERS



LEARN MORE

You catch important instruction, ask questions, and engage in learning.



STAY ON TRACK

You keep up with assignments and avoid falling behind.



ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

You earn credit, improve grades, and build confidence.



BUILD YOUR FUTURE

Good habits today lead to college, careers, and life opportunities.

ATTENDANCE FACTS



2 DAYS A MONTH
= 20 DAYS A YEAR

That's nearly 4 weeks of instruction missed!



10 MINUTES LATE EACH DAY
= 50 MINUTES LOST A WEEK

That's almost a full class period missed every week!



CHRONIC ABSENCE
(Missing 10% or more of school)

Students who miss 10% or more of school are more likely to struggle academically.



GOOD ATTENDANCE OPENS DOORS

It helps you participate in activities, athletics, clubs, and scholarships.



ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW.

Consistent attendance is one of the strongest predictors of success.



TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE MORE!

Small actions today lead to big results.

STUDENTS: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- ✓ Be in school every day unless truly sick.
- ✓ Arrive on time and be ready to learn.
- ✓ Follow school rules and make good choices.
- ✓ Talk to a teacher or counselor if you need help.
- ✓ Stay focused on your goals and your future.

PARENTS & GUARDIANS: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- ✓ Ensure your child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- ✓ Schedule appointments outside of school hours when possible.
- ✓ Communicate with the school about absences, tardies, or concerns.
- ✓ Review attendance regularly in Infinite Campus.
- ✓ Encourage your child and celebrate their effort!



PANTHER PRIDE
Every Day!



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.

When we work together, our Panthers show up, grow, and graduate ready to lead. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed!

Be Here.
Be Ready.
Belong.

**YOUR PRESENCE
BUILDS THEIR
FUTURE.**



YOU MATTER
YOU BELONG
YOU CAN
ACHIEVE

PANTHER
CARE



SECTION

5



HEALTH, WELLNESS & STUDENT SUPPORT

— *We Care. We Support. We Empower.* —

Your health and well-being are essential to your success. We are here to support you—mind, body, and spirit—so you can thrive in school and in life.



MENTAL HEALTH

Counselors and resources are available to support your emotional well-being.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Our school nurse and health services help keep you healthy and ready to learn.



WELLNESS RESOURCES

Access programs and tools that promote healthy habits and overall wellness.



ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Tutoring, study skills, and intervention services to help you succeed.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We work with local partners to connect you with additional support services.



SAFE & SUPPORTIVE

We are committed to creating a safe, caring environment where every student matters.



Health, Wellness & Student Support

Student success extends far beyond the classroom. At Sumter County High School, we recognize that students learn best when they are healthy, safe, supported, and connected to their school community. Our commitment is to educate the whole child by promoting physical health, mental wellness, emotional resilience, and access to the resources students need to thrive academically, socially, and personally.

This section provides important information about student health services, immunizations, medications, counseling and mental health resources, school safety, emergency procedures, student records, and the many support services available to students and families. It also outlines procedures designed to protect the health, safety, and well-being of every member of Panther Nation while ensuring compliance with state and federal laws.

The Sumter County School System believes that every student deserves a safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environment where they feel valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. Students and families are encouraged to become familiar with the information in this section and to seek assistance whenever questions or concerns arise. Whether a student needs academic guidance, health services, emotional support, or assistance overcoming personal challenges, our staff is committed to helping every Panther succeed.

At Sumter County High School, health, wellness, and student support are shared responsibilities. By working together, students, families, educators, and community partners create a culture where every Panther can learn with confidence, grow with purpose, and prepare for a successful future.



Panther Tip: *Strong students are healthy students. Take care of your mind, body, and well-being, ask for help when you need it, and remember—you are never alone. Panther Nation is here to support you every step of the way.*

— HIGH SCHOOL —
— HOME OF THE PANTHERS —

School Counseling

The Sumter County High School Counseling Department is committed to supporting the academic, personal, social, and career development of every student. School counselors partner with students, families, teachers, administrators, and community organizations to help students overcome challenges, explore opportunities, and prepare for success after high school. Through individualized guidance and proactive support, counselors empower students to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

Counselors provide a wide range of services designed to meet the unique needs of every student, including academic advising, graduation planning, course selection and scheduling, college and career exploration, dual enrollment guidance, scholarship and financial aid resources, military and workforce readiness, and postsecondary planning. Students are encouraged to meet with their counselor regularly to review graduation requirements, discuss future goals, and develop an individualized plan for success.

In addition to academic and career planning, school counselors provide short-term individual counseling, crisis response, classroom guidance, and referrals to school-based and community resources when additional support is needed. Counselors also collaborate with families and school staff to address concerns that may affect a student's academic performance, attendance, behavior, or overall well-being.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to maintain regular communication with their child's school counselor. Whether a student needs assistance selecting classes, preparing for graduation, applying to college, exploring career pathways, navigating personal challenges, or connecting with support services, the Counseling Department is committed to ensuring every Panther has the guidance and resources needed to succeed.

School counselors can assist students and families with:

- Academic advising and course selection
- Graduation planning and diploma requirements
- College admissions, scholarships, and financial aid information
- Career exploration, military opportunities, and workforce readiness
- Dual Enrollment and CTAE pathway planning
- Schedule changes and academic planning
- Study skills and academic success strategies
- Individual student support and goal setting
- Short-term counseling and crisis response
- Referrals for mental health, substance abuse, family, or community support services



Panther Tip: Your school counselor is one of your greatest resources. Whether you're planning for college, exploring a career, preparing for graduation, or simply need someone to talk to, don't hesitate to schedule a visit. Every Panther's future begins with a plan.

Mental Health Resources

The Sumter County School System is committed to supporting the mental, emotional, and social well-being of every student. We recognize that emotional wellness is an essential part of academic success and that students may experience personal, family, academic, or social challenges that affect their ability to learn and thrive.

Students are encouraged to seek assistance whenever they are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, grief, bullying, relationship concerns, or other challenges that impact their well-being. Help is available, and students are never expected to face these challenges alone.

Support may be available through school counselors, administrators, school nurses, teachers, school-based mental health providers, and other trained staff members. When appropriate, the school may also assist families by providing referrals to community mental health agencies and other support services.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate with the school if they have concerns about their child's emotional or mental well-being. By working together, families and school staff can identify concerns early and connect students with appropriate resources and interventions.

If a student expresses thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or harm to others, school personnel will respond immediately in accordance with district safety procedures and may contact parents, guardians, emergency responders, or community mental health professionals as necessary to ensure student safety.

The Sumter County School System is committed to fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued, respected, connected, and empowered to succeed



Panther Tip: Asking for help is a sign of strength. If you or someone you know is struggling, talk to a trusted adult, school counselor, teacher, administrator, or another member of the school staff. We are here to help.



Panther REMINDER

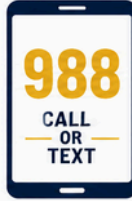
You are never alone. If you are struggling emotionally or are concerned about a friend, talk to a trusted adult. Asking for help is a sign of strength.



MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESOURCES

HELP IS AVAILABLE. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



- ✓ Call or text **988**
- ✓ Free, confidential support available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- ✓ Trained crisis counselors provide immediate support for mental health, emotional distress, substance use concerns, or suicidal thoughts.

GEORGIA CRISIS & ACCESS LINE (GCAL)



1-800-715-4225

- ✓ Available 24/7
- ✓ Provides crisis intervention, behavioral health support, referrals, and access to mobile crisis response services throughout Georgia.



IN AN EMERGENCY: If there is an immediate threat to life or safety, **CALL 911** or notify a trusted adult or school employee immediately.



PANTHER PRIDE
Stronger Together.

MTSS

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is Sumter County School System's comprehensive framework for ensuring that every student receives the academic, behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional support needed to succeed. Rather than waiting for students to experience significant difficulties, MTSS focuses on early identification, prevention, and timely intervention to help students remain successful both in and out of the classroom.

Through MTSS, all students receive high-quality instruction and schoolwide supports. When additional assistance is needed, targeted interventions are provided based on each student's individual strengths and needs. Student progress is monitored regularly so that interventions can be adjusted as students grow and their needs change.

The MTSS framework brings together many of the district's student support services, including:

- Academic intervention and enrichment
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Student Support Team (SST)
- Attendance interventions
- School counseling and mental health supports
- Section 504 and special education collaboration
- Family and community support services, when appropriate

Parents and guardians are valued partners in the MTSS process and may be invited to participate in meetings, review student progress, and collaborate in developing strategies that support student success. The goal of MTSS is to ensure that every Panther receives the right support at the right time to maximize learning, well-being, and overall success.

Tier 1 – Universal Supports

- High-quality classroom instruction and schoolwide behavioral expectations for all students
- Universal academic, behavioral, attendance, and wellness screenings

Tier 2 – Targeted Supports

- Small-group interventions and additional support for students demonstrating specific academic, behavioral, attendance, or social-emotional needs
- Frequent progress monitoring

Tier 3 – Intensive Supports

- Individualized interventions and collaborative problem-solving for students requiring intensive support
- Coordination with SST, Section 504, Special Education, counseling, or community agencies when appropriate



Panther Tip: MTSS is designed to provide support—not labels. Every student learns differently, and our goal is to ensure every Panther receives the encouragement, interventions, and opportunities needed to be successful.

Student Support Team (SST) HOME OF THE PANTHERS

The Student Support Team (SST) is a collaborative problem-solving team that works with students, families, and school staff to identify and address barriers that may affect a student's academic achievement, behavior, attendance, or overall school success. As part of the district's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), the SST develops individualized strategies and interventions designed to help students succeed in the general education setting whenever possible.

When a student experiences ongoing challenges despite receiving classroom and targeted interventions, an SST meeting may be scheduled to review the student's strengths, concerns, progress, and support needs. The team uses student data to identify barriers, develop intervention plans, monitor progress, and recommend additional supports or services as appropriate.

The Student Support Team may include teachers, administrators, school counselors, parents or guardians, special education staff, school psychologists, school social workers, nurses, instructional specialists, district personnel, and other professionals or community partners who can contribute to the student's success.

Parents and guardians are essential members of the Student Support Team and are encouraged to actively participate in meetings, share information, and collaborate in developing strategies that support their child's success. Referrals to the SST may be initiated by teachers, parents or guardians, administrators, counselors, or other school personnel whenever concerns arise.

The goal of the Student Support Team is to work collaboratively with families to identify solutions, coordinate appropriate supports, and ensure every Panther has the opportunity to achieve academic, behavioral, and personal success.



Panther Tip: The Student Support Team is a partnership between school and home. By working together, we can identify challenges early, celebrate strengths, and develop strategies that help every student reach their full potential.

Section 504 Services

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law that protects qualified students with disabilities from discrimination and ensures they have equal access to educational programs and activities. Students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities may be eligible to receive accommodations and supports through a Section 504 Plan.

A Section 504 Plan is designed to remove barriers to learning by providing reasonable accommodations that allow students to fully participate in the educational program. Depending on a student's individual needs, accommodations may include instructional supports, classroom adjustments, health-related accommodations, testing accommodations, or other services that promote equal access to learning.

Students may be referred for a Section 504 evaluation by a parent or guardian, teacher, counselor, administrator, or other school staff member when there is reason to believe a disability may be affecting the student's educational access. Parents and guardians are active participants throughout the evaluation and planning process and are invited to collaborate with the school in developing, reviewing, and revising Section 504 Plans as needed.

The Sumter County School System is committed to ensuring that all eligible students receive the accommodations and supports necessary to access educational opportunities and participate fully in school programs and activities.

Parents and guardians have important rights under Section 504, including the right to participate in meetings, review educational records, receive notice of decisions regarding their child's eligibility or accommodations, and access procedural safeguards. Questions regarding Section 504 services or requests for an evaluation should be directed to the school's Section 504 Coordinator or the district's Section 504 Coordinator.

Copies of the Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Parent and Student Rights are available from each school, the district office, and on the district website. Information regarding the Section 504 grievance and impartial hearing process is included in the Appendix of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *Section 504 is designed to provide equal access—not an advantage. If you believe your child may need accommodations to fully participate in school, contact your school counselor, principal, or Section 504 Coordinator to discuss available supports.*

SUMTER COUNTY — HIGH SCHOOL — HOME OF THE PANTHERS

Hospital Homebound Services

The Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Program provides temporary instructional services for students who are unable to attend school because of a documented non-communicable illness, injury, surgery, or other qualifying medical condition. The purpose of the program is to help eligible students continue making academic progress during an extended medical absence while maintaining a connection to their school.

Students may be considered for Hospital/Homebound services when a licensed physician certifies that the student is expected to be absent from school for a minimum of five (5) consecutive days if on block schedule and ten (10) consecutive school days if on traditional periods and is medically unable to participate in the regular school setting. The physician's documentation must describe the student's medical condition, explain why school attendance is not possible, and provide an anticipated date for the student's return to school.

Parents or guardians should notify the school principal as soon as they become aware of a qualifying medical absence. Applications for Hospital/Homebound services are available through the school office. The school will review the physician's documentation and determine eligibility in accordance with Georgia Department of Education guidelines. In some cases, the school may determine that appropriate accommodations or supports can be provided within the regular school setting rather than through Hospital/Homebound instruction.

The Sumter County School System is committed to working collaboratively with families, healthcare providers, and school staff to ensure students receive appropriate educational services during extended medical absences and experience a successful transition back to school when they are able to return.



Panther Tip: *If your child is expected to miss an extended period of school due to a medical condition, contact the school as soon as possible. Early communication helps us identify the most appropriate supports and keep your student on track academically.*

School Nurse Services

The health and well-being of every student are important priorities of the Sumter County School System. The school nurse serves as a valuable member of the educational team by promoting student health, responding to illness and injury, managing chronic health conditions, coordinating emergency care, maintaining required health records, and assisting with health screenings and referrals.

While the school nurse provides first aid and supports students during the school day, the primary responsibility for a student's medical care rests with the student's parent or guardian and healthcare provider. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of any significant medical conditions, allergies, chronic illnesses, or other health concerns that may affect their child's safety or participation in school activities.

If a student becomes ill or is injured during the school day, appropriate first aid will be provided, and parents or guardians will be contacted when necessary. In the event of a serious illness or medical emergency, school personnel will follow established emergency procedures, which may include contacting emergency medical services (911).

Medications at School

Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home. However, when it is medically necessary for a student to receive medication during the school day, the medication must be administered in accordance with Georgia law, Board policy, and district procedures.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications may be administered at school only with written parent or guardian authorization and, when required, written instructions from a licensed healthcare provider. All medications must be delivered to the school by a parent, guardian, or other authorized adult and must be in the original pharmacy-labeled or manufacturer's container with the student's name, medication name, dosage, and administration instructions clearly indicated. Students should not transport or possess medication at school unless specifically authorized by law or by an approved healthcare plan.

Nothing in this policy limits the authority of the school nurse or other trained school personnel to administer emergency medications or provide life-saving treatment as authorized by Georgia law, Board policy, or a student's approved health care plan.

Questions regarding medication procedures, self-carry medications, emergency action plans, or individual health needs should be directed to the school nurse or school administration.



Panther Tip: *To ensure student safety, never send medication to school with your child unless specifically authorized by the school. Contact the school nurse if medication must be administered during the school day.*

Student Illness & Medical Emergency

The health and safety of every student is a top priority of the Sumter County School System. If a student becomes ill or is injured during the school day, the school nurse or other trained school personnel will provide appropriate first aid and assess the student's condition. Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible whenever a student requires medical attention beyond routine first aid or should be picked up from school due to illness or injury.

In the event of a serious illness or medical emergency, the school will make every reasonable effort to contact a parent, guardian, or the emergency contacts listed in the student's records. If a parent, guardian, or emergency contact cannot be reached and immediate medical attention is necessary, the school may contact Emergency Medical Services (911) and arrange for the student to be transported to the nearest appropriate medical facility.

To help ensure a prompt response during an emergency, parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining current and accurate emergency contact information with the school. Changes to addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, medical conditions, physician information, allergies, or authorized individuals for student pick-up should be reported to the school immediately.

Each student's emergency information should include:

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) names
- Current home address
- Home, work, and mobile telephone numbers
- At least one emergency contact with a working telephone number
- Physician and medical provider information, if applicable
- Medical conditions, allergies, or other health alerts
- Individuals authorized to pick up the student from school

For the safety of all students, medications may only be administered in accordance with district procedures and the Medication at School policy outlined in this handbook.



Panther Tip: *A current phone number can make all the difference during an emergency. Please notify the school immediately whenever your contact information or your student's medical information changes.*

Immunizations

The Sumter County School System complies with all immunization requirements established by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Before attending school, students must have a current Georgia Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) or a valid Georgia Certificate of Religious Exemption (Form 2208) on file.

In accordance with Georgia law:

- *Students entering seventh (7th) grade must have received one (1) dose of Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis) vaccine and one (1) dose of the Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4/MenACWY), unless otherwise exempt.*
- *Students entering eleventh (11th) grade must provide proof of a booster dose of the Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4/MenACWY) administered on or after the student's 16th birthday, unless the initial dose was administered on or after age 16 or the student qualifies for an approved exemption.*

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that all required immunizations are current and that updated immunization records are provided to the school as required by Georgia law. Students who do not meet Georgia's immunization requirements may be excluded from school until the appropriate documentation has been submitted.

Questions regarding immunization requirements or acceptable documentation should be directed to the school nurse, your healthcare provider, or the local health department.



Panther Tip: *Before the first day of school, make sure your student's immunization records are up to date. Seventh- and eleventh-grade students have additional vaccine requirements under Georgia law.*

Hearing & Vision Screenings

Good hearing and vision are essential to student learning and academic success. In accordance with Georgia requirements, the Sumter County School System provides hearing and vision screenings for students in designated grade levels, including Grades 2, 4, 6, and 9, using trained and qualified personnel.

These screenings are intended to identify potential hearing or vision concerns that may affect a student's ability to learn. If a screening indicates that additional evaluation may be needed, parents or guardians will be notified and encouraged to follow up with their child's healthcare provider or eye care specialist. Any recommended diagnostic testing or treatment is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.



Panther Tip: *Routine hearing and vision checks can identify concerns that may affect learning. Early detection and treatment help students perform their best both in and out of the classroom.*

School Resource Officer (SRO)

The safety and security of our students, staff, and visitors is a top priority of the Sumter County School System. Sumter County High School is fortunate to partner with local law enforcement through the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. The School Resource Officer is a certified law enforcement officer who works collaboratively with school administrators, faculty, students, families, and community partners to help maintain a safe, secure, and positive learning environment.

The School Resource Officer serves in three primary roles:

- **Protector** – Helps maintain a safe school environment by assisting with campus security, emergency preparedness, crisis response, and the prevention of unsafe or unlawful behavior.
- **Educator** – Provides age-appropriate instruction and guidance on topics such as personal safety, digital citizenship, bullying prevention, conflict resolution, substance abuse awareness, traffic safety, and responsible decision-making.
- **Mentor** – Builds positive relationships with students, encourages responsible citizenship, and serves as a trusted adult who supports students in making positive choices both in and out of school.

The School Resource Officer works closely with school administrators to support school safety procedures and emergency response planning. While the SRO may assist with investigations involving criminal activity, school discipline remains the responsibility of school administrators in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and Board policy.

Students are encouraged to view the School Resource Officer as a resource and trusted partner who is available to answer questions, provide guidance, and promote a safe and welcoming school community.

The safety of our school is a shared responsibility. Students, staff, families, and community members are encouraged to report safety concerns, suspicious activity, or potential threats to a school administrator, the School Resource Officer, or another trusted school employee. Reports will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.



Panther Tip: *If you see something that concerns you, say something. Reporting a potential safety concern helps protect yourself, your classmates, and the entire Panther community.*

School Nutrition Services

The Sumter County School System is committed to supporting student health and academic success by providing nutritious, balanced meals each school day. Healthy meals help students stay focused, energized, and prepared to learn. School nutrition services are provided in accordance with federal and state regulations and are available to all students without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other protected status under applicable law.

Breakfast and lunch are provided free of charge to all enrolled students. Students are encouraged to participate in the school meal program, which offers well-balanced meals that meet USDA nutritional standards. Breakfast is served each morning until approximately 30 minutes before lunch service.

Students may bring a lunch from home if they choose; however, outside restaurant food, food deliveries, and soft drink containers are not permitted on campus. Students are not permitted to leave campus for breakfast or lunch, and food may not be ordered for delivery during the school day. For health and safety reasons, students should not share, trade, or exchange food or beverages in the cafeteria.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner while in the cafeteria. All students are responsible for cleaning their eating area, returning trays and utensils, disposing of trash properly, and following the directions of school personnel. Food and beverages should remain in the cafeteria unless otherwise authorized by school staff.

Parents and guardians are welcome to have lunch with their child. Visitors should check in through the school office before entering the cafeteria. Please contact the school in advance for visitor procedures and current adult meal pricing.

Parents or guardians should notify the school nurse and School Nutrition Department of any food allergies or medically necessary dietary restrictions. A physician's statement may be required to request meal modifications or substitutions in accordance with USDA guidelines.



Panther Tip: *Healthy meals fuel healthy minds. Eat a nutritious breakfast, make positive choices in the cafeteria, and help keep our dining areas clean and welcoming for everyone.*

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Services

The Sumter County School System is committed to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to a free, appropriate public education. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students experiencing homelessness have the right to enroll in school immediately, participate fully in school programs and activities, and receive services that support educational success.

A student may qualify for services if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including students who are:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar hardship ("doubled up");
- Living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or campgrounds because adequate housing is unavailable;
- Residing in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or other places not designed for regular sleeping accommodations; or
- Living in other temporary or unstable housing situations as defined by federal law.

Eligible students may have the right to remain enrolled in their school of origin, receive transportation when applicable, enroll without normally required documentation, and access educational programs and services available to all students.

Families who believe they may qualify for services are encouraged to contact the school's counselor, principal, or the district's McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison. School personnel will work confidentially with families to determine eligibility and connect students with available educational supports and community resources.

The Sumter County School System is committed to reducing barriers to enrollment, attendance, and academic success so that every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive, regardless of housing circumstances.



Panther Tip: *If your family's living situation changes, please let us know. Our goal is to provide support, maintain school stability, and help every Panther continue learning without interruption.*



PANTHER
PRIDE

SECTION

6



TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL LEARNING

— Empower. Explore. Excel. —

Technology opens doors to endless opportunities.
We provide the tools, resources, and support you need
to learn, create, and succeed in a digital world.



DIGITAL LITERACY

Build essential skills
to navigate, evaluate,
and create in
a digital world.



ONLINE LEARNING

Access resources,
assignments, and
materials anytime,
anywhere.



INNOVATION & CREATIVITY

Use technology to
think critically, solve
problems, and bring
ideas to life.



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Learn to be safe,
responsible, and
respectful online.



COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

Connect and work
together using
digital tools.



ACCESS & SUPPORT

Get the devices,
internet access, and
help you need
to succeed.



Technology & Digital Learning



Technology plays an essential role in teaching, learning, communication, and preparing students for success in college, careers, and life. At Sumter County High School, students have access to a variety of digital tools, devices, and online resources that enhance classroom instruction, foster collaboration, encourage creativity, and expand learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

With these opportunities comes the responsibility to use technology safely, ethically, and respectfully. Students are expected to be responsible digital citizens by protecting their personal information, respecting the privacy and rights of others, using technology for educational purposes, and following all district policies regarding acceptable use. Responsible technology use helps create a positive digital learning environment where every student can learn, explore, and succeed.

This section outlines the expectations for student devices, Chromebook care, cell phone procedures, Yondr pouches, artificial intelligence (AI), internet safety, digital citizenship, email communication, computer labs, and other technology resources available to students. Students and families are encouraged to review these expectations together to ensure technology remains a powerful tool for learning while supporting a safe, focused, and productive educational environment.

Technology is a privilege that provides incredible opportunities for learning, innovation, and connection. By using these resources responsibly, every Panther helps protect our digital community and contributes to a culture of respect, integrity, and academic excellence.



Panther Tip: *Think before you click, post, or share. Every digital action leaves a footprint—use technology to learn, create, collaborate, and represent Panther Nation with integrity.*

Personal Electronic Devices

Students may bring personal electronic devices to school; however, these devices must remain stored and may not be visible or accessible during the school day. Personal electronic devices may not be seen outside the student's bookbag. These devices should not interfere with teaching, learning, school operations, or the safety of the school environment. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, tablets, laptops, gaming devices, portable speakers, cameras, and other electronic communication or entertainment devices.

Students are responsible for the security of their personal electronic devices. The Sumter County School System is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school. Students should keep all devices secure and should not share them with others.

The use of any electronic device to photograph, record, livestream, or distribute images, audio, or video of students or staff without permission is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action and, when applicable, legal consequences. The use of personal electronic devices must comply with the Student Code of Conduct, the district's Acceptable Use Policy, and all applicable local, state, and federal laws.

Additional expectations regarding cell phones, smart phones, and Yondr pouches are outlined in the following section.



Panther Tip: *Bring technology to support your learning--not distract from it. Use personal devices responsibly, respect the privacy of others, and remember that digital choices have real-world consequences.*

Cell Phones & Personal Communication Devices

At Sumter County High School, we believe technology should support learning—not distract from it. To promote student engagement, reduce distractions, strengthen face-to-face interactions, and provide a safe learning environment, student use of cell phones and other personal communication devices is restricted during the instructional day.

Personal communication devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods or similar devices, Bluetooth headphones, tablets, smart glasses connected to a phone, gaming devices, and other electronic communication or entertainment devices.

Cell Phone Expectations

Students may use personal communication devices only in school-approved locations and during authorized times as designated by school administration. Students are expected to follow all posted signage and staff directions regarding when electronic devices may and may not be used.

Even during approved times, students may not:

- Make phone or video calls;
- Record audio or video;
- Take photographs of students or staff without permission;
- Use social media;
- AirDrop or electronically share digital content;
- Use earbuds, headphones, or similar listening devices unless specifically authorized by school personnel.

During restricted instructional periods, all personal communication devices must remain secured and out of sight in accordance with school procedures.

Yondr Program

To maximize instructional time and minimize distractions, Sumter County High School utilizes the Yondr Program as part of its cell phone procedures. Students who repeatedly violate the school's electronic device expectations may be required to secure their phone in a Yondr pouch during the school day for a designated period of time, in addition to other disciplinary consequences.

Disciplinary Consequences

Students who fail to comply with the school's electronic device expectations are subject to progressive disciplinary consequences, including assignment to In-School Intervention (ISI), parent conferences, temporary or extended placement of the device in a Yondr pouch, and other disciplinary actions as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

The following progressive consequences apply:

OFFENSE	CONSEQUENCE
1 st Offense	One (1) block of ISI, meeting with the school counselor, and parent notification.
2 nd Offense	Two (2) days of ISI and a mandatory parent conference before release.
3 rd Offense	Three (3) days of ISI, mandatory parent conference, and Yondr pouch assignment for three (3) school days following ISI.
4 th Offense	Four (4) days of ISI, mandatory parent conference, and Yondr pouch assignment for four (4) school days following ISI.
5 th Offense	Five (5) days of ISI, mandatory parent conference, and Yondr pouch assignment for five (5) school days following ISI.
6 th & Subsequent Offenses	Ten (10) days of ISI, school-assigned community service, and Yondr pouch assignment for the remainder of the school year.

Students assigned to use a Yondr pouch who are found in possession of another electronic device or who violate Yondr procedures will be subject to additional disciplinary action, including ISI and a mandatory parent conference.

The use of an electronic device to record, photograph, or distribute images or videos of fights, altercations, students in compromising situations, or other inappropriate content is considered a serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in suspension, referral to a disciplinary tribunal, referral to law enforcement, or other appropriate disciplinary action.

Chromebook Care & Maintenance

Chromebooks are valuable instructional tools that provide students with access to digital learning resources, classroom assignments, assessments, research, and communication. Students are expected to care for their assigned Chromebook and use it responsibly to support learning both at school and, when applicable, at home.

Students are responsible for bringing their Chromebook to school fully charged each day, keeping it in good working condition, and using it in accordance with the district's Acceptable Use Policy. Chromebooks should be handled with care, transported in a protective case when provided, and kept free from food, drinks, extreme temperatures, and other conditions that may cause damage.

To help protect district equipment, students should:

- Keep the Chromebook clean and free from stickers or markings unless approved by the school.
- Carry the Chromebook carefully using both hands or a protective case.
- Avoid placing heavy objects on the device or leaving it unattended.
- Keep food and drinks away from the Chromebook.
- Never share passwords or allow others to use their assigned device without permission.
- Report lost, stolen, or damaged Chromebooks to a teacher or administrator immediately.

Students should use Chromebooks for educational purposes and access only district-approved websites, applications, and digital resources. Installing unauthorized software, attempting to bypass security settings, damaging district technology, or using the Chromebook in a manner inconsistent with school policies may result in disciplinary action, loss of technology privileges, financial responsibility for damages, or other consequences as outlined by district procedures.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to support proper Chromebook care by providing a safe place for the device at home, ensuring it is charged nightly, and encouraging responsible digital behavior.



Panther Tip: *Your Chromebook is your classroom on the go. Treat it with care, charge it every night, and use it responsibly so it's ready to help you learn every day.*

Acceptable Use of Technology

Technology is an important part of teaching and learning in the Sumter County School System. Students are provided access to district computers, Chromebooks, networks, email, educational software, and the Internet to support classroom instruction, research, collaboration, creativity, and college and career readiness.

The use of district technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and all students are expected to use these resources responsibly, ethically, and in a manner that supports learning. Students are expected to follow the district's technology procedures, classroom expectations, and all applicable local, state, and federal laws when using school technology or accessing district networks.

To help provide a safe digital learning environment, the district utilizes Internet filtering and monitoring systems in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). While these systems help reduce access to inappropriate content, no filtering system can guarantee that all objectionable material will be blocked. Students are expected to exercise good judgment and immediately report any inappropriate content or online activity to a teacher or school administrator.

Students are expected to:

- Use district technology for educational purposes.
- Protect their usernames, passwords, and personal information.
- Respect the privacy, rights, and work of others.
- Follow copyright laws and properly credit the work of others.
- Practice appropriate digital citizenship and online etiquette.
- Report technology problems or inappropriate online content to school staff.

Students may not:

- Access, create, download, or distribute inappropriate, obscene, threatening, or illegal content.
- Attempt to bypass Internet filters or network security measures.
- Access another person's account or share usernames or passwords.
- Download or install unauthorized software, applications, or programs.
- Damage, alter, or misuse district technology or network resources.
- Use district technology for commercial, personal financial, or other non-educational purposes without authorization.

The Sumter County School System reserves the right to monitor the use of district-owned technology, network activity, email, files, and Internet usage to ensure compliance with Board policy and to maintain the safety and security of the district's technology systems. Students should have no expectation of privacy when using district-owned devices, networks, or accounts.

Failure to comply with the district's Acceptable Use expectations may result in the loss of technology privileges, disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, financial responsibility for damages when applicable, and, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement.

Students and parents/guardians are required to review and acknowledge the district's Student Acceptable Use Agreement before students are granted access to district technology resources. The complete agreement is included in the Appendix of this handbook.



Panther Tip: *Technology opens doors to endless opportunities. Use it wisely, protect your digital footprint, respect others online, and remember that every click reflects your Panther Pride.*

Digital Citizenship

Technology provides incredible opportunities for learning, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Along with these opportunities comes the responsibility to use digital tools safely, respectfully, and ethically. Sumter County High School is committed to helping students become responsible digital citizens who use technology in ways that reflect integrity, respect, and good judgment both at school and beyond.

In accordance with Georgia Senate Bill 351 (SB 351), students receive annual instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and responsible technology use. Lessons include topics such as:

- Online safety and privacy
- Protecting personal information
- Cyberbullying prevention and reporting
- Digital footprints and online reputation
- Responsible use of social media
- Evaluating online information and media
- Healthy technology habits and screen time
- Ethical and responsible use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI)

To support these efforts, the Sumter County School System utilizes Parent ProTech, a family engagement platform that provides students and parents with age-appropriate resources to encourage safe, responsible technology use. Families are encouraged to participate in the program and reinforce digital citizenship skills at home through ongoing conversations about online behavior and digital responsibility.

Parents and guardians may create a free Parent ProTech account to access videos, family guides, device-specific resources, and practical tools for supporting safe technology use outside of school. Instructions for creating an account are available on the district website and in the Appendix of this handbook.

Developing strong digital citizenship skills helps students become respectful communicators, responsible technology users, critical thinkers, and positive contributors in an increasingly connected world.



Panther Tip: *Before you post, share, comment, or click, ask yourself: Is it safe? Is it respectful? Is it true? Your digital footprint lasts long after you log off.*

Ethical and Responsible Use of Digital Tools, Including Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI), are becoming an important part of education, the workplace, and everyday life. When used appropriately, these technologies can support learning, encourage creativity, improve problem-solving, and enhance communication. Students are expected to use all digital tools responsibly, ethically, and in ways that reflect academic honesty and good digital citizenship.

Artificial intelligence may be used only when permitted by the teacher and for educational purposes that support learning. Students should never use AI or other digital tools to complete assignments dishonestly, submit work that is not their own, or misrepresent AI-generated content as original work. Students are expected to follow teacher directions regarding the appropriate use of AI and to acknowledge its use when required.

Students are also expected to respect copyright laws, protect personal information, communicate respectfully online, and use technology in ways that do not harm, harass, or violate the privacy of others. The misuse of digital tools—including artificial intelligence, social media, messaging platforms, or other online technologies—may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

As technology continues to evolve, Sumter County High School is committed to preparing students to use digital tools wisely, ethically, and responsibly so they are equipped for success in college, careers, and life.



Panther Tip: Artificial intelligence is a tool to enhance your learning—not replace your thinking. Use technology to learn, create, and grow while always demonstrating honesty, integrity, and respect.

Internet Safety

The Internet provides students with access to valuable educational resources, research tools, and opportunities for collaboration. While these resources enhance learning, students must also understand how to use the Internet safely, responsibly, and respectfully. Sumter County High School is committed to teaching students the skills they need to protect themselves and others in an increasingly connected digital world.

Students are expected to use sound judgment whenever they are online and to follow all district technology policies. Students should protect their personal information, respect the privacy of others, and communicate in a manner that reflects good character and digital citizenship. Information shared online can become permanent and may have lasting personal, academic, or professional consequences.

To promote online safety, students should:

- Keep usernames, passwords, and personal information private.
- Use only school-approved websites, applications, and digital resources during the school day.
- Report suspicious, threatening, inappropriate, or uncomfortable online activity to a teacher, parent, or other trusted adult immediately.
- Think carefully before posting, sharing, commenting, or sending information online.
- Treat others with kindness and respect in all digital communications.

Students should never:

- Share personal information such as home addresses, phone numbers, passwords, or financial information.
- Arrange to meet someone they have met online without the knowledge and permission of a parent or guardian.
- Access, create, or distribute inappropriate, threatening, or illegal content.
- Participate in cyberbullying, harassment, impersonation, or other forms of harmful online behavior.
- Open files, attachments, or links from unknown or suspicious sources.

The Sumter County School System uses Internet filtering and monitoring systems to help provide a safe online learning environment; however, no filtering system can completely eliminate access to inappropriate content. Students share responsibility for maintaining a safe digital environment by making responsible choices and reporting concerns promptly.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to remain actively involved in their child's online activities by discussing Internet safety, monitoring technology use at home, and reinforcing responsible digital habits.



Panther Tip: Stop. Think. Connect. Before you click, ask yourself: Is it safe? Is it respectful? Is it necessary? Smart choices online protect both you and others.

Student Email & Digital Communication

Each Sumter County High School student is provided with a district-issued email account to support learning, communication, and collaboration. Student email is an official school communication tool and may be used to communicate with teachers, submit assignments, access educational resources, and receive important school information.

Students are expected to use their school email account in a responsible, respectful, and professional manner at all times. Email communications should reflect appropriate language, good judgment, and the same standards of conduct expected in the classroom. Students should remember that electronic communication creates a permanent record and should always communicate with honesty, integrity, and respect.

Students should:

- Use their district email account for educational and school-related purposes.
- Communicate respectfully with teachers, staff, and classmates.
- Protect their account by keeping passwords secure and confidential.
- Check their school email regularly for important announcements and assignments.
- Report suspicious emails, phishing attempts, or inappropriate messages to a teacher or school staff member.

Students may not:

- Use school email for harassment, bullying, intimidation, or threatening behavior.
- Send or forward inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory messages or images.
- Share passwords or access another person's account.
- Use school email for personal business, commercial purposes, political campaigning, or other unauthorized activities.
- Attempt to bypass district security measures or misuse district technology resources.

District-issued email accounts and digital communications are school property and are subject to monitoring in accordance with Board policy and applicable law. Students should have no expectation of privacy when using district-issued email accounts or other school technology resources.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to remind students that professional digital communication is an important life skill. Learning to communicate respectfully and responsibly online prepares students for success in college, careers, and the workplace.



Panther Tip: Healthy meals fuel healthy minds. Eat a nutritious breakfast, make positive choices in the cafeteria, and help keep our dining areas clean and welcoming for everyone.

EMPOWERED BY TECHNOLOGY

Committed to Learning.

When we use technology responsibly, we open doors to **knowledge, opportunities, and a brighter future.**

LEARN. CONNECT. SUCCEED.

SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

PANTHER PRIDE.

- BE SAFE**
Protect yourself and others. Think before you click.
- BE RESPECTFUL**
Treat others online the way you want to be treated.
- BE RESPONSIBLE**
Use technology for learning and growth.
- BE HONEST**
Give credit, follow the rules, and do your own work.
- BE A PANTHER**
Represent Panther Pride everywhere you go—online and offline.

BE PREPARED for today.

BE PURPOSEFUL every day.

BE SUCCESSFUL tomorrow.

BE THE DIFFERENCE always.

SECTION

7

EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS

— *High Standards. Strong Character. Bright Futures.* —

Success starts with clear expectations and a commitment to doing your best every day. When we hold ourselves accountable and support one another, we all achieve more.



BE RESPONSIBLE

Take ownership of your actions, meet deadlines, and come prepared to learn.



BE RESPECTFUL

Treat others with kindness and respect. Value different perspectives and our school.



BE SAFE

Follow school rules and make choices that keep yourself and others safe.



BE PREPARED

Come ready to learn with the right tools, a positive attitude, and a focused mind.



BE ENGAGED

Participate in class, ask questions, and get involved in your school community.



BE YOUR BEST

Set goals, stay motivated, and strive for excellence in all you do.



Expectations for Success

Success at Sumter County High School is about more than earning good grades—it is about demonstrating character, showing respect, making responsible choices, and contributing to a safe, positive learning environment where everyone can thrive. Every student plays an important role in creating the culture of Panther Nation.

The expectations outlined in this section are designed to promote learning, safety, responsibility, and mutual respect. Whether students are in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, on the bus, at school events, or representing Sumter County High School in the community, they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects Panther Pride and the values of our school.

Throughout this section, students will find expectations for daily behavior, dress, electronic devices, common areas, transportation, parking, and other aspects of school life. These guidelines are intended to provide consistency, encourage personal responsibility, and help ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe, orderly, and welcoming environment.

Every Panther is expected to:

- **Be Ready** – Arrive prepared to learn, participate, and give your best each day.
- **Be Respectful** – Treat yourself, others, and school property with courtesy and dignity.
- **Be Responsible** – Make positive choices, accept accountability, and do what is right.
- **Be Safe** – Help maintain a secure environment by following school procedures and looking out for one another.
- **Be Kind** – Show compassion, include others, and help create a school culture where everyone feels valued and supported.

When every student embraces these expectations, Panther Nation becomes a place where academic excellence, strong relationships, and personal growth flourish.



Panther Tip: Success isn't measured only by what you accomplish—it's also reflected in how you treat others, the choices you make, and the example you set every day. At Sumter County High School, Panther Pride starts with you.



PANTHER EXPECTATIONS

— EVERY PANTHER IS EXPECTED TO: —



 BE READY ✓ Arrive on time and prepared to learn. ✓ Bring required materials and complete assignments. ✓ Participate actively in class and school activities.	 BE RESPECTFUL ✓ Treat others with kindness and courtesy. ✓ Respect differences, opinions, and school property. ✓ Use appropriate language and behavior.	 BE RESPONSIBLE ✓ Make positive choices. ✓ Follow school rules and classroom expectations. ✓ Take ownership of your actions.	 BE SAFE ✓ Help maintain a safe learning environment. ✓ Report concerns to a trusted adult. ✓ Follow all school safety procedures.	 BE KIND ✓ Include others. ✓ Encourage classmates. ✓ Choose empathy and compassion every day.
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TOGETHER, WE LEARN. TOGETHER, WE LEAD. TOGETHER, WE SUCCEED.



Daily Readiness

Every school day provides an opportunity to learn and grow. Students are expected to arrive at school on time, prepared with the materials needed for learning, and ready to participate in all instructional activities.

Daily readiness includes:

- Being present and on time
- Completing assignments
- Bringing school supplies and charged devices
- Following classroom procedures
- Maintaining a positive attitude toward learning

Prepared students are more successful academically and contribute to a productive learning environment.



Panther Tip: Charge your Chromebook, pack your backpack, and get a good night's sleep. Tomorrow's success starts tonight.

Dress Code

A student's appearance should support a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. Students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school-sponsored activities while following the district's dress code.

Clothing should be neat, clean, and appropriate for the school setting. Apparel that disrupts the educational environment, promotes violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity, discrimination, or contains inappropriate language or images is prohibited.

Students who are not in compliance with the dress code may be required to change clothing or be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with district policy.



Panther Tip: Dress for learning and leadership. Your appearance should reflect the pride you have in yourself and your school.

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM DRESS CODE

DRESS RIGHT. LEARN RIGHT. EVERY DAY.

1 WEAR SHOES No slides. Crocs allowed but wear properly.	2 KEEP IT CLEAN No profanity, alcohol, drugs, marijuana, or inappropriate images or language.	3 NO HEADGEAR No hats, caps, bandanas, do-rags, or other head coverings inside the building.	4 KEEP IT NEAT No combs, picks, or rakes in hair. Do not carry combs or brushes during the day.
5 PANTS UP Wear at the waist. No sagging or rolling up. Belts should not hang.	6 APPROPRIATE FIT No holes above the knee. Holes must be at the knee or below.	7 KEEP IT COVERED No exposing midriff, back, cleavage, buttocks, or undergarments. No sleepwear.	8 SHIRTS & DRESSES No tank tops, muscle shirts, spaghetti straps, tube tops, or mesh shirts unless worn with a shirt with sleeves. Sundresses need a jacket or shirt.
9 POCKET CHECK No towels, bandanas, or other items hanging from pockets.	10 INSIDE RULE Sunglasses may not be worn inside.	JOGGERS & SWEATPANTS ✓ Joggers and sweatpants are allowed. ✓ Must be worn at the waist. ✓ No leggings as pants. ✓ Wear appropriate size.	

The administration has final discretion in determining whether student attire is appropriate and does not disrupt the educational environment. See upcoming handbook for full details.

PANTHER PRIDE. | RESPECT. | RESPONSIBILITY. | SUCCESS.

Students, always, should observe the rules governing body cleanliness, neatness of appearance, and good grooming. T-shirts with improper suggestions or advertising of any alcoholic drink, or illegal substance will not be allowed at school. When, in the opinion of administration or teacher, a pupil is inappropriately dressed for school, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called for proper school attire. Though pupils have the right to choose individual dress, the school has the responsibility to see that the attire is not immodest or offensive to anyone.

Students are expected to:

- Wear clothing that fits appropriately and is not oversized.
- Wear proper undergarments at all times.
- Follow all dress code expectations throughout the school day.
- Understand that apparel or accessories determined by the principal to be inappropriate or disruptive are prohibited.
- Keep ankle monitors covered with pants.
- Students who are dressed inappropriately will not be permitted to attend class. Parents/guardians may be contacted to bring appropriate clothing or pick up the student.

Shirts, Tops & Upper Body Clothing

The following clothing is prohibited:

- Shirts displaying profanity, vulgar language, suggestive writing, or inappropriate pictures.
- Clothing advertising or depicting alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia.
- Cut-off shirts.
- Shirts exposing the midriff.
- Tube tops.
- Spaghetti strap blouses or dresses unless covered by an acceptable shirt.
- Tank top dresses unless covered by an acceptable shirt.
- Sundresses unless worn with a jacket.
- Bareback dresses or blouses that expose the back.
- Clothing that exposes the stomach, cleavage, or undergarments.
- Net or mesh shirts unless a shirt with sleeves is worn underneath.
- Muscle shirts.
- Tank tops.
- White T-shirts or undershirts worn as outerwear.

Pants, Shorts, Skirts & Dresses

Pants

Pants must:

- Be worn securely at the waist.
- Remain above the buttocks.
- Fit securely without constantly being pulled up.
- Not be rolled up, tucked into shoes or socks, folded, wrapped, or secured with rubber bands.
- Have no holes above the knee that expose bare skin. Holes must be at or below the knee.

The following are prohibited:

- Sweatpants
- Bicycle shorts or bicycle pants
- Skin-tight pants
- Skin-tight blue jeans
- Pants with writing across the buttocks

Shorts

Shorts must:

- Be approximately knee length.

The following are prohibited:

- Short shorts
- Gym shorts
- Cut-off shorts
- Ragged shorts
- Shorts with writing across the buttocks

Skirts & Dresses

Skirts and dresses must:

- Be no more than three (3) inches above the kneecap.

The following are prohibited:

- Mini skirts
- Mini culottes
- Short dresses worn over tights
- Dresses with slits extending more than four (4) inches above the knee
- Ragged dresses
- Fishnet tights

Hair, Headwear & Grooming

The following are prohibited:

- Hair rollers
- Rags or wave caps
- Do-rags
- Bandannas
- Sweatbands
- Stocking caps
- Hats
- Caps
- Sun visors
- Other headgear worn inside the school building

Students may not carry:

- Combs
- Picks
- Rakes
- Rat-tail combs

Students may not carry brushes or combs in their hands during the school day. These items will be confiscated and turned over to the administration.

Jewelry & Accessories

The following are prohibited:

- Oversized earrings
- Necklaces with medallions larger than one (1) inch in diameter
- Sunglasses worn inside the school building
- Buttons displaying vulgar or obscene language
- Buttons advertising alcohol or drugs
- Towels hanging from pockets
- Bandannas or do-rags hanging from pockets
- Belts hanging from pants or shorts

Additional Prohibited Apparel

Students may not wear apparel or accessories that:

- Display profanity or obscene language.
- Advertise or depict alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia.
- Display sexually suggestive words or images.
- Are considered distracting, inappropriate, or disruptive by the principal.

Dress Code Violations

Students are expected to comply with all dress code requirements throughout the school day. Students who are dressed inappropriately will not be permitted to attend class until the violation has been corrected. Parents or guardians may be contacted to bring appropriate clothing or pick up their child.

The administration reserves the right to determine whether student attire complies with the dress code and to make final decisions regarding questions of appropriateness.



Panther Tip: When choosing what to wear, ask yourself: "Is this appropriate for learning, respectful of others, and something that reflects Panther Pride?" If the answer is yes, you're ready for a successful day!

Classroom Expectations

Classrooms are places where everyone deserves the opportunity to learn without disruption.

Students are expected to:

- Follow teacher directions promptly.
- Participate respectfully in discussions and activities.
- Remain engaged in learning.
- Respect classmates and staff.
- Complete assignments honestly and demonstrate academic integrity.
- Use technology appropriately when permitted.

Positive classroom behavior helps create an environment where everyone can succeed.



Panther Tip: *Participate, ask questions, and don't be afraid to make mistakes--they're part of learning.*

Hallways

Hallways should remain safe, orderly, and respectful throughout the school day.

Students should:

- Walk at all times.
- Keep hallways free of horseplay and excessive noise.
- Report directly to their destination.
- Follow staff directions.
- Use hall passes when required.

Respecting instructional time means transitioning efficiently between classes.



Panther Tip: *Walk with purpose. Respect everyone's learning by keeping hallways safe, calm, and moving.*

Restrooms

School restrooms should be used responsibly and respectfully.

Students are expected to:

- Respect school property.
- Maintain cleanliness.
- Use facilities appropriately.
- Return promptly to class.
- Report vandalism or safety concerns to school staff.



Panther Tip: *Leave the restroom cleaner than you found it. Small acts of respect make a big difference.*

Cafeteria

The cafeteria is a place for students to enjoy meals while demonstrating courtesy and responsibility.

Students should:

- Follow cafeteria procedures.
- Treat cafeteria staff respectfully.
- Clean their eating area before leaving.
- Use appropriate voices and behavior.
- Dispose of trash properly.

Good manners and respect help make lunchtime enjoyable for everyone.



Panther Tip: *Good manners never go out of style. Say "please" and "thank you," clean up after yourself, and include someone who may be eating alone.*

Assemblies

Assemblies, performances, and school events are important opportunities to build school spirit and celebrate accomplishments.

Students are expected to:

- Be respectful of speakers and performers.
- Follow staff directions.
- Remain seated unless instructed otherwise.
- Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior.
- Represent Sumter County High School with Panther Pride.



Panther Tip: *The way you behave during assemblies reflects the pride you take in your school. Cheer loudly, listen carefully, and represent Panther Nation well.*

Bus Expectations

Riding the school bus is a privilege.

Students are expected to:

- Follow the driver's directions.
- Remain seated while the bus is moving.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects inside the bus.
- Respect fellow passengers.
- Help maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Bus misconduct may result in disciplinary action or suspension of transportation privileges.



Panther Tip: *The bus ride is an extension of the school day. Safe choices help everyone arrive ready to learn.*

Student Drivers & Parking

Students who drive to school are expected to operate their vehicles safely and responsibly.

Student drivers must:

- Obtain and display a valid parking permit.
- Park only in assigned areas.
- Observe posted speed limits.
- Lock vehicles after parking.
- Refrain from returning to vehicles during the school day without permission.

Parking on campus is a privilege that may be revoked for violations of school rules or unsafe driving.



Panther Tip: *Drive like a Panther--safe, respectful, and responsible. Your choices behind the wheel protect everyone on campus.*

Personal Electronic Devices

Technology should support learning, not distract from it.

Students are expected to follow district policies regarding:

- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- Earbuds/headphones
- Tablets and other electronic devices
- Yondr pouch procedures (when applicable)

Unauthorized use of personal electronic devices may result in disciplinary consequences.



Panther Tip: *Don't let your phone distract you from moments that matter. Be present, engaged, and focused on learning.*

Food Deliveries

To maintain campus security and minimize classroom disruptions, food deliveries from restaurants, delivery services, or other third-party vendors are not permitted during the school day unless specifically authorized by school administration.

Parents or guardians who need to deliver lunch for their child should follow school procedures by bringing the lunch directly to the Front Office. Students will be notified when appropriate.



Panther Tip: *Planning ahead helps keep the school day running smoothly. Pack your lunch or follow school procedures for meal deliveries.*

Personal Property

Students are responsible for their personal belongings while at school.

Students should:

- Label personal items.
- Keep valuables secure.
- Properly care for school-issued materials.
- Promptly report lost items.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.



Panther Tip: *If it's valuable, keep it secure. Label your belongings and think twice before bringing expensive items to school.*

Visitors & Campus Safety

The safety of students and staff is a shared responsibility.

All visitors must:

- Enter through the designated entrance.
- Check in at the Front Office.
- Present identification when requested.
- Wear a visitor badge while on campus.
- Follow all campus safety procedures.

Unauthorized visitors are not permitted on school grounds.



Panther Tip: *If you see something that doesn't seem right, say something. Keeping our campus safe is everyone's responsibility.*

Positive School Climate

Every Panther contributes to creating a welcoming and inclusive school community.

Students are encouraged to:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Celebrate diversity.
- Choose kindness.
- Be an upstander by supporting others and reporting bullying, harassment, or unsafe behavior.
- Help classmates feel included and valued.

If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress or a mental health crisis, tell a trusted adult immediately. Help is available 24 hours a day through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988. Additional support is available through the Georgia Crisis & Access Line (GCAL) at 1-800-715-4225 or mygcal.com. Asking for help is a sign of strength, and every Panther deserves support.



Panther Tip: *Choose to be an upstander, not a bystander. One act of kindness or courage can change someone's day—or even their life.*

Character, Kindness & Panther Pride

Creating a Culture of Respect

At Sumter County High School, we believe success is measured not only by academic achievement, but also by the character we demonstrate each day. Every Panther has the opportunity to help create a school where everyone feels safe, respected, valued, and included.

Being a Panther means choosing kindness, showing empathy, respecting differences, and treating others with dignity both in person and online. Students are expected to contribute to a positive school climate by encouraging others, resolving conflicts respectfully, and making choices that strengthen our school community.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing, discrimination, and retaliation have no place in Panther Nation. Students who experience or witness these behaviors are encouraged to report concerns to a trusted adult, teacher, school counselor, administrator, School Resource Officer, or another trusted adult. All reports are taken seriously and investigated in accordance with district policy.

Every Panther can make a difference by choosing to be an upstander instead of a bystander. An upstander speaks up, includes others, reports unsafe or hurtful behavior, and supports classmates who may be struggling. Choosing kindness and taking action when someone needs help helps create a stronger, safer, and more welcoming school community for everyone.

Sometimes the kindest thing you can do is ask for help—for yourself or for someone else. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, thoughts of self-harm, or emotional distress, tell a trusted adult immediately. Help is always available through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988, or through the Georgia Crisis & Access Line (GCAL) at 1-800-715-4225 or mygcal.com. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, and no Panther should ever face life's challenges alone.



Panther Tip: Character is revealed by the choices you make every day. Every act of kindness, respect, responsibility, and courage helps make Sumter County High School a place where everyone can learn, belong, and succeed.

PANTHER PRIDE *in Action*

Panther Pride is demonstrated through the choices we make every day.
Small acts of kindness, respect, responsibility, and leadership create a
school where everyone can learn, belong, and succeed.

SHOW YOUR PANTHER PRIDE BY:

- Welcoming** new students and making everyone feel included.
- Treating** classmates, staff, and visitors with kindness and respect.
- Choosing to be an upstander** by speaking up, reporting concerns, and supporting others.
- Encouraging** classmates and celebrating their successes.
- Using respectful language** in person and online.
- Helping** keep our campus clean, safe, and welcoming.
- Taking pride** in your work, your school, and your community.
- Resolving disagreements** peacefully and respectfully.
- Showing integrity** by doing the right thing—even when no one is watching.
- Representing** Sumter County High School with pride both on and off campus.



Remember, **every positive choice makes a difference.**
Together, we can build a school culture where every Panther feels valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.



Panther Tip:

Leave every classroom, conversation, and situation better than you found it. **One act of kindness can change someone's entire day.**

Pride. Purpose. Panthers.
TOGETHER WE ROAR!



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Excellence.
EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY DAY.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Plan Ahead. Stay Prepared. Panther Pride Every Day.



2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR *Highlights*

DATE(S)	EVENT
July 23-24 & 27-29, 2026	Pre-Planning (Staff)
July 28, 2026	Open House
July 30, 2026	First Day of School
September 7, 2026	Labor Day Holiday
October 12-16, 2026	Fall Break
November 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
December 21, 2026-January 1, 2027	Winter Break
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 15, 2027	Mid-Winter Break / President's Day
March 15, 2027	Mid-Spring Break
April 5-9, 2027	Spring Break
May 21, 2027	Last Day of School / Early Release



PROGRESS REPORTS 2026-2027

September 9, November 11,
January 10, April 21, 2027



REPORT CARDS ISSUED 2026-2027

October 21, January 13,
March 24, May 27, 2027



EARLY RELEASE DAYS 2026-2027

October 2, November 6, February 11,
March 11, April 21, May 21, 2027



TEACHER WORKDAYS 2026-2027

October 2, December 18,
January 4, May 24, 2027



All dates are subject to change.
Please check the district website
for the most up-to-date information.

COLLEGE & CAREER TESTING



SAT® DATES (2026-2027)

Register at sat.org

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
August 22, 2026	August 7, 2026
September 12, 2026	August 28, 2026
October 3, 2026	September 18, 2026
November 7, 2026	October 23, 2026
December 5, 2026	November 20, 2026
March 6, 2027	February 19, 2027
May 1, 2027	April 16, 2027
June 5, 2027	May 21, 2027



ACT® DATES (2026-2027)

Register at act.org

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
September 19, 2026	August 14, 2026
October 17, 2026	September 11, 2026
December 12, 2026	November 6, 2026
February 27, 2027	January 22, 2027
April 10, 2027	March 5, 2027
June 12, 2027	May 7, 2027
July 10, 2027	June 4, 2027



AP® EXAMS

AP Exams will be administered during the first two full weeks
of May 2027, with late testing the following week.

See the Counseling Office for the official subject schedule.

OTHER IMPORTANT ASSESSMENTS



PSAT/NMSQT

October 2026

National merit scholarship qualifying test
for 10th & 11th graders. Prepares students
for the SAT.



GEORGIA MILESTONES EOC

Winter 2026 & Spring 2027

End-of-Course assessments in
Algebra, Biology, Composition &
Literature II, and U.S. History.



ACCESS FOR ELLS

January-February 2027

Assessing Comprehension and
Communication in English.



ASVAB CAREER EXPLORATION

Dates announced by the
Counseling Office

Career and military aptitudes
assessment for students.



BE READY.
Come prepared
to learn and
succeed.



BE RESPECTFUL.
Treat others and
our school with
respect.



BE RESPONSIBLE.
Make smart choices
and own your
actions.



BE SAFE.
Follow the rules
and look out for
one another.



BE KIND.
Show compassion
and make a
positive difference.



PANTHER PRIDE

LEARN

•

LEAD

•

BELONG

•

SUCCEED



PANTHER
PRIDE



LEARN
LEAD
BELONG
SUCCEED

SECTION

8

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

— *Respect. Responsibility. Integrity.* —

Our code of conduct helps create a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment where everyone can thrive. By following these expectations, we show pride in ourselves, our school, and our community.



BE RESPECTFUL

Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Value different perspectives and our school.



BE RESPONSIBLE

Take ownership of your actions, meet deadlines, and come prepared to learn.



BE FAIR

Follow rules and procedures. Make choices that are just and honest.



BE SAFE

Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Help keep our school safe.



BE ENGAGED

Participate in class, stay focused, and give your best effort every day.



BE PROUD

Represent yourself, your school, and your community with pride.



Student Code of Conduct



At Sumter County High School, we believe every student deserves the opportunity to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment. The Student Code of Conduct establishes the behavioral expectations that help protect that learning environment while promoting responsibility, accountability, and positive decision-making.

The primary goal of discipline is not punishment—it is to teach, restore, and help students develop the skills needed to make better choices. In support of this philosophy, Sumter County Schools is committed to using Restorative Practices whenever appropriate. Restorative Practices encourage students to reflect on their actions, repair harm caused to others, rebuild relationships, and strengthen our school community. While accountability remains an essential part of the disciplinary process, restorative approaches help students accept responsibility for their actions, repair harm, rebuild trust, and develop the skills needed to make positive choices that contribute to long-term success.

Most disciplinary situations are addressed through progressive interventions designed to correct behavior, strengthen relationships, and keep students engaged in learning whenever possible. Restorative conversations, reflection, problem-solving, conflict resolution, mediation, and opportunities to repair harm may be incorporated into disciplinary responses when appropriate. Serious violations involving violence, weapons, drugs, or other behaviors that threaten school safety may require more significant disciplinary consequences in accordance with Board policy.

The Code of Conduct applies:

- On school property before, during, and after school hours.
- On school buses and at bus stops.
- At school-sponsored activities, events, and athletic competitions.
- During travel to and from school-sponsored activities.
- In certain off-campus situations when student behavior substantially disrupts the educational environment or threatens the safety of students or staff.

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others.
- Follow school rules and directions from school staff.
- Respect school property and the property of others.
- Behave responsibly in classrooms, on campus, and at school activities.
- Help maintain a safe, welcoming, and positive learning environment for everyone.

When determining appropriate disciplinary responses, school administrators consider a variety of factors, including:

- The severity of the behavior.
- The student's age and maturity.
- The student's discipline history.
- The impact on school safety and the learning environment.
- Any mitigating or aggravating circumstances.
- Opportunities to restore relationships, repair harm, and support positive behavioral growth.

Whenever appropriate, disciplinary responses follow a progressive discipline model that provides students with opportunities to learn from mistakes and improve future behavior. However, serious violations involving safety, violence, drugs, weapons, or other major offenses may result in immediate and more severe consequences as outlined in the official Student Code of Conduct.

The pages that follow contain the official Sumter County Schools Student Code of Conduct, including behavioral expectations, definitions, disciplinary procedures, and consequences approved by the Sumter County Board of Education. Because these policies are Board approved, they are published in their official form.



Panther Tip: *Mistakes do not define who you are—how you learn, grow, and make things right does. Every day is a new opportunity to demonstrate Panther Pride.*



UNDERSTANDING THE CODE OF CONDUCT



This visual guide provides a quick overview of how our Code of Conduct works.
The full Code of Conduct, including all behaviors and consequences, begins on the next page.

1 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Our goal is to teach, restore, and help students make better choices through a progressive approach.



STEP 1: PREVENT & TEACH

Clear expectations, positive relationships, and proactive teaching of appropriate behavior.



STEP 2: REDIRECT & REMIND

Verbal reminders, reteaching, and informal conversations.



STEP 3: RESTORE & REPAIR

Restorative conversations, reflection, problem-solving, and opportunities to repair harm.



STEP 4: INTERVENE & SUPPORT

Systematic interventions, parent contact, detention, ISI (In-School Intervention), or other supports.



STEP 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), tribunal hearing, or other consequences as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Serious violations may result in immediate consequences at any step to ensure safety.

2 STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES



YOUR RIGHTS

- ✓ To learn in a safe, respectful and supportive environment.
- ✓ To be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- ✓ To be informed of rules, expectations, and consequences.
- ✓ To have your voice heard and to participate in restorative processes.



YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Follow school rules and adult directions.
- ✓ Treat others with respect and kindness.
- ✓ Take responsibility for your actions.
- ✓ Come prepared to learn and participate.
- ✓ Help create a positive, safe school community.

3 HOW DISCIPLINE DECISIONS ARE MADE

School officials consider many factors before determining the appropriate response:



Severity of the behavior



Student age & maturity



Discipline history



Impact on school safety & learning



Mitigating or aggravating circumstances



Opportunities to restore, repair, and support growth



Restorative Practices are used whenever appropriate to help students reflect, repair harm, and rebuild relationships while maintaining accountability.

4 BEHAVIORS THAT MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OR TRIBUNAL



- Weapons or dangerous instruments
- Drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances
- Violence or threats of violence
- Fighting or physical aggression
- Sexual harassment or assault
- Arson or fire-setting
- Robbery or theft
- Extortion or blackmail
- Vandalism or serious destruction of property
- Bullying that threatens safety
- Possession or distribution of pornography
- False reports of serious incidents
- Gang-related activity
- Serious disruption of school activities
- Repeated major violations after interventions
- Other actions that pose an immediate threat to the safety of others

SCHOOL SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.

Consequences will be determined in accordance with Board Policy and State Law.

5 HOW PARENTS CAN HELP



Know the Code of Conduct. Read it with your child and talk about expectations.



Communicate regularly. Ask about their day, listen, and encourage positive choices.



Support school staff. Work together with teachers and administrators to help your child succeed.



Help your child prepare. Ensure they are well-rested, on time, and ready to learn.



Model respect and responsibility. Your example sets the tone for their behavior.



Stay informed. Keep your contact information updated and respond to school communications.



ONE TEAM. ONE SCHOOL. ONE PANTHER NATION.

The official Sumter County Board of Education Code of Conduct begins on the next page.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

It is the policy of the Sumter County Board of Education that each school within this school district shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment and which will comply with state law and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15. Each code of conduct shall include, at a minimum, the requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-4-8-.15, STUDENT DISCIPLINE.

Each school shall involve parents in developing and updating student codes of conduct. Each code shall require disciplinary action for each infraction of the code. All student codes of conduct shall be submitted to the board for approval.

The student code of conduct shall be distributed to each student and the student's parents or guardians during the first week of school and upon enrollment of each new student. The parents shall be requested to sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of the code of conduct and return promptly the acknowledgment to the school. The student code of conduct shall be available in the school office and each classroom.

It is the purpose of the Sumter County Board of Education to operate each school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend the schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, the Board of Education has adopted a policy which requires all schools to adopt codes of conduct which require students to conduct themselves at all times in order to facilitate a learning environment for themselves and other students. These standards for behavior require students to respect each other and school district employees, to obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within the district.

The school's primary goal is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On school buses and at school bus stops.

Also, students may be disciplined for conduct off campus which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board Rule 160-4-8-.16, UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL/AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly, or dangerous conduct covered or not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures that he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school, provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures. **Only action taken by principals can be appealed to the Associate Superintendent.**

All consequences for offenses listed below are minimum consequences. Depending on the severity of the situation, school officials may apply stricter measures. An administrator has the discretion to determine the offense and the appropriateness of the consequence assigned.

Misbehavior governed by the code may occur during school hours, outside school hours, on school grounds or campus, off school grounds or campus, at school-sponsored activities whether on or off school grounds/campus, and/or on school-sponsored transportation.

**** Each time a student is given In-School Intervention or Out-School Suspension the parent(s)/guardian must meet with a member of the school administration before the student may return to his/her regular classes.**

Students who repeatedly violate the various rules and regulations may be subject to disciplinary action more severe than the consequences specified for the individual offenses committed, up to and including suspension to a formal hearing and possible long-term suspension or expulsion.

School **administrators** are authorized to take disciplinary action for misconduct which occurs:

- On the school grounds during or immediately before or immediately after school hours;
- On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event;
- Within a school safety zone.

Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school related actions by students, at any time of the year, which has a direct and immediate impact on school

discipline, the educational function of the school, or the welfare of students and staff. A student who has committed a criminal act while off campus is subject to disciplinary action and may be excluded from school. Such act could, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act which would be considered to be felony if committed by an adult, an assault misconduct of a serious nature. A student whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare and/or safety of other students or staff, whose presence may cause substantial disruption at school, is also subject to in-school intervention, and assignment to an alternative education.

The Superintendent fully supports the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to provisions of state law.

Each teacher shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737 which requires the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct. Such a report shall be filed with the principal or designee on the school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or designee.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



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A **teacher** shall remove the student from class and send to the principal for placement in an alternative education program or for expulsion as appropriate, a student who engages in conduct described in Levels III and IV.

The teacher shall file a report of such removal with the principal by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day: that describes the student's behavior, and is one page or less.

By no later than the close of school on the day following removal, the principal shall discuss the matter with the teacher and student and give the student oral or written notice of the reason(s) for which the student was removed from class. If the student denies engaging in such conduct, the principal shall explain the evidence against the student and offer the student an opportunity to present the student's version of what happened.

If the principal seeks to return the student to the teacher's class, and the teacher **gives his/her consent**, the student shall be returned to class, and the principal may take such additional action to discipline the student as may be warranted.

If the teacher **refuses to accept the student back in his/her class**, the principal shall: determine an appropriate temporary placement for the student, and convene a meeting of a school placement review committee.

At the conclusion of the conference, the principal shall send to the student's parent a copy of the report filed by the teacher and written notification that:

- the student was removed from class,
- the placement of the student, whether back in class or in a temporary placement pending review by the school placement review committee,
- any additional disciplinary action imposed by the principal, and
- information regarding how the student's parents may contact the principal.

An **appropriate temporary placement** for the student shall be a placement that, in the judgment of the principal:

- provides the least interruption to the student's education, and
- reflects other relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the severity of the behavior that was the basis for the removal
- the student's behavioral history
- the student's need for support services, and
- the available education settings.

The student shall not be returned to the class of the teacher who removed him/her, as an appropriate temporary placement, unless the teacher gives his/her consent. The temporary placement shall be in effect from the time of student removal until the decision of the school placement review committee is issued or, if applicable, a placement determination is made.

The school placement review committee shall convene by the end of the second day following the student removal by the teacher and shall issue a decision in writing by the end of the third school day following such removal by the teacher. The sole function and authority of the placement review committee shall be to determine whether or not the student shall be returned to the teacher's classroom.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

If a placement review committee decides to return a student to class, the principal shall implement the decision, and **may**, after considering the use of any appropriate student support services, take any of the following actions:

- place the student in ISI
- impose out-of-school suspension for not more than ten school days, including any time during which the student was subject to out-of school suspension after his/her removal from class
- make another disciplinary decision/recommendation consistent with local board policy.

If a placement review committee decides not to return a student to class, the principal shall implement the decision and after considering the use of any appropriate student support services may:

- Place the student in another classroom, ISI or an alternative education program
- Impose out-of-school suspension for not more than (10) school days, including any time during which the student was subject to out-of school suspension as a temporary placement
- May make another placement or disciplinary decision or recommendation consistent with local board policy; or
- May implement or recommend any appropriate combination of the above and return the student to the class from which he/she was removed upon the completion of any disciplinary or placement action.

Within one day of taking action on the decision of the placement review committee, the principal shall:

- Send written notification of the action to the teacher and the parents of the student
- Make a reasonable attempt to confirm that the written notification has been received by the student's parents.

Parents of a student removed from class who has been determined to be a chronic disciplinary problem student may be required to participate in conferences requested by the principal.

Refusal by a parent or guardian to participate in such a conference will subject the parent to an application to the Juvenile Court of Sumter County for an order to attend such conferences and/or participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior or both.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors. The following is an **example of the progressive discipline procedures**:

- 1st OFFENSE- Warning(verbal or written)
- 2nd OFFENSE- Contact parent/guardian/ ISI/OSS or afterschool intervention
- 3rd OFFENSE- Contact parent/guardian/ ISI/OSS or after school intervention
- 4th OFFENSE- Contact parent/guardian/ ISI/OSS or after school intervention



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia's Character Education Program.

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Loss of Privileges
- Isolation or Time Out
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Corporal Punishment
- Detention
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion, but those punishments will be determined only by a disciplinary tribunal as outlined in the Board of Education policies.

Parents or students may elect not to contest whether a student has violated the Code of Conduct or the appropriate discipline, and in such cases, an agreement may be negotiated which would include the parents or students waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal. Such an agreement and waiver must be approved also by the disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer in accordance with local board policy.

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

School officials may search a student if there is reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of an item that is illegal or against school rules. Students' vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, desks and other school property are subject to inspection and search by school authorities at any time without further notice to students or parents. Students are required to cooperate if asked to open book bags or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at school or at any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search.

1. Personal Searches: A student's person and/or personal effects (e.g. purse, book bag, etc.) may be searched whenever a school administrator has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student may be in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. If a search of a student's person is conducted, it will be conducted in private by a school administrator of the same sex and with an adult witness of the same sex present.

2. Automobile Searches: Vehicles parked on campus during the school day are required to be registered with the school and display the appropriate permit. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exterior of student auto-mobiles on school property. The interiors of students' vehicles may be inspected/searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside. Such patrols, inspections, and searches may be conducted without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

3. Seizure of Illegal Materials: If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to the legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

DISCIPLINARY JURISDICTION OVER STUDENT CONTACT

OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT MISCONDUCT AND JURISDICTION POSTING

Off-Campus Student Misconduct

A student who has been **arrested, indicted, adjudicated, convicted**, or having information filed for conduct that occurs off-campus, and while the student is not in attendance at a school related event or activity, will be automatically placed in an alternative education program with/without a hearing, or will be recommended for expulsion or long-term suspension at a Student Evidentiary Hearing, provided that:

1. The Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student has engaged in conduct punishable as a felony or a delinquent act which would be a felony if committed by an adult, and the Superintendent (designee) believes the continued presence of the student in a regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process. Students placed in an alternative education program under this provision will remain in such program pending the disposition of their criminal case. The Superintendent (designee) will review the outcome of the criminal case at that time and make a determination as to whether the student may return to his/her neighborhood school or remain in the alternative education program.
2. In addition, the School District has the authority to take disciplinary action regarding any off-campus, non-school related actions taken by students, which has a direct and immediate impact on school discipline, the learning environment, or the welfare and/or safety of students and staff. A student who has committed a criminal act while off-campus is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.
3. The School District can also refuse to readmit or re-enroll a student that has been expelled or suspended because the student has been convicted of, adjudicated to have committed, indicted for, or having information filed for the commission of any felony or any delinquent act which would be a felony if committed by an adult.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

When and how principals become involved in discipline

Jurisdiction: School administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for misconduct that occurs:

- On the school grounds before, during or after school hours,
- On the school grounds at any time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off the school grounds at a school activity or function or even,
- En route to and from school;
- On school buses or at bus stops;
- Within a school safety zone.

Authority to take disciplinary action also extends to any off-campus non-school related actions by students, at any time of the year, which have a direct and immediate impact on school discipline, the educational function of the school, or the welfare of students and staff. A student who has committed a criminal act while off campus is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school. Such an act could include, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act which would be considered to be a felony if committed by an adult, an assault upon another student, a violation of the laws prohibiting controlled substances, or sexual misconduct of a serious nature. A student whose presence on school property may endanger the welfare and/or safety of other students or staff, or whose presence may cause substantial disruption at school, is also subject to in-school suspension and/or assignment to an alternative education program.

INVESTIGATION OF MISCONDUCT

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION - Instruction should take place in a school environment conducive to learning. Effective instruction requires good order and discipline. Good order and discipline mean the absence of distraction and disturbance which interfere with functions of the teachers, students, class and school. Good order and discipline mean the presence of a friendly, business-like atmosphere in which students and school personnel work cooperatively toward established and accepted goals.

Students who misbehave usually have academic difficulties, and removal from school almost inevitably adds to their academic problems. Sometimes expulsion is precisely what a delinquent student desires. Also, as the school loses contact with a student and loses its opportunity to work with the student to eliminate antisocial behavior, the student may continue the misconduct in a way more dangerous to himself/herself and others. When the regular classroom is not the place for the student, other provisions will be made.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT - Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others
- Behave in a responsible manner at school, on school buses, and at all school functions on or off campus
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class
- Be well-groomed and dress appropriately
- Obey all campus and classroom rules
- Respect the property of others, including District property and facilities
- Cooperate with or assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline
- Avoid violations of the Student Code of Conduct



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

The District may impose campus, classroom, or club/organization rules in addition to those found in the Code of Conduct. These rules may be listed in the student handbooks or posted in classrooms, or published in extracurricular handbooks, state or national organization by-laws, and/or constitutions, and may or may not constitute violations of the Code of Conduct.

Additional rules or requirements, not part of the Student Code, are adopted and approved by the sponsor, principal, and/or district administrator.

Sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities may develop and enforce standards of conduct that are higher than the District's general standards and may condition membership or the student's participation in the activity on adherence to those standards. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs anytime, on or off school property; however, no provision of an extracurricular behavioral standard shall have the effect of discriminating on the basis of gender, race, disability, religion, or ethnicity.

Organizational standards of behavior of an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of behavior that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in independent disciplinary actions. **A student may be removed from participation in extracurricular activities or may be excluded from school graduation/honors programs for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.**

DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF DISCIPLINE/TERMS

After School Intervention: A requirement that the student report to a specific school location and to a designated teacher or school official to complete a specific intervention. After School Intervention requires the student's attendance after school. Students are given several days notice so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.

Assault: Any threat or attempt to physically harm another person or any act which reasonably places another person in fear of physical harm.(Example: threatening language or swinging at someone in an attempt to strike).

Battery: Intentionally making physical contact with another person in an insulting, offensive, or provoking manner or in a way that physically harms the other person.

Bullying: In accordance with Georgia law, bullying is defined as (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student: A student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur.

Community Service: Away for students to contribute to society, gain valuable skills, and enhance their college applications.

Corporal Punishment: Physical punishment of a student by a school official in the presence of another school official.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

Cyberbullying: Bullying that takes place using electronic technology; electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, emails, and websites.

Disciplinary Tribunal: School officials appointed by the Board of Education to sit as fact finder and judge with respect to student disciplinary matters.

Dress Code: The current dress code is explained in the student handbook.

Drug: The substance which, when taken into the body causes noticeably impaired behavior and/or obvious physical symptoms. This definition includes illegal substances; legal substances such as alcohol, tobacco, solvents, and medicines; and all others covered under board policy. Caffeine pills are considered drugs.

Expulsion: Suspension of a student from a public school beyond the current school quarter or semester. Such action may be taken only by a disciplinary tribunal.

Extortion: Obtaining money or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

Fighting: A physical altercation between two or more individuals. A student under attack should detach himself/herself from the situation and get an adult to help; this action would constitute "self-defense" on the attacked student's part. A fight occurs when the student strikes back and actively engages in the altercation.

Firearm: Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or silencer; or any destructive device, including any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine or similar device. Destructive device also includes any weapon by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant.

Fireworks: The term "fireworks" means any combustible or explosive composition or any substance of combination of substances or article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation, as well as articles containing any explosive or flammable compound and tablets and other devices containing an explosive substance.

Gambling: Engaging in a game or contest in which the outcome is dependent upon chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value.

In-School Intervention: A short term teaching program to help students struggling with specific behavioral issues during or after school. The interventions are taught to the students in an isolated setting.

Long-Term Suspension: Suspension from school for more than ten (10) days.

Physical Violence: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another, or intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm to another.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

Placement Review Committee: A committee at each school established to determine the placement of a student who has been removed by class when a teacher withholds consent to return such student to the teacher's class.

Possession: The actual care, custody, control or management of an object or substance. A student shall be considered to be in possession of any substance or object prohibited or regulated by this Code if the substance or object is:

1. On the student's person or in the student's personal property, including but not limited to the student's clothing, purse, book bag, or backpack;
2. In any private vehicle used by the student for transportation to or from school or a school-related activity, including but not limited to a truck, auto, motorcycle, or bicycle; and
3. Any school property used by the student including their desk.

Probation: A conditional period of enrollment during a trial period

School Authorities: A school principal, an assistant principal, a School Resource Officer or any other school employee designated by the principal to administer discipline or to conduct inspections or searches of students, student desks, or automobiles.

School Safety Zone: In or within 1,000 feet of any real property owned by or leased to any public elementary school, secondary school, or school board and used for elementary or secondary education.

School Bus Suspension: A termination of the privilege to ride the school bus to and from school for a specific length of time.

Short-Term Suspension: A temporary termination of enrollment for up to ten (10) days until stipulated conditions are met.

Suspension: Removal of a student from the regular school program for a period not to exceed 10 days (short-term) or for a period greater than 10 days (long-term, which may be imposed only by a disciplinary tribunal). During the period of suspension, the student is excluded from all school-sponsored activities including practices, as well as competitive events, and/or activities sponsored by the school or its employees.

Theft: The offense of taking or misappropriation of any property of another, with the intention of depriving that person of the property, regardless of the manner in which the property is taken or appropriated.

Under the influence: Not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties; however, the student need not be legally intoxicated but will be considered under the influence if there is any amount of alcohol, marijuana, controlled substance or dangerous drug in the student's blood, urine or breath. Impairment of a person's physical and/or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior and/or the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol abuse.

Waiver: A waiver is an agreement not to contest whether a student has committed an infraction of the Code of Conduct and the acceptance of consequences in lieu of a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

OFFICIAL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

Weapons: The term weapon is defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1 and for the purpose of this policy includes any object which is or may be used to inflict bodily injury or to place another in fear for personal safety or well-being. The following things may be defined as dangerous weapons:

1. Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.
2. Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nunchuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or Taser. Toy guns or other look-alike weapons will be considered weapons. They will not be allowed on campus for any reason. Students who violate this rule will be subject to disciplinary action. **Such terms shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.**

Yondr Pouch: A specialized, lockable pouch designed to temporarily secure mobile devices like cell phones, smartwatches, and earbuds during events or in designated spaces like schools. The pouch uses a magnetic locking system, and once secured, the device inside cannot be accessed until the pouch is opened with a special unlocking device or at a designated unlocking station.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS ON OTHER SCHOOL MATTERS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE STUDENT BODY.
- IN ANY OR ALL MATTERS NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED IN THIS HANDBOOK, ANY ITEM BROUGHT ONTO SCHOOL PROPERTY MAY BE SEARCHED AT ANY TIME.
- SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE CONSEQUENCE FOR ANY DISCIPLINE VIOLATION BASED ON THE SEVERITY OF THE INFRACTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION. STUDENTS MAY SERVE A MAXIMUM OF **15 DAYS IN ISI (IN SCHOOL INTERVENTION)**. ONCE A STUDENT HAS REACHED THE 15 DAY MAXIMUM, ANY FUTURE OFFENSES WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION.
- STUDENTS WHO ACCUMULATE **8 DISCIPLINE REFERRALS** (to not include bus and tardy referrals) IN A SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE PLACED ON BEHAVIOR CONTRACT. VIOLATION OF THIS CONTRACT WILL RESULT IN A MANDATORY **10 DAY SUSPENSION** AND REFERRAL TO TRIBUNAL.

*****Alternative Programs** are available based on the needs of all students.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CODE OF CONDUCT

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The following Student Code of Conduct has been approved by the Sumter County Board of Education and is published in its official form.

VIOLATION(S) INDEX

- Academic Dishonesty
- Acts Of Bigotry
- Alcohol
- Arson
- Assault and Battery On School Employee
- Being In an Unauthorized Area
- Breaking and Entering-Burglary
- Bullying/Cyberbullying (Social Media)
- Campus Disturbances/Disorderly Conduct
- Classroom Disturbances
- Cell Phone/Electronic Devices/Banned Objectives
- Computer Trespass
- Disobedience, Disrespect, Misconduct, And/Or Insubordination
- Drugs
- Fighting/Battery
- Food Items
- Forgery/False Signatures/Forged Passes
- Gambling
- Homicide
- Inappropriate Display of Affection
- Indecent Exposure
- Kidnapping
- Leaving Campus without Permission / Skipping
- Misbehavior in ISI
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Non-Sanctioned Group Activities (Gang Related Activities)
- Obscenity
- Parking Violation
- Possession And/or use Of Explosive Compounds
- Prank
- Robbery
- Sexual Battery
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Misconduct
- Skipping
- Skipping After School Intervention/ISI
- Tardies To Class/School
- Terroristic Threats
- Threatening And/Or Intimidating Another Child
- Theft or Possession of Stolen Property
- Tobacco and Other Tobacco Products
- Trespassing
- Vandalism
- Vapors
- Violation of Student Dress Code/ID Violation
- Weapons

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

HONEST WORK. EARNED SUCCESS.



WHAT IS ACADEMIC DISHONESTY?

Academic dishonesty or academic misconduct is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise. It can include:



PLAGIARISM: The adoption or reproduction of original creations of another author (person, collective, organization, community or other type of author, including anonymous authors, AI, ChatGPT, etc.) without due acknowledgment.



FABRICATION: The falsification of data, information, or citations in any formal academic exercise.



DECEPTION: Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise—e.g., giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.



CHEATING: Any attempt to give or obtain assistance in a formal academic exercise (like an examination) without due acknowledgment.



BRIBERY: or paid services. Giving certain test answers for money.



SABOTAGE: Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books or willfully disrupting the experiments of others.



PROFESSORIAL MISCONDUCT: Professorial acts that are academically fraudulent equate to academic fraud.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE

Parent contacted and after school intervention

2nd OFFENSE

Parent conference, assigned 3 Blocks ISI

3rd OFFENSE

Parent conference, assigned 3 days ISI

4th OFFENSE

Parent conference, assigned 1 day OSS and student placed on a behavioral contract

5th OFFENSE

Parent conference, assigned 3 days OSS.



** IN ALL CASES

the student's grade will be penalized at the discretion of the teacher.



Integrity today protects your future tomorrow.



PANTHER PRIDE

Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching.

BE HONEST. BE RESPECTFUL. BE THE STANDARD.

ACTS OF BIGOTRY

RESPECT EVERYONE. OUR SCHOOL. OUR COMMUNITY. OUR PRIDE.



WHAT IS ACTS OF BIGOTRY?

While on school grounds or during school activities engaging in any verbal or physical acts of bigotry whether observed, overheard, or known to be fact, by a member of the school faculty.



OUR SCHOOL STANDS FOR RESPECT.

Discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance have no place in our school or community. Treat others with kindness, respect, and dignity at all times.

BE RESPECTFUL. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE PROUD.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE

Parent Conference and 3 Days ISI

2nd OFFENSE

5 Days ISI

3rd OFFENSE

10 Days OSS, Referral to Tribunal



INTEGRITY



RESPECT

A STRONG COMMUNITY STARTS WITH RESPECT FOR ALL.



RESPONSIBILITY



EXCELLENCE

ALCOHOL

MAKE GOOD CHOICES. PROTECT YOUR FUTURE.



OFFENSE

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any drug, alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, or intoxicant of any kind. *(Influence is defined as noticeably impaired behavior and/or obvious physical symptoms.)*



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**

10 DAYS SUSPENSION
FROM SCHOOL PENDING A TRIBUNAL.

Parent must provide proof of professional counseling prior to student return to school.



A STUDENT WHO VIOLATES THIS RULE WILL FACE SUSPENSION FROM ALL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ANY ELECTED/APPOINTED STUDENT BODY OFFICE FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR.



IN EVERY INSTANCE, **LAW ENFORCEMENT** WILL BE NOTIFIED.



ARSON

YOUR ACTIONS CAN IGNITE CONSEQUENCES.



OFFENSE

Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device.



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**

10 DAYS OSS

- ✓ Restitution
- ✓ Referral to Law Enforcement
- ✓ Referral to Tribunal



**PROTECT OUR SCHOOL.
PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.**

Damage to property harms everyone and will not be tolerated.



THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.

Respect property. Respect people. Respect our school.



**ARSON IS A SERIOUS CRIME.
IT WILL RESULT IN SEVERE CONSEQUENCES.**



ASSAULT / BATTERY / THREATENING ON SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

RESPECT OUR STAFF. PROTECT OUR SCHOOL. PROTECT OUR FUTURE.



OFFENSE

Engaging in an assault on and/or battery of any school employee on or off school property, if school-related. This includes touching, striking, pushing, or threatening the person, bodily or psychologically, and/or the property of any school system employee.



(GA Code 20-2-753)

Code Section (20-2-751.6) Relating to suspension policy for students committing acts of physical violence resulting in injury to teachers would be amended in: Subsection (a), (b), (c) to permit local boards to use disciplinary hearing officers or panels, in addition to tribunals, to hear cases involving students committing acts of physical violence resulting in injury to teachers.



CONSEQUENCES



MINIMUM
10 DAYS
OSS



Student will be referred to a tribunal hearing for long term suspension.



A formal complaint will be filed with the proper authorities.



VIOLENCE HAS CONSEQUENCES.
RESPECT IS NOT OPTIONAL.



WE SUPPORT OUR EMPLOYEES.
WE PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

BEING IN AN UNAUTHORIZED AREA

BE RESPECTFUL. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE.



OFFENSE

Being in areas designated as unauthorized.

Students are not to be in unauthorized areas of the school without written permission.



SAFETY. SECURITY. SUCCESS.

Being in the right place helps keep our school safe and our students successful.



CONSEQUENCES

1st
OFFENSE



Parent conference,
3 Days ISI and
meet with school counselor

2nd
OFFENSE



5 Days ISI

3rd
OFFENSE



3 Days OSS

4th
OFFENSE



10 Days OSS
Referral to Tribunal

80



MAKE RESPONSIBLE CHOICES.
YOUR ACTIONS. YOUR FUTURE.



PANTHER PRIDE
EVERY DAY.



RIGHT PLACE. RIGHT TIME.
RIGHT FUTURE.

STAY WHERE
YOU BELONG.
STAY ON TRACK.



BREAKING AND ENTERING- BURGLARY



RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. RESPECT OUR COMMUNITY. RESPECT THE LAW.



OFFENSE

Unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime.



PROTECT OUR SCHOOL. PROTECT OUR FUTURE.

Trespassing and burglary steal safety, trust, and resources from everyone.

MAKE GOOD CHOICES. THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



10 DAYS OSS



Referral to Tribunal



Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Authorities



INTEGRITY. RESPECT. RESPONSIBILITY.

These values guide our actions and build a better community.



PANTHER PRIDE

Strong students.
Stronger school.
Stronger future.



CRIMES HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

RESPONSIBLE CHOICES
LEAD TO A BETTER FUTURE.



BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING (SOCIAL MEDIA)

BE KIND. BE RESPECTFUL. BE RESPONSIBLE.



OFFENSE

Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm or emotional distress caused by repeated teasing, taunting, joking, name calling, etc.

- ✓ This includes cyberbullying, text message/chat threats, pictures and other electronic threats through social media platforms.
- ✓ Certain information transmitted via electronically may be considered as a form of cyberbullying.
- ✓ Students must never send inappropriate messages, pictures and/or videos using electronic devices or the internet/intranet at any time.
- ✓ Instances may be referred to law enforcement or juvenile authorities.



NOTE: Retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in a stronger disciplinary action.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, Parent Conference prior to release from ISI

2nd OFFENSE



3 Days OSS and Student placed on a behavior contract

3rd OFFENSE



Minimum 10 Days OSS, Referral to Tribunal



**BULLYING HURTS.
WORDS CAN HARM.
ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.**



**SPEAK UP. REPORT IT.
SUPPORT OTHERS.
MAKE OUR SCHOOL A SAFE
PLACE FOR EVERYONE.**



**BE SMART ONLINE.
BE RESPECTFUL.
BE A LEADER, NOT A BULLY.**



CAMPUS DISTURBANCES/ DISORDERLY CONDUCT

RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. RESPECT EACH OTHER. RESPECT LEARNING.



OFFENSE

Causing substantial disruption of learning opportunities, the normal operating procedure of the school, and/or threatening the safety of other students.



KEEP OUR SCHOOL SAFE AND FOCUSED.

Your actions affect everyone.
Make good choices and
protect the learning environment.



Georgia Code Section 20-2-1181 states that "it shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public school bus stop as established by local school boards of education. Any person violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature."



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



5 Days ISI
Parent conference
with counselor

2nd OFFENSE



3 Days OSS

3rd OFFENSE



5 Days OSS

4th OFFENSE



10 Days OSS with
Referral to Tribunal



***SUBSTANTIAL DISRUPTION MAY LEAD TO LAW ENFORCEMENT
REFERRAL AND/OR SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL***



**YOUR CHOICES.
OUR COMMUNITY.
OUR FUTURE.**



**RESPECT OTHERS.
FOLLOW THE RULES.
KEEP THE PEACE.**



**DISRUPTIONS
DISRESPECT OTHERS
AND HURT LEARNING.**



**PANTHER PRIDE
MEANS MAKING
RESPONSIBLE CHOICES
EVERY DAY.**

CLASSROOM DISTURBANCE

RESPECT THE CLASSROOM. PROTECT LEARNING.



WHAT IS CLASSROOM DISTURBANCE?

OFFENSE: Disrupting the learning environment.

COMMON EXAMPLES



EXCESSIVE TALKING

Talking during instruction or while others are speaking.



INTERRUPTING INSTRUCTION

Behaviors that stop or delay teaching and learning.



DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Making unnecessary noise, horseplay, or distracting classmates.



OFF-TASK BEHAVIOR

Refusing to focus on assigned work or distracting others from learning.



REPEATED DISRUPTIONS

Continuing disruptive behaviors after redirection by school staff.



Any behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be considered a **classroom disturbance**.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE

2 Days/Blocks ISI,
meet with school counselor,
parent conference prior to release from ISI

2nd OFFENSE

3 Days ISI

3rd OFFENSE

1 Day OSS

4th OFFENSE

3 Days OSS and
student placed on a behavioral contract

5th OFFENSE

10 Days OSS and
referral to tribunal hearing



IMPORTANT!

Students are expected to contribute to a positive learning environment by following directions, respecting classmates, and allowing everyone the opportunity to learn without interruption.



INTEGRITY



RESPECT



PANTHER PRIDE

A positive classroom makes success possible.
Do your part. Be the reason.

RESPONSIBILITY



EXCELLENCE



CELL PHONE/ ELECTRONIC DEVICES

STAY FOCUSED. STAY RESPECTFUL. STAY SUCCESSFUL.



OFFENSE

Limited electronic device use will be allowed at school in designated areas. Only school-issued or approved devices necessary for student learning will be allowed to be used during the school day.

The following personal electronic devices (PEDs) are not allowed to be used:

Cell phones, AirPod/like devices, IPAD/like devices, bluetooth headphones/earphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, toys, games, or other unapproved electronic communication devices.



Any material stored or saved on confiscated electronic devices/cell phones may be searched by school officials.

ALL CONFISCATED DEVICES that are not used for investigative purposes or picked up by a parent/guardian, WILL BE DISCARDED AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.



CELL PHONE POLICY:

Cell phones are not to be used during unauthorized times nor in unauthorized areas. Students are to obey the signs related to cell phone usage. Any violation will result in the consequences listed.



- ▶ No phone calls/video calls.
- ▶ No recording of videos.
- ▶ No taking pictures.
- ▶ No headphone/AirPod like device.
- ***** No social media or air dropping/sharing digital content.



Student cell phone usage is allowed when this sign is posted, with the exception of: phone calls, video calls, recording videos, taking pictures, headphone/AirPod like device, social media and air dropping/sharing digital content.



Student's phones or related devices should not be visible or used in any manner (including headphones/AirPod like devices, IPAD/like devices and smartwatches, smart glasses connected to phones, toys, games, or other unapproved electronic communication devices) in an area with this sign posted will result in the consequences listed.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



1 Block ISI, meet with school counselor, mandatory parent contact.

2nd OFFENSE



2 Days ISI, mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI.

3rd OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, cell phone will be placed in Yondr Pouch for 3 days following release from ISI, and mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI.

4th OFFENSE



4 Days ISI, cell phone will be placed in Yondr Pouch for 4 days following release from ISI, and mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI.

5th OFFENSE



5 Days ISI, cell phone will be placed in Yondr Pouch for 5 days following release from ISI, and mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI.

6th OFFENSE and after



10 Days ISI with SCHS Community Service, and cell phone will be placed in Yondr Pouch for the remainder of the school year.



*Recording/taking pictures of fights/altercations, students in compromising positions, and sharing obscene digital content, will result in the 6th consequence, possible suspension pending tribunal, and/or referral to law enforcement.



* Student's phone in Yondr Pouch: Any possession of an electronic device will result in the student being assigned to ISI with a mandatory parent meeting prior to release from ISI.



*Headphones/AirPods violation (any location) will result in after school intervention for each violation.



SUMTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

RESPECT THE RULES. RESPECT EACH OTHER. RESPECT LEARNING.



Sumter County High School will assume NO LIABILITY for lost or stolen phones and/or electronic devices. No searches will be conducted for any electronics reported lost or stolen.



COMPUTER TRESPASS



BE RESPONSIBLE. | BE RESPECTFUL. | BE TRUSTWORTHY.



OFFENSE

Unauthorized use
of a computer, computer
network, or data.



PROTECT OUR SYSTEMS. PROTECT OUR FUTURE.

Respect technology.
Respect others.
Respect the rules.



CONSEQUENCES

Penalty at the discretion of the administrator
which may include, but is not limited to loss
of computer privilege, ISI, suspension,
suspension for a tribunal hearing, and/or
referral to law enforcement officials,
or juvenile authorities.



Immediate restitution for any damages
is required.

(See Internet Acceptable Use Policy pages 43-49)



USE TECHNOLOGY THE RIGHT WAY.
IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.



THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK.
YOUR ACTIONS HAVE
CONSEQUENCES.



RESPECT. RESPONSIBILITY.
INTEGRITY.
THAT'S PANTHER PRIDE.

SECURE TODAY.
SUCCEED TOMORROW.



DISOBEDIENCE, DISRESPECT, MISCONDUCT, AND/OR INSUBORDINATION

(Following Directions, Horseplay, Refusal to obey faculty,
Inappropriate Behavior, Interruption Instruction)

RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. RESPECT EACH OTHER. RESPECT LEARNING.



OFFENSE

Acting in a rude, disobedient,
disrespectful and/or insubordinate
manner and/or refusing to identify
oneself correctly upon request.



GREAT STUDENTS MAKE GREAT SCHOOLS.

- ✓ Follow directions.
- ✓ Show respect.
- ✓ Make good choices.

YOUR CHOICES. YOUR SCHOOL. YOUR FUTURE.



CONSEQUENCES

*Blatant disrespect
may result in
immediate suspension

1st

OFFENSE



1 Day ISI

2nd

OFFENSE



3 Days ISI

3rd

OFFENSE



1 Day OSS

4th

OFFENSE



3 Days OSS

5th

OFFENSE



10 Days OSS with
Referral to Tribunal



RESPECT IS EARNED.
DISRESPECT HAS CONSEQUENCES.



BE RESPONSIBLE.
BE ACCOUNTABLE.



FOCUS ON LEARNING.
AVOID DISTRACTIONS.



PANTHER PRIDE
DO IT THE RIGHT WAY!



DRUGS:

Drug related, Drugs, Pseudo Drugs

STAY FOCUSED. • STAY SMART. • STAY DRUG FREE.



OFFENSE

Selling of or attempting to sell, distribution of, possession of, use of drugs or under the influence of drugs on school property or at a school function* (illegal, prescription, over the counter, or substances represented to be illegal drugs, inhalants, vapors, CBD products with or without THC and/or drug paraphernalia such as rolling papers, roach clips, pipes, etc.) Mere possession of inhalants such as glue, white-out, and/or rubber cement does not constitute a violation of this policy.



Georgia law, 16-12-191, provides that persons may be in possession of medical marijuana under limited circumstances defined in the law. Because of federal law parents should make other arrangements for administering medical marijuana at school and students should not possess the medical marijuana at school. Parents must administer medical marijuana off campus to the student.



Cannabis Oil (CBD) is permissible but it must be self-administered in the presence of the school nurse or designee. It must be housed in the nurse's office.



Federal law has NOT changed and possession of any form of marijuana is illegal. (Influence is defined as noticeably impaired behavior and/or obvious physical symptoms.)



*(In every instance, law enforcement officials and parents will be notified.)



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS pending tribunal with a drug education program.



RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. • RESPECT EACH OTHER. • RESPECT LEARNING.



FIGHTING/BATTERY

VIOLENCE IS NEVER THE ANSWER.

— RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. RESPECT EACH OTHER. RESPECT THE LAW. —



OFFENSE

It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to engage/encourage fighting. Fighting is a serious offense. Students may be charged with affray, disruption of public school, battery, and/or assault. If a student claims self-defense, it is the student's responsibility to prove that they acted in self-defense.



(Based on investigation and evidence presented administrative discretion of consequences.)



Georgia law, 16-12-191, provides that persons may be in possession of medical marijuana under limited circumstances defined in the law. Because of federal law parents should make other arrangements for administering medical marijuana at school and students should not possess the medical marijuana at school. Parents must administer medical marijuana off campus to the student.



Cannabis Oil (CBD) is permissible but it must be self-administered in the presence of the school nurse or designee. It must be housed in the nurse's office.



Federal law has NOT changed and possession of any form of marijuana is illegal. (Influence is defined as noticeably impaired behavior and/or obvious physical symptoms.)



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS and a mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS.

**2nd
OFFENSE**



Alternative School placement for remainder of school year.



NOTE: If a school system employee is hit, whether intentionally or not, during the process of breaking up a fight, the student will receive a minimum ten-day suspension. In addition, the student may be referred to a formal hearing.



NOTE: If a fight involves 2 students, any additional students that participate may result in a disciplinary tribunal at the discretion of the administration.



NOTE: A legal complaint may be filed with the proper law enforcement officials at the discretion of the administration.



MAKE GOOD CHOICES.
EVERY PANTHER. EVERY DAY.

VIOLENCE HAS CONSEQUENCES. THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.





FOOD ITEMS*

(Gum, candy, soft drinks, junk food)
(Unless school-approved)



OFFENSE

Unauthorized
possessing/chewing/
eating/selling/buying
of identified food items.



*NOTE:

In all instances, items
and/or money will be
confiscated and disposed of.



CONSEQUENCES

1st
OFFENSE



1 Day/Block ISI,
parent conference prior to
release from ISI

2nd
OFFENSE



2 Days/Blocks ISI

ALL OTHER
OFFENSES



3 Days ISI



MAKE GOOD CHOICES. ★ FOLLOW THE RULES. ★ RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. ★ BE RESPONSIBLE.



FORGERY/FALSE SIGNATURES/ FORGED PASSES

(False info, False signature)



OFFENSE

Forging checks, school or parent
documents, hall passes, absence
or check out excuses, bus passes, etc.



CONSEQUENCES:

Possible referral to
law enforcement.



CONSEQUENCES

1st
OFFENSE



3 Days ISI and parent conference
prior to release from ISI

2nd
OFFENSE



5 Days ISI

3rd
OFFENSE



1 Day OSS

4th
OFFENSE



3 Days OSS and student
placed on a behavior contract

5th
OFFENSE



10 OSS
Referral to Tribunal



HONESTY IS EXPECTED. ★ INTEGRITY IS ESSENTIAL. ★ YOUR CHOICES MATTER. ★ OUR SCHOOL. OUR FUTURE.

DON'T FAKE IT. MAKE IT RIGHT.



GAMBLING



BETTING ON THE WRONG THING CAN COST YOU.

MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Participating in illegal gambling, games of chance or possession of illegal gambling devices such as dice. Gambling on school property or while attending an activity under school supervision is not allowed.



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, parent conference prior to release from ISI

**2nd
OFFENSE**



5 Days ISI

**3rd
OFFENSE**



3 Days OSS and student placed on a behavior contract

**4th
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS and a referral to disciplinary tribunal



NOTE: All gambling devices and/or money will be confiscated and given to law enforcement or returned to parent.



* Law enforcement may be notified.



HOMICIDE



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, killing of one human being by another, killing a person through negligence.



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS, Tribunal referral, Notification of Law Enforcement.



NOTE: This offense is a serious violation of school policy. Law enforcement will be notified.



* Law enforcement may be notified.



INAPPROPRIATE DISPLAY OF AFFECTION



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Displaying inappropriate expressions of affection such as kissing, holding hands, embracing, and petting, etc., while at school or at any school sponsored activity.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, parent conference

2nd OFFENSE



5 Days ISI and parent conference

3rd OFFENSE



3 Days OSS

4th OFFENSE



10 Days OSS
Referral to Tribunal



NOTE: This behavior is a violation of school policy. Further consequences may apply based on severity and prior behavior.



**RESPECT YOURSELF. RESPECT OTHERS.
RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.**



INDECENT EXPOSURE



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Violating the school's dress code and/or removing one's own or another's clothing or acts which offend against commonly recognized standards of good taste.



CONSEQUENCES



Penalty at the discretion of the administrator which may include In-School Intervention, or suspension for a formal hearing.



**Indecent exposure is defined as removing clothing items, pulling down pants, wearing pants significantly below the waistline, or unzipping pants in public. Unzipping pants and/or pulling them down while wearing shorts underneath will be treated as indecent exposure.*



RESPECT YOURSELF. RESPECT OTHERS. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
Your actions today shape your future.



Report concerns to a trusted adult.
THIS IS HOW WE PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.



KIDNAPPING



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parents or legal guardian.



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS,
Referral to Tribunal,
Notification of
Law Enforcement.



NOTE: This offense is a serious violation of school policy.
Law enforcement will be notified.



RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
RESPECT EACH OTHER.
RESPECT LEARNING.



LEAVING CAMPUS WITHOUT PERMISSION



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

A student leaving school grounds without permission from the parent/guardian and the principal or designee.



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



3 Days OSS,
parent conference prior
to release from OSS

**2nd
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS,
Referral to Tribunal



NOTE: Leaving campus without permission is a serious violation of school policy.



STAY ON CAMPUS.
STAY SAFE. STAY ACCOUNTABLE.



MISBEHAVIOR IN IN-SCHOOL INTERVENTION (ISI)



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Acting in a rude, disobedient, disrespectful, and/or insubordinate manner, causing a disruption, use of profanity, and/or failure to follow rules while in ISI.



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



1 day OSS,
parent conference

**2nd
OFFENSE**



3 days OSS and a mandatory
parent conference prior to
students returning to school.
Students will be placed on
a behavior contract.

**3rd
OFFENSE**



10 days OSS and
referral to tribunal



NOTE: Misbehavior in ISI will not be tolerated.
Additional consequences may apply based on severity
and prior behavior.



**RESPECT YOURSELF. RESPECT OTHERS.
RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.**



MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Theft or attempted theft of
a motor vehicle (car, truck,
motorcycle, RV, dune buggy,
ATV, or anything that is
self-propelled.)



CONSEQUENCES

**1st
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS,
Referral to Tribunal,
and Referral to
Law Enforcement or
Juvenile Authorities



NOTE: Motor vehicle theft is a serious violation
of school policy and the law.



**OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.
RESPECT THE RULES. RESPECT EACH OTHER.**



NON-SANCTIONED GROUP ACTIVITIES (GANG RELATED ACTIVITIES)



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

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

Membership in or affiliation with gangs as defined above shall not be permitted. Wearing of any insignia, and/or uniforms, or other means of any gang identification, or using or making any signs, signals, or other means of gang communication or identification by any students or non-student visiting on the premises of any school facility shall not be permitted.

There is zero tolerance in the Sumter County School System for non-sanctioned group activities which are detrimental to a healthy and safe school environment.

1. No colors, bandanas, articles of clothing, or paraphernalia which promote or identify with a non-sanctioned group is acceptable. No extremes in dress and/or grooming will be permitted.
2. No recruiting, intimidating, initiating, or hazing will be permitted on school property and/or at school related functions.
3. No signs, symbols, gestures, songs, drawings, or writings which show an allegiance or affiliation with non-sanctioned groups will be permitted. Tattoos, body carvings showing allegiance or affiliation with non-sanctioned groups must be covered at all times.
4. Any items found on school property which display signs, symbols, gestures, songs, drawings or writings which show allegiance or affiliation with a non-sanctioned group will be confiscated by school officials and turned over to law enforcement agencies.
5. No student shall threaten to commit, or actually commit, any crime of violence or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another; cause the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, school bus, or other school facility, or otherwise disrupt the orderly operation of any activity on any school campus or school property in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or disruption.
6. Any student who urges, encourages, counsels, furthers, promotes, assists, causes, advises, procures, or abets any other students to violate any section or paragraph of this policy shall be deemed to have violated this policy.



Gang activity endangers our schools and our community.
REPORT CONCERNS TO A TRUSTED ADULT OR SCHOOL OFFICIAL.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



3 Days OSS, meet with school counselor, mandatory parent conference prior to student returning to school.

2nd OFFENSE



5 Days OSS and mandatory parent conference prior to student returning to school. Student will be placed on a behavior contract.

3rd OFFENSE



10 Days OSS, Referral to Tribunal, Referral to Law Enforcement.



**RESPECT YOURSELF. RESPECT OTHERS. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
TOGETHER, WE KEEP OUR SCHOOLS SAFE.**



Gang activity has no place in our schools.
Let's stand together for a positive, respectful, and safe learning environment.



OBSCENITY



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Using profane, vulgar, and/or obscene words or gestures, or improper dress, possession of pornographic material.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, mandatory parent conference prior to student release from ISI

2nd OFFENSE



5 Days ISI

3rd OFFENSE



3 Days OSS and mandatory parent conference prior to students returning to school. Students will be placed on a behavior contract.

4th OFFENSE



10 Days OSS with Referral to Tribunal



NOTE: If obscenity is directed toward any school system employee, consequences will result in a minimum of five (5) days suspension from school and may result in a formal hearing.



**RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
RESPECT OUR STAFF.
RESPECT EACH OTHER.
SUCCESS STARTS WITH RESPECT.**



PARKING VIOLATION



— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

Parking in a reserved or unauthorized area, parking without a permit, speeding, playing loud music, general safety violation, or other inappropriate behavior in the parking lots.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



\$5 parking violation fee

2nd OFFENSE



\$10 parking violation fee and possible suspension of parking privileges

3rd OFFENSE AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES



\$20 parking violation fee, possible permanent loss of parking privileges, and possible vehicle towing at owner's expense



**** ALL UNPAID PARKING FINES WILL BE ADDED TO THE STUDENT'S SENIOR DEBT.**



POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF EXPLOSIVE COMPOUNDS (LIGHTER/MATCHES)/ BANNED OBJECTS



— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

Carrying, possessing or having under such person's control while at school building, school function, on school property, on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school, ammunition of any type or explosive compound, (matches, lighter, explosives, fireworks, flammable incendiary devices), pepper spray/mace or similar objects. (GA Code O.C. GA. 16-11-127.1)
Punishment is subject to administrative discretion based on the severity of the offense.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, mandatory parent conference prior to student release from ISI

2nd OFFENSE



3 Days OSS and mandatory parent conference prior to students returning to school. Students will be placed on a behavior contract.

3rd OFFENSE



10 Days OSS and Tribunal Referral



NOTE: Possession or use of explosive compounds, lighters, matches, or banned objects is a serious violation and may result in additional consequences up to and including expulsion and legal action.



**SAFE SCHOOLS. STRONG COMMUNITY.
RESPECT THE RULES. RESPECT EACH OTHER.**



PRANKS

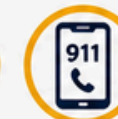


MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Causing substantial disruption of learning opportunities, the normal operating procedure of the school, and/or threatening the safety of other students. Destroying, vandalizing of, and/or threatening to destroy public or private property located on school premises or at a school function. (This may include such actions as use of odor altering devices, bombs, explosive devices, setting fires, pulling or vandalizing fire alarms, calling 911, the deliberate destruction or defacement of school property.)



SUBSTANTIAL DISRUPTION MAY LEAD TO LAW ENFORCEMENT REFERRAL



CONSEQUENCES

Consequences: Based on the severity of each situation the administrator will use their discretion for appropriate consequences. Which may include but not limited to the following listed below.

- Repayment for damages
- ISI or OSS depending upon the severity of the incident
- After school Interventions
- Student removal from Extracurricular/Graduation/Honors programs
- Clean up by students involved (unless outside service is required)
- Law enforcement referral for damages and battery/assault
- Holding of diploma



GEORGIA CODE SECTION 20-2-1181 states that "it shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public school bus stop as established by local school boards of education. Any person violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature."



ROBBERY



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Taking or attempting to take anything of value that is owned by another person or organization, under confrontational circumstances by force, threat, or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



10 Days OSS,



Referral to Tribunal,



Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Authorities.



ROBBERY IS A SERIOUS CRIME.
IT WILL RESULT IN SEVERE CONSEQUENCES.



OUR SCHOOL. OUR COMMUNITY.
SAFE, RESPECTFUL, AND FOCUSED ON LEARNING.



SEXUAL BATTERY



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Forcible sexual union against a person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will when the victim is incapable of giving consent because of age or mental incapacity, (Includes rape, attempted rape, fondling, indecent liberties, child molestation).



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



10 Days OSS,



Referral to Tribunal,



Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Authorities.



SEXUAL BATTERY IS A SERIOUS CRIME. IT WILL RESULT IN SEVERE CONSEQUENCES.



OUR SCHOOL. OUR COMMUNITY. SAFE, RESPECTFUL, AND FOCUSED ON LEARNING.



SEXUAL BATTERY IS NEVER OKAY.

RESPECT. DIGNITY. BOUNDARIES. WE ALL DESERVE TO FEEL **SAFE**.

*Speak Up.
We Listen.
We Help.*



SEXUAL BATTERY

is any intentional sexual contact without consent.

IT IS A CRIME. IT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

REPORT IT. GET HELP. SAVE LIVES.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual battery, tell someone you trust. **You are not alone.**



TALK TO AN ADULT

Teacher, Counselor, Coach, or Administrator



CALL GNSA
1-800-656-4673
Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault
24/7 Confidential



REPORT ANONYMOUSLY
Online at gnesa.org



IN AN EMERGENCY
CALL 911



YOUR VOICE HAS POWER. **SPEAK UP.**

WE BELIEVE YOU. WE WILL HELP.



Consent is **MANDATORY.**



Silence **HELPS NO ONE.**



Kindness **STARTS HERE.**





SEXUAL HARASSMENT



— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

Sexual harassment means unwanted sexually oriented words or actions that hurt or humiliate people. It causes tension for others. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or any member of the district staff to harass a student through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined below. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a member of the school staff to a student or when made by any student to another student or system employee constitutes sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's education.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic environment

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal harassment or abuse
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Repeated remarks to a person with
 - Sexual or demeaning implications
 - Unwelcome touching
 - Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.
- Sexual harassment is a kind of discrimination. It means that someone is treated differently because of his or her sex. It is behavior or words that:
 - ✓ are directed at a person because of his or her sex
 - ✓ are unwelcome, unwanted, and unwelcome
 - ✓ cause a person to feel uncomfortable or offended
 - ✓ create an environment that makes learning difficult
 - ✓ are pervasive and ongoing.

Any person who alleges sexual harassment by a staff member or student in the school district may complain directly to a principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, or other individual to receive such complaints. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment, grades, or job assignments. The right to confidentiality, both of the complaint and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated and immediate and appropriate correction or disciplinary action shall be initiated. Appropriate documentation shall be maintained on all allegations of sexual harassment. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion. Additionally, in all cases a report of sexual harassment will be provided to the Sumter County Board of Education to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the district to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined.



ZERO TOLERANCE: Sexual harassment is a serious violation of school policy and the law. It will not be tolerated.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



3 Days OSS,
meet with school counselor,
and mandatory parent
conference prior to student
return from OSS

2nd OFFENSE



10 Days OSS



Referral to Tribunal



Referral to
Law Enforcement



OUR SCHOOL. OUR COMMUNITY.
SAFE, RESPECTFUL, AND FOCUSED ON LEARNING.



SPEAK UP. GET HELP.
SAVE LIVES.



SEXUAL MISCONDUCT



— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



A student shall not engage in physical sexual activity on school property or at school sponsored events. A student shall not be in possession of any sexually oriented device or material.

All students should be aware of the consequences, including potential criminal penalties, of underage sexual conduct that can include criminal charges and the student being tried as an adult. Sexual offenses are prohibited with and against members of the same sex as well as members of the opposite sex. Students may not engage in consensual sexual acts on school grounds or at a school activity, function, or event when on or off school grounds. Sexual Misconduct is defined as amorous kissing or similar displays of affection; any form of sexual activity; or exposing one's intimate body parts or "mooning" to another student or adult. A student may be charged with Sexual Battery for intentionally making physical contact with the intimate parts of another person without the consent of that person. A student may be charged with Sexual Molestation for doing any immoral or indecent act to or in the presence of another person, without that person's consent, with the intent to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires of either the student or the other person. This includes forcing another person to make physical contact with the student's intimate body parts. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of abuse, sexual misconduct, or other inappropriate behavior is urged to immediately make a report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. Other sexual offenses include but are not limited to inappropriate sexually-based contact, public groping, inappropriate bodily contact, sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials, simulated sex acts, or engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or school activities.



CONSEQUENCES

1st OFFENSE



10 Days OSS



Referral to Tribunal



Referral to Law Enforcement
or Juvenile Authorities.

WHAT TEENAGERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX AND THE LAW?

18+



- If you are 18, you are considered to be an adult even if you are still in high school. Anyone younger than 18 is a "minor."
- "Sexting" is a crime. You and your friends can be charged criminally if there is a nude or partially nude photo of you on their cell phone or computer—even if you took the photo yourself. You can get into trouble, too, for sending it to them. Once you send the photo, you cannot control who else they share it with or where they post it.
- If you touch, slap or pinch someone's breast or bottom as a joke in school, it may not be a joke to that person. If the person you touch finds it offensive, the legal system will not take it as a joke either.
- If you are convicted of a sex offense, even as a juvenile, you will be required to register as a sex offender. You will have to notify the police every time you move, get a new job, or attend a new school.
- If you have consensual sexual contact with someone under the age of 16, you can be charged with statutory rape in juvenile court even if you are under the age of 16 as well. If your case is then transferred to adult court, you will be treated as an adult sex offender and subject to the same penalties as an adult.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF SCHOOL POLICY AND THE LAW. IT WILL RESULT IN SEVERE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND/OR CRIMINAL CHARGES.



OUR SCHOOL. OUR COMMUNITY.
**SAFE, RESPECTFUL,
AND FOCUSED ON LEARNING.**



SKIPPING

**SUMTER
PANTHERS**

— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during school hours except for illness or other providential cause, nor shall any student encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this rule.

Truancy, skipping class or required in-school activity out of class without valid permission, being in areas designated as unauthorized (students are not to be in unauthorized areas of the school without written permission) and/or being 15+ minutes late to class without written permission constitute skipping.



BE PRESENT.
BE PREPARED.



BE ON TIME.
EVERY MINUTE
MATTERS.



FOLLOW THE RULES.
STAY IN CLASS.
STAY ON TRACK.



RESPECT OUR
SCHOOL AND
EACH OTHER.



CONSEQUENCES

**1ST
OFFENSE**



3 Days ISI and parent conference
prior to release from ISI

**2ND
OFFENSE**



5 Days ISI

**3RD
OFFENSE**



3 Days OSS and student
placed on a behavior contract

**4TH
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS,
Referral to Tribunal



SKIPPING SCHOOL **HURTS** YOUR EDUCATION,
YOUR FUTURE, AND OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.



TARDINESS TO CLASS / SCHOOL

**SUMTER
PANTHERS**

— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

Tardiness is defined as (1) being late for school, or (2) late for class. Tardies accumulate on a nine-week basis. Tardiness occurs when a student is not in the classroom when the tardy bell sounds.

Students who are tardy to class will report to class and sign the tardy roster.

Students tardy to school (8:00 a.m.) will report to the office to sign in and retrieve a tardy slip excused/unexcused to submit to the teacher.

This will affect students' attendance for credit.



BE ON TIME.
EVERY DAY. EVERY CLASS.



BE PREPARED.
BE READY.



BE RESPONSIBLE.
BE RESPECTFUL.



CONSEQUENCES

**1ST
TARDY**



Warning

(Teacher must document on Tardy Log)

**2ND
TARDY**



Parent Notification

(Email, call, etc.)

**3RD
TARDY**



3 Days ISI

**4TH
TARDY**



5 Days ISI

**5TH
TARDIES**



3 Days OSS



ON TIME. EVERY TIME.
BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.



**SUMTER PANTHERS
EXPECT EXCELLENCE**

- Tardy Policy starts over each Nine Weeks
- Tardy Check - automatic lunch intervention
- Late to lunch intervention = additional day



TARDINESS TO CLASS / SCHOOL



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Tardiness is defined as (1) being late for school, or (2) late for class. Tardies accumulate on a nine-week basis. Tardiness occurs when a student is not in the classroom when the tardy bell sounds.

Students who are tardy to class will report to class and sign the tardy roster.

Students tardy to school (8:00 a.m.) will report to the office to sign in and retrieve a tardy slip excused/unexcused to submit to the teacher.

This will affect students' attendance for credit.



BE ON TIME.
EVERY DAY. EVERY CLASS.



BE PREPARED.
BE READY.



BE RESPONSIBLE.
BE RESPECTFUL.



ON TIME. EVERY TIME.
BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.



SUMTER PANTHERS
EXPECT EXCELLENCE

- Tardy Policy starts over each Nine Weeks
- Tardy Check - automatic lunch intervention
- Late to lunch intervention = additional day



CONSEQUENCES

**1ST
TARDY**



Warning

(Teacher must document on Tardy Log)

**2ND
TARDY**



Parent Notification

(Email, call, etc.)

**3RD
TARDY**



Office Referral:

Lunch intervention

**4TH
TARDY**



Office Referral:

Lunch intervention



TERRORISTIC THREATS TOWARDS SCHOOL OR STUDENT



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

O.C.G.A. 16-11-37(a) A person commits the offense of a terroristic threat when he or she threatens to commit any crime of violence, to release any hazardous substance, as such term is defined in Code Section 12-8-92, or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another or of causing the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation or otherwise causing serious public inconvenience or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.



Students charged with making a terroristic threat toward the school or students (verbally or via social media) may be permanently expelled or expelled for a specific period of time.



OCGA 20-2-690.1 clearly gives the school system the authority to expel a student, particularly when there is a threat to the safety and security of the school.



CONSEQUENCES

**1ST
OFFENSE**



3 Days OSS,

Students will be placed on a behavior contract.

**2ND
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS,

Referral to Tribunal



***(Law enforcement officials will be notified in all incidents)**



THREATS ARE NOT A JOKE.
THEY ARE A CRIME.
THEY WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.



BE SAFE. BE RESPECTFUL.
BE RESPONSIBLE.



THREATENING AND/OR INTIMIDATING ANOTHER STUDENT



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Threatening and/or intimidating another student: touching, pushing, or threatening the person bodily or psychologically.

Possible referral to law enforcement



BE RESPECTFUL.
BE RESPONSIBLE.



TREAT OTHERS THE WAY
YOU WANT TO
BE TREATED.



HELP MAKE OUR SCHOOL
SAFE AND POSITIVE.



CONSEQUENCES

1ST OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, and mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI

2ND OFFENSE



5 Days ISI, and mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI

3RD OFFENSE



3 Days OSS, mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS, and Student placed on a behavior contract.

4TH OFFENSE



10 Days OSS,
Referral to Tribunal



MAKE SMART CHOICES TODAY.
IT CAN CHANGE YOUR TOMORROW.



RESPECT EVERYONE.
RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.

BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.



THEFT OR POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Theft without threat, violence or bodily harm of public or private property located on school premises or at a school function.



Based on the value of the object, law enforcement may be notified.



Consequence may result in immediate suspension based on administrative discretion.



CONSEQUENCES

1ST OFFENSE



3 Days ISI*, meet with school counselor, mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI

2ND OFFENSE



3 Days OSS*, mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS, and Student placed on a behavior contract.

3RD OFFENSE



5 Days OSS*

4TH OFFENSE



10 Days OSS and
Referral to Tribunal*

*Possible referral to law enforcement officials or juvenile authorities.



HONESTY IS YOUR STRENGTH.
INTEGRITY IS YOUR CHOICE.



RESPECT PROPERTY.
RESPECT PEOPLE.

BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.





TOBACCO

**SUMTER
PANTHERS**



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

The possession or use of tobacco on school campus and/or school property is not permitted.

This includes all school related activities that met inside school facilities or sponsored by an organization of the school meeting elsewhere.

In addition, cigarettes, lighters, and matches should not be brought to school.



Possible referral to law enforcement and immediate suspension.



CONSEQUENCES

1ST OFFENSE



3 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, and mandatory parent conference prior to return from ISI

2ND OFFENSE



3 Days OSS, meet with school counselor, and mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS

3RD OFFENSE



5 Days OSS, mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS, and Student placed on a behavior contract.

4TH OFFENSE



10 Days OSS with a referral to tribunal



**YOUR CHOICES AFFECT
YOUR FUTURE.
CHOOSE WISELY.**



**RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
RESPECT EACH OTHER.**

**BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.**



TRESPASSING

**SUMTER
PANTHERS**



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Entering or remaining on a public school campus or School Board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry (includes students under suspension or expulsion, and unauthorized persons who enter or remain on a campus after being directed to leave by the chief administrator or designee.)



**No trespassing or loitering
is allowed.**



CONSEQUENCES

1ST OFFENSE



Notify Parents and Trespass Letter & possible referral to Law Enforcement

2ND OFFENSE



Referral to Law Enforcement & tribunal hearing



**RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
FOLLOW THE RULES.**



**SAFETY IS
EVERYONE'S
RESPONSIBILITY.**

**BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.**





VANDALISM



— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

Destroying, vandalizing of, and/or threatening to destroy public or private property located on school premises or at a school function.

(This may include such actions as use of bombs, explosive devices, setting fires, pulling or vandalizing fire alarms, calling 911, the deliberate destruction or defacement of school property.)



Immediate restitution for damages and possible referral to law enforcement. May result in immediate suspension.



CONSEQUENCES

**1ST
OFFENSE**



5 Days ISI, meet with school counselor, mandatory parent conference prior to release from ISI

**2ND
OFFENSE**



3 Days OSS, mandatory parent conference

**3RD
OFFENSE**



5 Day OSS

**4TH
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS, Referral to Tribunal



**RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
PROTECT OUR PROPERTY.**



**VANDALISM HURTS
EVERYONE.
CHOOSE RESPECT.**

**BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.**



VAPORS



— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE

The possession or use of a vape on school campus and/or school property is not permitted.

This includes all school related activities that meet inside school facilities or sponsored by an organization of the school meeting elsewhere.



**VAPING IS HARMFUL.
IT'S AGAINST THE RULES.**



CONSEQUENCES

**1ST
OFFENSE**



5 Days OSS with a mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS and powerpoint presentation on the dangers of vaping

**2ND
OFFENSE**



7 Days OSS with a mandatory parent conference prior to return from OSS (no powerpoint)

**3RD
OFFENSE**



10 Days OSS with a referral to tribunal



**RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.
PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.**



**YOUR CHOICES TODAY.
YOUR FUTURE TOMORROW.**

**BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.**





VIOLATION OF DRESS CODE

**SUMTER
PANTHERS**

— MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL. —



OFFENSE



Violation of dress code policy.



CONSEQUENCES

1ST OFFENSE



Sequester in ISI until clothes are changed/call parents

2ND OFFENSE



Sequester in ISI until clothes are changed/call parents;
Assign after school intervention

3RD OFFENSE AND AFTER



Sequester in ISI until clothes are changed/call parents;
Assign after school intervention
and SCHS Community Service



**DRESS FOR SUCCESS.
RESPECT THE STANDARD.**



**FOLLOW THE DRESS CODE.
SHOW PRIDE EVERY DAY.**

**BE HERE. BE READY.
BE YOUR BEST.**



PANTHER PRIDE



**DRESS FOR
SUCCESS.**



**LEARN WITH
CONFIDENCE.**



**RESPECT
YOURSELF.**



**RESPECT
OTHERS.**

Represent Panther Pride.



Every Panther helps create a
POSITIVE, SAFE, AND DISTRACTION-FREE
learning environment.





WEAPONS

(HAND GUN, KNIFE, OTHER, RIFLE, FIREARM)

SUMTER
PANTHERS



MAKE SMART CHOICES. FOLLOW THE RULES. RESPECT OUR SCHOOL.



OFFENSE

Possessing a dangerous instrument or weapon on school property or at a school event. A student shall not supply, possess, handle, use, threaten to use or transmit any weapon or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury and intended for use as a weapon, in a school safety zone, at a school building, school function, or on school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school. A "weapon," "tool" or "instrument" means and includes by way of illustration but is not limited to the following items:

1. Any handgun, firearm, rifle, shotgun or similar weapon; any explosive compound or incendiary device; or, any other dangerous weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121, including a rocket launcher, bazooka, recoilless rifle, mortar, or hand grenade.
2. Any hazardous object, including any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nunchuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or Taser. Such terms shall not include any of these instruments used for classroom work authorized by the teacher.

Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year expulsion. The Superintendent shall have the authority either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing to reduce the mandated one-year expulsion under circumstances where the one-year expulsion appears excessive to the superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment. Finally, in any tribunal decision appealed to the board of education, the board may reduce the mandated punishment but shall consider whether the superintendent and/or tribunal considered a reduction and any rationale in denying such a reduction.

Students who possess other weapons or hazardous objects as described in paragraph 2 will be subject to discipline as specified in the student code of conduct.



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student possesses a weapon as defined in paragraph 1, is involved in an assault using a weapon as defined in paragraph 2, or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus must report such violations to the principal or assistant principal of the school.
- If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that a report is valid, he/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney. The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any activity involving weapons.
- If a student turns in a weapon found, school authorities have to make an insightful determination as to whether the student is truthful in reporting finding a weapon as opposed to being in possession of the weapon. In cases where doubt exists, proof remains with the student. Please be reminded that the case law ruling from the State Board of Education is that intent must be determined in order to expel a student for possession of a weapon.
- Students will be given a copy of the Code of Conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to weapons and possible disciplinary actions.
- A student is deemed to be in possession of an illegal and/or banned item(s) under BOE policy when such item(s) is/are on the person of the student, in the student's possession or in the student's vehicle on school property or on property being used by the school system.



CONSEQUENCES

1ST
OFFENSE



10 Days OSS



Referral to Tribunal



Notification of
Law Enforcement

THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS ON OTHER SCHOOL MATTERS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE STUDENT BODY IN ANY OR ALL MATTERS NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED IN THIS HANDBOOK.



ANY ITEM BROUGHT ONTO SCHOOL PROPERTY MAY BE SEARCHED AT ANY TIME.



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE CONSEQUENCE FOR ANY DISCIPLINE VIOLATION BASED ON THE SEVERITY OF THE INFRACTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION.



STUDENTS MAY SERVE A MAXIMUM OF 15 DAYS IN ISI (IN SCHOOL INTERVENTION). ONCE A STUDENT HAS REACHED THE 15 DAY MAXIMUM, ANY FUTURE OFFENSES WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION.



STUDENTS WHO ACCUMULATE 8 DISCIPLINE REFERRALS (to not include bus and tardy referrals) IN A SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE PLACED ON BEHAVIOR CONTRACT. VIOLATION OF THIS CONTRACT WILL RESULT IN A MANDATORY 10 DAY SUSPENSION AND REFERRAL TO TRIBUNAL.





SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

A SUBSECTION OF THE
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



**SAFE TRAVEL.
RESPONSIBLE CHOICES.
PANTHER PRIDE.**



**SAFETY
FIRST**



**RESPECT
OTHERS**



**FOLLOW
EXPECTATIONS**



**REPRESENT
SUMTER**

TOGETHER, WE ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE.



Transportation Manual



Welcome to another great school year! The Sumter County School System Transportation Department is committed to providing every student with safe, reliable, and efficient transportation to and from school each day.

School buses are one of the safest forms of transportation available. Maintaining that level of safety requires a partnership between students, parents, bus drivers, school staff, and administrators. By working together and following established safety procedures, we can help ensure that every student arrives at school and returns home safely each day.

A school bus is an extension of the classroom. Students are expected to demonstrate the same positive behavior on the bus that is expected at school by following the Panther expectations:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe
- Follow Directions
- Show Panther Pride

These expectations apply while:

- Walking to and from the bus stop
- Waiting at the designated bus stop
- Boarding and exiting the bus
- Riding the bus
- Participating in school-sponsored transportation activities

Safe transportation begins before students ever step onto the bus. Students should arrive at their designated bus stop approximately five minutes before their scheduled pickup time. Arriving early helps eliminate the need to rush, reduces unsafe behavior near roadways, and allows students to board the bus safely and efficiently.

Parents and guardians play an important role by reviewing these transportation expectations with their children throughout the school year. Together, we can create a safe, respectful, and positive transportation experience for every student.



Panther Tip: *Safe rides begin with smart choices. Be on time, stay alert, follow directions, and help make every bus ride safe for everyone.*



School Bus Safety & Transportation Procedures

Before Leaving Home

Students should:

- Be ready for the bus each morning.
- Leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop **at least five (5) minutes before** the scheduled pickup time.
- Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Keep backpacks and personal belongings organized for easy boarding.

AT THE BUS STOP

While Waiting for the Bus

Students should wait away from the roadway at their designated stop. There should be no horse playing, pushing, or shoving while on the way to the bus stop or at the bus stop. Students who do not live on the same side of the road as the bus pick up must wait on their side of the road until the bus arrives. If your child must cross the road, he/she must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and wait for the driver to give instructions when it is safe for him/her to cross.

Students should:

- Wait in the designated bus stop area.
- Stay well away from the roadway until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Remain on the sidewalk or shoulder whenever possible.
- Stay with the group and avoid wandering.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
- Never engage in horseplay, pushing, shoving, running, or throwing objects.
- Wait on their own side of the road until directed otherwise by the driver.

BOARDING THE BUS

Students Boarding on the Same Side of the Road

Students must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the entrance door to open, and make sure that the red stop lights are flashing before approaching the bus to board. When more than one student boards at the same bus stop, they must line up in a single file line just prior to the bus' arrival. There should not be pushing, shoving or horse playing while boarding the bus. Students should always use the handrail when stepping onto the bus. Students should be seated in their seat as carefully but as promptly as possible and remain there until they reach their school or destination.

Students should:

- Form a single-file line.
- Wait patiently for the driver to open the door.
- Use the handrail while boarding.
- Walk—not run—onto the bus.
- Proceed directly to their assigned seat.
- Remain seated until arriving at school or their destination.



School Bus Safety & Transportation Procedures

Students Crossing the Road to Board

When a student must cross the road to board the bus, they must stand on their side of the road. Students must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the entrance door to open, and be sure the red stop lights are flashing before approaching the bus to board. Students must wait for the driver to give a verbal or physical sign that it is ok to cross the road. Even after all the above, students must quickly look both ways to be sure the road is still clear, and all other vehicles have stopped. Students must always cross in front of the bus and should always use the handrail when stepping onto the bus. There should not be pushing, shoving or horse playing while loading the bus. Students should seat themselves as carefully and as promptly as possible and remain seated until they reach their school or destination.

Students must:

- Remain on their side of the road until instructed by the driver.
- Wait for the driver's verbal or hand signal.
- Cross only in front of the bus.
- Stop and look left-right-left before crossing.
- Continue watching traffic while crossing.
- Never run across the roadway.
- Use the handrail while boarding.

WHILE RIDING THE BUS

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of every passenger. Students are expected to help maintain a safe environment by following all bus rules whether it is from home to school or back home or any school-sponsored trips.

Students should:

- Follow all driver directions immediately.
- Remain seated facing forward.
- Keep aisles clear.
- Keep hands, feet, arms, and objects inside the bus.
- Speak quietly.
- Respect other students and the driver.
- Help keep the bus clean.
- Never distract the driver.



SAFETY REMINDER

Never approach the school bus until **ALL** of the following have occurred:



The bus has come to a complete stop.



The entrance door has opened.



The red warning lights are flashing.



The driver gives you a signal that it is safe to board.





Your safety comes first—
always wait for the driver's instructions.

ARRIVING AT SCHOOL / DESTINATION

Unloading at School

Students should unload the bus in single file from front to back with no pushing, shoving or horseplaying while unloading the bus. Students should use the handrail as they depart the bus until both feet are on the ground. Students should check for an approaching bus on the door side before stepping off the bus while unloading.

Students should look both ways before crossing the traffic area and should clear this area as quickly and safely as possible. Students should never return to the bus without supervision of an administrator.

Students should:

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Exit one row at a time.
- Use the handrail.
- Walk away from the bus carefully.
- Watch for other buses and traffic.
- Proceed directly into the school building.
- Never return to the bus without permission from school personnel.

School Bus Safety & Transportation Procedures

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Loading the Bus at School

Students should wait for buses in a safe area designated by the school. The bus should come to a complete stop and your child must wait for the driver to open the entrance door before approaching the bus.

Students should look both ways before leaving the curb and crossing the traffic area to approach the bus. Students must watch for other buses pulling up on the right side while loading the bus. Students should line up in a single file in the order they arrive to the bus and should use the handrail to load. There should be no pushing, shoving or horse playing while coming to, while loading and while getting to their seat.

Students should be seated as carefully but as promptly as possible and remain seated until they reach their designated stop.

Students should:

- Wait only in designated loading areas.
- Remain orderly while waiting.
- Form a single-file line.
- Wait until the driver opens the entrance door.
- Use the handrail.
- Go directly to their assigned seat.
- Stay seated until reaching their designated stop.

UNLOADING THE BUS AT DESIGNATED STOP

Unloading the Bus at Home or Designated Stop

Students should unload the bus in a single file from front to back without pushing, shoving, or horseplay. They should use the handrail while exiting the bus until both feet are safely on the ground. After exiting, students should move immediately away from the bus, clear the roadway, and continue moving until they are safely away from the danger zone.

Students who live on the opposite side of the road must cross in front of the bus while the bus is stopped at their designated stop. Before crossing, students should stop at the front of the bus, wait for the driver's signal, and look both ways to ensure it is safe to continue. Once the roadway is clear, students should cross promptly and move completely out of the roadway.

After leaving the bus, students should go directly home and never return to the bus for any reason. Parents should remind their child never to retrieve an item that has fallen under or near the bus. Instead, the student should notify the bus driver for assistance.

Students who have parent permission to check their mailbox and whose mailbox is on the same side of the road as their home must first clear the roadway, wait for the bus to depart, and allow traffic to clear before returning to the roadside to check the mailbox.

If a student's home is on the opposite side of the road from the mailbox, the student must first cross to their side of the road while the bus is stopped at the designated stop. If the student has parent permission to check the mailbox, they must wait until after the bus has departed and all traffic has cleared before crossing back over the roadway to check the mailbox.

School Bus Safety & Transportation Procedures

RETURNING HOME

Unloading at Your Bus Stop

Students should:

- Exit carefully using the handrail.
- Move immediately away from the bus.
- Stay clear of the roadway.
- Go directly home after leaving the bus.

Students Crossing the Road After Unloading

Students must:

- Walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
- Wait for the driver's signal.
- Look left-right-left before crossing.
- Continue watching traffic while crossing.
- Cross quickly and safely.
- Never cross behind the bus.

Mailbox Safety

Students who have permission to check the mailbox should:

- Move safely away from the bus first.
- Wait until the bus has departed.
- Wait until traffic has completely cleared.
- Cross the roadway only when it is safe.



BUS NOTES



BUS PASSES:

If a student needs to ride a bus other than their assigned bus, they must bring a letter stating the following:



- ✓ Bus number
- ✓ Reason for bus pass request
- ✓ Parent name
- ✓ Signature
- ✓ Contact number



All bus pass requests should be
SUBMITTED TO THE FRONT OFFICE
no later than **10:30** a.m.



★ *Safe Riders. Smart Choices. Strong Panthers.* ★

School Bus Safety & Transportation Procedures

RAILROAD CROSSING

Railroad crossings require the bus driver's complete attention. Throughout history, more school bus fatalities have occurred at railroad crossings than at any other location involving school buses. In any collision between a school bus and a train, the train has the advantage due to its size, weight, and inability to stop quickly.

For this reason, it is essential that the driver be able to look and listen for approaching trains without distraction. Students can help by remaining completely silent whenever the bus stops at a railroad crossing.



BUS EVACUATION

Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the bus driver's control, your child may need to evacuate a school bus at some point during the school year. The decision to evacuate a bus is made solely with the best interests and safety of the students in mind. When an evacuation is necessary, students are moved to a safer location while waiting for assistance.

Most evacuations occur because of mechanical breakdowns that may leave the bus in an unsafe location. However, not every breakdown requires an evacuation. Several factors are considered before the decision is made to evacuate a bus. The location of an inoperative bus is the most important factor in determining whether an evacuation is necessary. Situations that may require an evacuation include, but are not limited to, a bus stopped next to a high-volume roadway, on a high-speed roadway, on or near a bridge, on a steep hill, in or near a curve, or near water.

Whenever an evacuation is necessary, students must follow the driver's instructions to safely exit the bus and relocate to a safe area away from the hazard. On the rare occasion that the driver is unable to direct the evacuation, older and more mature students may be asked to assist, provided doing so does not place them at any additional risk. Emergency evacuation procedures are practiced with all students during each new school year to help ensure they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

There are also several situations in which students may be transferred from one bus to another without it being an emergency. We ask that you periodically remind your child to remain calm whenever it becomes necessary to unload from one bus and board another, regardless of the reason. Students should always follow the "While Loading and Unloading the Bus" procedures outlined in this handbook.

All school buses are equipped with several emergency exits, including, but not limited to, the front entrance/service door, rear emergency door, emergency exit windows, and roof hatches. Whenever possible, students should always evacuate using the front entrance/service door. If the front entrance/service door is not available, the rear emergency door should be used. All other emergency exits should be used only when the front and rear exits are not practical or accessible.

When the rear emergency door is used, students designated by the driver may assist other students as they exit safely to the ground. During any evacuation, students must leave all personal belongings on the bus and exit in an orderly manner, beginning with those closest to the designated exit. After exiting the bus, students should move at least 100 feet away from the bus in the direction designated by the driver and away from the identified hazard or hazards.

School bus transportation is an important part of the educational experience in Sumter County. We appreciate your partnership and support as we work together to provide the safest and most efficient transportation possible for our most precious cargo—your children.



BUS EVACUATION

STAY CALM. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. STAY SAFE.



WHY EVACUATIONS HAPPEN



Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the bus driver's control, your child may need to evacuate the bus.

Evacuations are made with the best interests and safety of students in mind. Students are moved to a safer location while waiting for assistance.

WHEN EVACUATIONS MAY BE NECESSARY

Most evacuations occur due to mechanical breakdowns in unsafe locations. Not every breakdown requires an evacuation. The location of the bus is the most important factor.

LOCATION FACTORS MAY INCLUDE:



High-volume roadways



High-speed roadways



On or near a bridge



On a steep hill



In a curve



Near water

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

- ✓ Follow the driver's instructions at all times.
- ✓ Older, mature students may be asked to assist if the driver is unable, without adding risk.
- ✓ Emergency evacuation procedures are practiced with all students each school year.
- ✓ Students may be transferred to another bus for reasons other than an emergency.
- ✓ Always remain calm and follow the **"While Loading and Unloading the Bus"** procedures in this handbook.

EMERGENCY EXITS

All school buses have multiple emergency exits.



Front Entrance/
Service Door
(First Choice)



Rear Emergency Door
(Second Choice if front is not available)



Emergency Exit Windows
(Use only when front and rear are not practical)



Roof Hatches
(Use only when front and rear are not practical)

★ Use the **front entrance/service door** whenever possible. If not available, use the **rear door**. Other exits are used only when necessary.

DURING AN EVACUATION



Use the designated exit as directed by the driver. If the rear door is used, selected students may assist others to the ground.



Leave all personal belongings on the bus.



Exit in an orderly manner, starting with those closest to the exit.



Move at least **100 feet** away from the bus in the direction the driver indicates and away from the hazard.



WE WORK TOGETHER FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY

School bus transportation is an important part of the educational experience in Sumter County. We appreciate your partnership and support as we work together to provide the safest and most efficient transportation possible for our most precious cargo—your children.



**SAFE RIDES.
STRONG PANTHERS.
BRIGHTER FUTURES.**



KNOW THE PLAN. FOLLOW THE DRIVER. STAY SAFE.



High School Bus Discipline Procedures

The following rules are published for the safety, health, and welfare of all children who ride school buses. Parents are requested to impress on their children the importance of obeying the rules so that all students may be transported safely and comfortably. If a student is suspended from the bus, he or she may also be suspended from school depending on the severity of the offense. The school reserves the right to combine school consequences with transportation consequences. When a student is suspended from the school bus, he or she **CANNOT** ride any Sumter County School Bus. If a student is suspended and gets on another bus to or from school, then **three (3) additional** days will be added to the current suspension. **This rule also applies to activity buses and field trips.** If a student's bus suspension extends beyond the end of the school year, any remaining suspension days will be served at the beginning of the next school year before bus riding privileges are reinstated.

Students and parents/guardians are financially responsible for restitution for any damage to school bus seats or other school bus property. Bus riding privileges may be withheld until restitution has been made in accordance with district procedures.

BROUGHT BACK TO SCHOOL (No One Available at the Bus Stop)

Students who require supervision must have a responsible person available at the designated bus stop. If no responsible person is present to receive the student, the student will be returned to the school for safety reasons. Repeated occurrences may result in the following transportation consequences.

<u>OFFENSE</u>	<u>TRANSPORTATION CONSEQUENCE</u>
1st Offense	Parent/guardian conference with school or Transportation Department personnel and a signed acknowledgment of the "Brought Back to School" procedures and consequences.
2nd Offense	Three (3) school-day bus suspension.
3rd Offense	Five (5) school-day bus suspension.
4th Offense	Ten (10) school-day bus suspension.
5th Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Important Reminder: Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that a responsible person is available to receive students who require supervision at their designated bus stop. Returning a student to school is a safety measure intended to protect the child and should not be viewed as a disciplinary action.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, & INTIMIDATION

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, or any conduct that creates an unsafe or hostile environment on a school bus will not be tolerated. Students who engage in these behaviors are subject to both school disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the following transportation consequences.

<u>OFFENSE</u>	<u>TRANSPORTATION CONSEQUENCE</u>
1st Offense	Ten (10) school-day bus suspension and a mandatory parent/guardian conference with the Transportation Department before bus riding privileges are reinstated.
2nd Offense	Twenty (20) school-day bus suspension.
3rd Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the semester (minimum of 30 school days).
4th Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Administrative Authority: Severe or repeated incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, or threatening behavior that result in injury, involve hate-based conduct, constitute sexual harassment, include credible threats, or create a significant safety concern may result in the immediate loss of bus riding privileges, regardless of prior offenses. The Transportation Department and school administration reserve the right to adjust consequences based on the severity of the incident, student safety, and the circumstances involved.

High School Bus Discipline Procedures

ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES (Vapes / E-Cigarettes, etc.)

The possession or use of tobacco, electronic smoking devices, including vapes, e-cigarettes, vape pens, or similar devices, is prohibited on all school buses and at all school-sponsored transportation activities. Students who violate this policy are subject to both school disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the following transportation consequences.

<u>OFFENSE</u>	<u>TRANSPORTATION CONSEQUENCE</u>
1st Offense	Twenty (20) school-day bus suspension.
2nd Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the semester (minimum of 30 school days).
3rd Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Administrative Authority: *Severe or repeated incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, or threatening behavior that result in injury, involve hate-based conduct, constitute sexual harassment, include credible threats, or create a significant safety concern may result in the immediate loss of bus riding privileges, regardless of prior offenses. The Transportation Department and school administration reserve the right to adjust consequences based on the severity of the incident, student safety, and the circumstances involved.*

FIGHTING

Fighting, physical aggression, or any behavior that endangers the safety of students or the bus driver will not be tolerated. Students involved in fighting on a school bus are subject to both school disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the following transportation consequences.

<u>OFFENSE</u>	<u>TRANSPORTATION CONSEQUENCE</u>
1st Offense	Ten (10) school-day bus suspension and a mandatory parent/guardian conference with the Transportation Department before bus riding privileges are reinstated.
2nd Offense	Twenty (20) school-day bus suspension.
3rd Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the semester (minimum of 30 school days).
4th Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Administrative Authority: *Serious fighting that results in injury, involves multiple students, includes the use of an object as a weapon, or creates a significant safety risk may result in the immediate loss of bus riding privileges, regardless of prior offenses. The Transportation Department and school administration reserve the right to adjust consequences based on the severity of the incident, student safety, and the circumstances involved.*

High School Bus Discipline Procedures

GENERAL BUS RULES

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful, and responsible manner while riding a Sumter County School System bus. The following behaviors are prohibited because they interfere with the safe operation of the bus or create an unsafe environment for students and staff.

Driver Authority

Students shall not:

- Disrespect the bus driver or bus monitor.
- Refuse to obey the driver or any person in authority.
- Refuse to sit in an assigned seat.
- Refuse to answer the driver when asked a question.
- Give false or misleading information to the driver.
- Get off the bus at an unauthorized stop without written permission from the school.
- Refuse to follow the Railroad Crossing Rule.

Safety Rules

Students shall not:

- Extend any part of their body or any object outside the bus windows.
- Extend objects into the aisles or doorways.
- Stand, walk, play, horseplay, or kick while the bus is in motion.
- Board or exit the bus while it is moving.
- Engage in any other action that may distract the driver or interfere with the safe operation of the bus.

Food & Personal Items

Students shall not bring or consume:

- Water, food, gum, juice, or soft drinks.
- Toys of any size.
- School supplies or personal items outside of backpacks, except a book being read.

Electronic Devices & Other Prohibited Items

Students shall not use or possess:

- Mirrors.
- Laser pointers.
- Flash devices.
- Cameras.
- Lights.
- Reflective devices.
- Electrical communication devices or any device that may distract the driver.

Student Conduct

Students shall not:

- Write graffiti on the bus or damage bus property.
- Yell inside the bus or out of the windows.
- Wear sunglasses unless prescribed by a physician.
- Violate the district dress code while riding the bus.

Students who violate these expectations are subject to both school disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the following transportation consequences.

High School Bus Discipline Procedures

GENERAL BUS RULES CONTINUED

Students who violate General Bus Rules and expectations are subject to both school disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the following transportation consequences.

<u>OFFENSE</u>	<u>TRANSPORTATION CONSEQUENCE</u>
1st Offense	Needs Improvement Form issued to the student and parent/guardian.
2nd Offense	Five (5) school-day bus suspension.
3rd Offense	Ten (10) school-day bus suspension.
4th Offense	Thirty (30) school-day bus suspension.
5th Offense	Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Administrative Authority: *The examples listed above are not intended to include every possible bus misconduct violation. Any behavior that disrupts the safe operation of the school bus, distracts the driver, threatens the safety of students or staff, or violates district policy may result in transportation disciplinary action. The Transportation Department and school administration reserve the right to adjust consequences based on the severity of the incident, student safety, and the circumstances involved.*

MAJOR OFFENSES

The safety of all students and staff is the highest priority of the Sumter County School System. The following behaviors are considered Major Bus Offenses and will not be tolerated. Depending on the severity of the incident, these violations may result in the immediate suspension of bus riding privileges, referral to school administration, law enforcement notification (when appropriate), and/or a disciplinary tribunal.

Major Bus Offenses include, but are not limited to:

Violence & Threatening Behavior

- Physical assault or physical violence.
- Intentional spitting at or on another person.
- Profanity, threats, or abusive language directed toward an adult.

Weapons & Dangerous Items

- Possession of a dangerous instrument, firearm, weapon, or any object used as a weapon.

Fire & Arson

- Possession or ignition of lighters, matches, combustible materials, flammable materials, fireworks, or similar items.
- Arson or the unlawful and intentional damage to real or personal property by fire.

Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco

- Smoking, vaping, dipping, the use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or related products and paraphernalia.

Sexual Misconduct

- Sexual misconduct, including inappropriate sexual contact or fondling.
- Sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual comments, gestures, or other forms of sexual misconduct.

Property Crimes

- Theft of school property or personal property.
- Vandalism or intentional damage to school or personal property.

Harassment & Discrimination

- Racial slurs or other discriminatory language or conduct.

High School Bus Discipline Procedures

MAJOR OFFENSES CONTINUED

Students who commit a Major Bus Offense are subject to both school disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the following transportation consequences:

Minimum Consequence

- Ten (10) school-day bus suspension pending administrative investigation.

Possible Additional Consequences

Depending on the severity of the offense, students may also receive one or more of the following:

- Referral to a disciplinary tribunal.
- Long-term suspension of bus riding privileges.
- Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the semester.
- Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.
- Referral to law enforcement when required or appropriate.

Administrative Authority: Because every incident is unique, the Transportation Department and school administration reserve the right to impose consequences that are more severe than the minimum consequence when warranted by the seriousness of the offense, the level of danger created, the student's disciplinary history, or applicable Board policy. Nothing in this schedule limits the district's authority to impose an immediate suspension of bus riding privileges pending investigation or to recommend a disciplinary tribunal.



Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

The safety of our students is our highest priority. Please review the Safe Student Riding Instructions with your child before the school year begins and continue to discuss these expectations throughout the year. Your partnership helps ensure a safe and positive transportation experience for every student. After reviewing the Transportation Manual, please sign and return the acknowledgment form below to your child's school.



SECTION

9



FAMILIES *as* PARTNERS

— *Together We Support. Together We Succeed.* —

When families and schools work together, students thrive. We value our partnerships with families and recognize that you are your child's first and most important teacher.



STAY CONNECTED

Keep in touch through school communications, meetings, and events. We're better together.



BE INVOLVED

Join in school activities, volunteer, and support your child's learning at home.



WORK TOGETHER

Communicate openly with teachers and staff to support your child's growth and success.



SUPPORT SUCCESS

Encourage good habits, attendance, and positive choices every day. Small actions matter.



OUR COMMUNITY

We're building a stronger school community where everyone belongs.



SHARED GOAL

Our shared goal is simple: every student learning, growing, and thriving.

HOME OF THE *Panthers!*



LEARN • LEAD • BELONG • SUCCEED



Families as Partners



Together, We Help Every Student Thrive

At Sumter County School System, we believe that student success is strongest when schools and families work together as partners. Parents, guardians, caregivers, and families play a vital role in supporting learning, encouraging positive behavior, and helping students reach their full potential.

This partnership extends beyond the classroom. Staying informed, participating in school activities, maintaining regular communication with teachers, and being actively involved in your child's education all contribute to greater academic achievement, improved attendance, and a more positive school experience.

This section provides important information and resources to help families stay connected and engaged, including:

- **Parent Portal** for monitoring grades, attendance, assignments, and student information.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** to discuss academic progress and set goals for success.
- **Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO/PTA)** that strengthen the connection between home and school through volunteerism and school events.
- **School Councils** that provide families and community members an opportunity to share ideas and support school improvement.
- **Volunteer Opportunities** that allow parents and community members to make a meaningful difference in our schools.
- **Communication Tools** such as phone calls, emails, newsletters, school websites, social media, and district messaging systems to keep families informed.
- **Report Cards and Progress Reports** that provide regular updates on student achievement and academic growth.
- **School Choice and Educational Options** available to eligible families in accordance with district and state guidelines.
- **Family Engagement Opportunities**, including workshops, family nights, celebrations, performances, and other events designed to strengthen the partnership between home and school.

When families and schools communicate openly, support one another, and share a common commitment to student success, students are more confident, more engaged, and better prepared for the future.

Together, we create schools where every student is known, supported, challenged, and empowered to succeed.



Panther Tip: *Stay Connected. Stay Informed. Stay Involved. Checking the Parent Portal regularly, attending school events, communicating with your child's teachers, and participating in school activities are some of the most powerful ways to support your child's success. Together, we are building a stronger future—one Panther at a time.*

Classroom Visitation

The Sumter County School System values family engagement and welcomes parents, guardians, and approved visitors to our schools. We encourage families to become familiar with our schools and support their child's educational experience through appropriate involvement.

To ensure a safe, secure, and productive learning environment, the following procedures apply to all visitors:

- All visitors must report to the school's Front Office immediately upon entering the building.
- A valid photo identification may be required, and all visitors must obtain and wear an official Visitor's Pass while on campus.
- Parents, guardians, and parent advocates wishing to observe their child's classroom must schedule the visit in advance with the school administration. Classroom observations are subject to district procedures and may be limited to minimize disruption to instruction.
- Visitors may not interrupt instruction or engage in conversations with teachers during instructional time. Conferences with teachers should be scheduled before or after the school day or during the teacher's planning period.
- Students will not be called out of class to receive personal deliveries except in cases of emergency or as approved by school administration.
- Visitors may be escorted by the principal, an administrator, or the administrator's designee while on campus.
- Individuals who enter school property without authorization, fail to check in through the Front Office, or remain on campus without permission may be considered trespassing and may be subject to removal or other legal action.

Our goal is to provide meaningful opportunities for family involvement while protecting instructional time and maintaining a safe learning environment for all students and staff.



Panther Tip: *A successful school-home partnership respects both learning and safety. Schedule classroom visits in advance, check in through the Front Office, and wear your visitor badge at all times while on campus.*

Communication Couriers

Each student will receive a Communication Courier (weekly folder) that is sent home every Wednesday with important school information, including assignments, progress reports/report cards, projects, permission forms, and school correspondence.

Parents and guardians are asked to review the contents, sign the folder, and return it to the student's homeroom teacher on the next school day.

Students must use their assigned Communication Courier for all school-home communication.

Replacement Fee: A \$5.00 fee will be charged for lost Communication Couriers.



Panther Tip: *Check it. Sign it. Return it. Reviewing your child's Communication Courier each week is one of the easiest ways to stay connected to their education.*

Digital Citizenship

In accordance with Georgia Senate Bill 351 (SB 351), Sumter County Schools provides annual instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, responsible technology use, and cyberbullying prevention. The district has adopted Parent ProTech as its official digital citizenship program. Parent ProTech equips students with age-appropriate lessons on topics such as:

- Online safety
- Cyberbullying prevention
- Digital footprints
- Healthy screen time habits
- Responsible technology use

Parents and guardians are encouraged to create a free Parent ProTech account to access videos, device guides, and other resources that support safe technology use at home.

Getting Started

1. Visit www.parentprotech.com.
2. Select Sign Up and choose Sponsored User.
3. Select Sumter County Schools and your child's school.
4. Create your account and add your student(s).
5. Submit your registration and begin exploring the available resources.

Note: Families with children attending multiple Sumter County schools only need one Parent ProTech account. Together, families and schools can help students become safe, responsible, and respectful digital citizens.



Panther Tip: *Talk with your child about their online life as often as you talk about their school day. Open communication is one of the best ways to promote safe and responsible technology use.*

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal provides parents, guardians, and students with secure, 24/7 access to important student information. Families are encouraged to check the Parent Portal regularly to stay informed and monitor student progress. Through the Parent Portal, you can view:

- Grades and assignments
- Attendance
- Class schedules
- Unofficial transcripts
- Student fees and holds
- Other important student information

To access the Parent Portal, visit www.sumterschools.org/parents, click the Parent Portal icon, and follow the login instructions.



Panther Tip: *Check the Parent Portal regularly. Staying informed about your child's grades, attendance, and assignments is one of the best ways to support academic success.*

Parent Right to Know Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals as of 7/1/2026

Dear Parents,

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

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

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher and/ or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact to be announced Ms. Calandra Parker at 229-924-3653.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Regular communication between parents and teachers is essential to student success. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in at least two parent-teacher conferences each school year to discuss academic progress, behavior, and ways to support learning at home.

Parents may request a conference at any time by contacting the school or their child's teacher. To minimize interruptions to instruction, conferences must be scheduled in advance. Teachers are available for conferences during their planning period, after 3:30 p.m., or at another mutually agreed-upon time. When needed, the school counselor may assist in scheduling a conference.



Panther Tip: *Don't wait for a report card. Regular communication with your child's teacher is one of the most effective ways to support academic success.*

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) plays an important role in supporting our schools, students, and staff. Parents, guardians, and family members are encouraged to become active participants by attending meetings, volunteering, and supporting school programs and events.

Working together through the PTO helps strengthen the partnership between home and school and enhances opportunities for all students.



Panther Tip: *Get involved! Even a small amount of time can make a big difference in your child's school experience and our school community.*

Report Cards & Progress Reports

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine-week grading period, and progress reports are sent home midway through each grading period (approximately every 4½ weeks) to keep families informed of student progress. Parents and guardians are encouraged to review these reports carefully and contact the school if they have questions or concerns. If a student is experiencing academic difficulty or is failing one or more classes, parents should schedule a conference with the student's teacher(s) to discuss strategies for improvement.

Parents will receive formal notification if their child is in danger of being retained at the end of the first semester or the third nine-week grading period. A parent-teacher conference will be scheduled to review the student's progress and develop a plan for success.



Panther Tip: *Review report cards and progress reports together. Celebrating successes and addressing concerns early helps students stay on track for academic success.*

School Choice / Intradistrict School Choice

As of June 30, 2012, there will no longer be a Public School Choice transfer option under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as reauthorized under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and local educational agencies (LEAs) will no longer be required to implement Choice or pay for Choice transportation as implemented under the ESEA.

In November 2011, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), submitted to the United States Department of Education (USED), a flexibility waiver requesting flexibility through ten ESEA requirements and their associated, regulatory, administrative and reporting requirements. One of the ten requested waivers directly affects the Public School Choice transportation under ESEA.

Any student that has previously transferred to another school by exercising the ESEA Choice must be allowed to attend that school until they complete the school's highest grade; however, the LEA is no longer required to pay for the students' transportation cost during the duration of the student's attendance at their current CHOICE school. The LEA may continue to pay for CHOICE transportation for students, only if the LEA chooses to do so.

However, parents will still have the Choice transfer option under House Bill 251: The Quality Basic Education Act; Intra-District School Choice. House Bill 251 allows parents of students enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school to enroll in a school other than the assigned school that is located within the school district, if classroom space is available after the assigned students of that district have been enrolled. Under House Bill 251, transportation will not be paid for by the district. The parent shall assume the responsibility and cost of transportation of the student to and from the school. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Federal Programs at (229) 931-8525.



Panther Tip: Get involved! Serving on your school's School Council is a great way to help shape the future of your school and support student success.

School Council

School councils are created to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents and community into the school-based decision-making process. Their purpose is to help the board of education develop and nurture participation, bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns, and share ideas for school improvement.

The management and control of the public schools of this district are the responsibility of the Sumter County Board of Education. The instructional and administrative leader of each school is the principal. School councils provide advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses. By law, the school council is composed of at least two parent members, two teacher members, two business members, and the principal.



Panther Tip: Get involved! Serving on your school's School Council is a great way to help shape the future of your school and support student success.

Shout Point

Shout Point Telephone System is our automatic student/parent/staff information center. Parents can be notified of: absences, homework assignments, schedule of school events, invitation to meetings, cancellations of school, and report card announcements. Parents and students can instantly access information from any touch-tone phone. Messages for individual staff members can also be left on voice mail. Additional information will be sent home.



Panther Tip: Keep your contact information up to date to ensure you receive important school notifications in a timely manner.

Telephone Messages

Students will not be allowed to use the school telephone except in cases of emergency. Students will not be called out of class to the telephone. Messages for students will be accepted in cases of emergency. It is greatly appreciated when parents refrain from calling their children or the teachers out of their room for telephone calls during school hours. However, allowances are made in times of emergencies. Students will NOT be called to the office for non-emergency visits.



Panther Tip: Help us protect learning time. Make plans before the school day begins whenever possible, and reserve phone calls and messages for emergencies.

Video and Audio Recording & Photography

Students may be photographed, audio recorded, or video recorded during the school day or while participating in school-sponsored activities for educational, instructional, or school-related purposes.

Parents or guardians who do not wish for their child to be photographed, audio recorded, or video recorded should notify the school in writing at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment.



Panther Tip: *Keep your preferences current.* If your family's media permissions change during the school year, please notify your child's school as soon as possible.

Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in supporting student learning and school success. Parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged to share their time and talents by assisting with school programs, classrooms, events, and other activities.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact your school's principal for information about volunteer opportunities and any required approval procedures.



Panther Tip: *Every volunteer makes a difference! Your time, talents, and support help create a stronger school community for all students.*



TOGETHER,
*we inspire. we support.
we make a difference.*



Thank you for being a vital part of our school community! ♥

*Our Community.
Our Commitment.
Our Future.*



SECTION

10



SCHOOL POLICIES

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Policies and Procedures

- ✓ Safe Environment
- ✓ Student Rights
- ✓ Responsibilities
- ✓ Legal Compliance
- ✓ Fair Treatment

POLICIES AND LEGAL NOTICES

— Clear Policies. Strong Protection. Shared Responsibility. —

This section provides important information about the policies, procedures, and legal rights that support a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all students and families.



SCHOOL POLICIES

Understand the rules and procedures that guide daily operations and student conduct.



STUDENT RIGHTS

Know your rights under federal and state laws that protect students and families.



SAFETY & SECURITY

Information on school safety, emergency procedures, and reporting concerns.



EQUAL ACCESS

Our commitment to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students.



LEGAL NOTICES

Important notices and disclosures required by law and school district policy.

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Policies & Legal Notices

The policies and legal notices in this section are designed to promote a safe, equitable, and well-managed learning environment while ensuring compliance with federal and state laws, State Board of Education rules, and Sumter County School System Board policies. These guidelines help protect the rights, responsibilities, and well-being of students, families, and staff.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to review this section carefully and discuss these expectations with their child. Questions about any policy or legal notice may be directed to your child's school or the appropriate district office.

Together, we can ensure every student learns in a safe, respectful, and legally compliant school environment.



Panther Tip: *Stay informed. Knowing your rights, responsibilities, and district policies helps create a positive partnership between home and school.*

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Perkins Act of 1998); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Students, parents, employees and the general public are hereby notified that the Sumter County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.

The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the school system's effort to implement this nondiscriminatory policy:

Vamee Mallineni & Brian Simon
Sumter County Board of Education
100 Learning Lane
Americus, Georgia 31719
(229) 931-8500

COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972, THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT, THE HATCHAMENDMENT, AND THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES

It is the intent of the Sumter County School District to comply with the above referenced federal statutes and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, in terms of employment, programs and other related activities in the school district. Part of our compliance effort is to periodically apprise employees, parents and students of the existence of these statutes and regulations, and our intent to carry out the mandates thereof.

Coverage

The final regulations cover all operations of the Sumter County School District with the exception that the Vocational Education Guidelines cover vocational programs only.

Treatment

All schools must treat students and employees without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability. The regulations cover the following areas:

- Access to and participation in course offerings and extracurricular activities, including campus organizations and competitive athletics.
- Eligibility for and receipt or enjoyment of benefits and services.
- Use of facilities.

A recipient school district may not participate with single-sex organizations other than the following: Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; YWCA; YMCA; and certain voluntary youth services organizations that meet the provisions of Title IX.

Health Education

Classes in health education may not be offered separately on the basis of sex except that separate sessions for boys and girls are permissible during times when materials and discussion deal exclusively with human sexuality.

Physical Education

Sex segregated physical education classes are prohibited. The regulations allow separation by sex within physical education classes during competition in wrestling, boxing, basketball, football, and other sports involving bodily contact.

Athletics

Where selection is based on competitive skill or the activity involved is a contact sport, athletics may be provided through separate teams for males and females, or through a single team open to both sexes. If separate teams are offered, they must provide equal opportunity – comparable facilities, equipment, etc. – but equal aggregate expenditures are not required.

Organizations

The school district may not provide significant assistance, in connection with its education program or activity, to any organization, agency, or person which discriminates on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age or disability.

Counseling Materials

Counseling materials developed and disseminated in keeping with these regulations must exclude references which portray biases toward race, sex, color, national origin, age, religion or disability.

Employment

The regulations apply to nondiscriminatory policies and practices including both full-time and part-time employment and students. Specifically, the regulations cover:

- Employment criteria;
 - Recruitment;
 - Compensation;
 - Job classification and structure;
 - Fringe benefits;
 - Marital or parental status; Effect of state or local law or other requirements;
 - Advertising;
 - Pre-employment inquiries.
- Employment coverage generally follows the policies of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are: The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the Sumter County School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task, (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Ave, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4605

The school district has designated the following types of personally identifiable information about students as "Directory Information." Directory information may be released by the school district without the consent of a parent or student.

- Student's name, address and telephone listing;
- Date and place of birth;
- Dates of attendance;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- Diploma awarded.

A parent or eligible student who desires that the school district not release any or all of the directory information about a student must notify the school district to that effect in writing addressed to Sumter County School District, Attention: Director of Human Resources, 100 Learning Lane, Americus, Georgia 31719 no later than September 2.

Research

All instructional materials, including teachers' manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis or evaluation conducted by or for the school district, shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students involved in the survey, analysis or evaluation.

No student shall be required to submit to a survey, analysis or evaluation which reveals any of the following information without prior consent of the student (if an adult or an emancipated minor) or of the student's parent or guardian: Information concerning:

- political affiliations,
- mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to students or their families,
- sexual behavior and attitudes,
- illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior,
- critical appraisals of other individuals with whom students have close family relationships,
- legally recognized privileges and analogous relationships such as those with lawyers, physicians and ministers, or income (other than that required by law) to receive eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

Compliance

The Director of Human Resources has been named to coordinate the school district's activities in complying with all regulations and purposes cited above.

Grievances

If employees or students think that they have been discriminated against because of their sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, or disability, they should contact:

Federal Regulations Compliance Officer Sumter County School District
100 Learning Lane
Americus, Georgia 31719
(229) 931-8500

OR

The Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education 101 Marietta Towers
Atlanta, GA 30323
(404) 221-2352

Contact should be made in writing stating the nature of the grievance and indicating how you may be reached in order to schedule a conference.

Title IX Notice

The Sumter County School System is committed to providing a learning and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation on the basis of sex, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex in all educational programs and activities, including athletics, academic programs, employment, admissions, and extracurricular activities. This protection extends to all students, employees, applicants, and other individuals participating in district programs.

The District does not tolerate sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or other forms of sex-based discrimination. Reports of suspected Title IX violations will be addressed promptly, fairly, and in accordance with applicable federal regulations and Board policy.

Any student, parent, employee, or community member who believes they have experienced or witnessed sex-based discrimination or harassment is encouraged to report the concern immediately to the school principal.

Additional information regarding Title IX rights, reporting procedures, grievance procedures, supportive measures, and Board policies is available on the district website or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

Water Safety Notice

The Sumter County School System encourages all families to make water safety a priority. Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental injury and death among children, and learning basic water safety skills and swimming can help prevent tragedies.

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-779.4, Georgia public schools provide families with information each year regarding the importance of water safety education and swimming lessons. School systems are required to share this information but are not required to provide swimming lessons or excuse students from school to attend water safety courses.

Water Safety Tips for Families

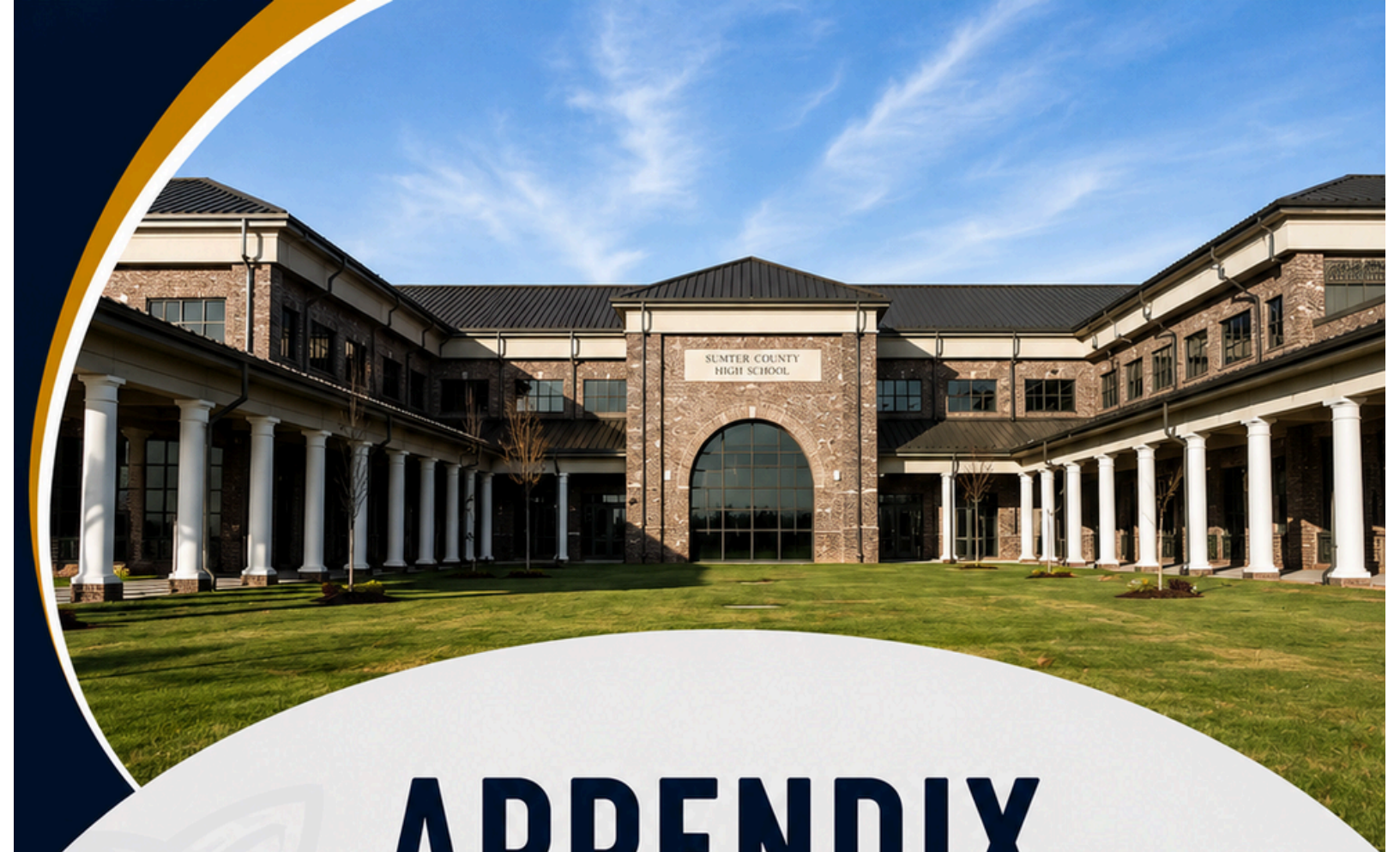
- Never leave children unattended in or around water—even for a moment.
- Designate a responsible adult to actively supervise children during all water activities.
- Enroll children in age-appropriate swimming lessons and water safety courses whenever possible.
- Children and inexperienced swimmers should wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when boating or participating in open-water activities.
- Teach children to ask permission before entering or going near any body of water.
- Learn CPR and basic water rescue skills to be prepared for emergencies.
- Avoid distractions such as cell phones while supervising children near water.

Community Water Safety Resources

Families are encouraged to explore water safety education and swimming lessons offered by local organizations, including:

- Local YMCA programs
- American Red Cross swimming and water safety courses
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources boating safety programs
- Local parks and recreation departments, where available
-

Additional water safety information is available from the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.



APPENDIX

Resources. Information. Support.



The appendix includes additional resources, forms, and important information to support students, families, and our school community.



FORMS

Helpful forms and templates for student and family use.



RESOURCES

Community and school resources to support learning and well-being.



REFERENCE MATERIALS

Additional information to guide understanding and decision-making.



SUPPORT SERVICES

Contacts and services available for students and families.



ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Important documents and notices for your reference.





SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM AFFIRMATION OF KNOWLEDGE

*One Team.
One Purpose.
One Sumter.*

2026–2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Please read, sign and return this form to your child's school.



STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____

Homeroom/Advisory Teacher: _____



STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read the **2026–2027 Sumter County School System Student Handbook**. I understand that it contains important information regarding school expectations, student conduct, safety, technology and digital learning, attendance, and student rights and responsibilities.

I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with these expectations and to follow all school and district policies.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____



PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read the **2026–2027 Sumter County School System Student Handbook**.

I understand that the handbook contains important information regarding:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Student Code of Conduct | ☐ Transportation |
| ☐ Attendance Expectations | ☐ Student Rights & Responsibilities |
| ☐ Technology & Digital Learning | ☐ District Policies and Procedures |
| ☐ Student Health & Safety | |

I understand that school board policies and administrative procedures may be revised during the school year. The most current policies are available through the Sumter County School System and may supersede information printed in this handbook.

I have reviewed the handbook with my child and understand that it is our shared responsibility to support a safe, respectful, and successful learning environment.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____



CLUB PARTICIPATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand that information regarding school-sponsored clubs and organizations has been made available to me.

Please select one:

- ☐ **My child may participate** in school-sponsored clubs and organizations, provided all eligibility requirements are met.

OR

- ☐ **I have completed and attached the Parent/Guardian Opt-Out of Club Participation Form.**



CONTACT INFORMATION VERIFICATION

Please verify your current contact information.

Home Address: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Secondary Phone: _____

Email Address: _____



PANTHER PROMISE

Working together, families, students and schools create a safe, respectful, and successful learning environment where every Panther is empowered to learn, lead and achieve.

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Date Received: _____

Received By: _____

Student Information Verified: ☐ Yes ☐ No



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM ATTENDANCE LAW REQUIREMENT

IN ACCORDANCE WITH GEORGIA HOUSE BILL 1190 (2004)



ATTENDANCE LAW REQUIREMENT

In accordance with the Georgia House Bill 1190 (2004) the Sumter County School System is required to notify parents/guardians and students (age 10 and older by September 1) of the possible consequences and penalties for violation of attendance policies if a student has five (5) or more unexcused absences from school.



PARENT LIABILITY FOR TRUANCY:

Parents or guardians may be liable for up to \$100 fine, may be imprisoned for up to 30 days or may be ordered to do community service if their child misses more than 5 unexcused school days.



HB 1190 (2004) requires that parents/guardians and students (age 10 and older by September 1) be notified and sign a form that indicated receipt of a written statement of possible consequences and penalties for violation of attendance policies. The House Bill (Section 10) reads: "Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five (5) unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense."

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Truancy is defined as being absent from school without appropriate documentation or permission.

Your child, _____, has been out _____ days without an excuse.

Sumter County School System is required by law to notify parents/guardians and students (age 10 and older by September 1) of the possible consequences and penalties for violation of attendance policies if a student has five (5) or more unexcused absences from school.

Parents/Guardians may be charged with a misdemeanor if they are causing the child's absence from school. The penalty can be up to \$100.00 fine and up to 30 days in jail for each day the child has an unexcused absence from school.

Parents must take the responsibility for keeping children in school. Please provide us with a written excuse each time your child is absent. Also, please sign the enclosed Attendance Law Requirement notice and return to your child's homeroom teacher as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Calandra Parker

Principal

The parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child or children shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties; children who are age ten years or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. These signed forms shall be retained through the end of the school year. Therefore, each school year it will be necessary to sign a form indicating receipt of this notification.



ATTENDANCE LAW REQUIREMENT

PLEASE SIGN and DATE this form and return it to your child's HOMEROOM TEACHER.

Student's Name	Grade/Homeroom	Date

This is to acknowledge receipt of a statement of possible consequences and penalties for violation of school attendance policies.

Parent/Guardian Signature	Student Signature (Age 10+ by September 1)
Date _____	Date _____



BE PRESENT. BE PREPARED. BE A PANTHER.

Please sign and return this page.



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT



BUS INFORMATION

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

100 Learning Lane
Americus, Georgia 31719
Phone 229-931-8507
Fax 229-931-7455

Tracy Monts
Supervisor

Mark Harnage
Fleet Manager

Derether Harris
Routing Clerk



I have read and understand the contents of the **Student Riding Instructions**. Please keep the **Student Riding Instructions** for your future reference to review with your child during the course of the school year.

Please sign and return this page.

Student Signature/Name

Date

Parent Signature

Date



★ SIGN AND TURN BACK INTO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL ★



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS PARENT/GUARDIAN OPT-OUT



OF CLUB PARTICIPATION FORM

ONE TEAM.  ONE PURPOSE.  ONE SUMTER.

The Sumter County School System offers a variety of school-sponsored clubs and organizations designed to enrich students' educational experiences. Participation in most clubs is voluntary.



1 STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____ Homeroom/Advisory Teacher: _____



School Year: _____



School: _____



2 PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUEST

By completing this form, I am requesting that my child not participate in one or more school-sponsored clubs or organizations during the current school year.

☐ I do NOT want my child to participate in ANY school-sponsored clubs or organizations.

OR

☐ I do NOT want my child to participate in the following club(s):



3 PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____



PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand that:

- ✓ This request applies only to voluntary extracurricular clubs and organizations and does not apply to required classroom instructional activities.
- ✓ My child will not be penalized academically for not participating in voluntary clubs.
- ✓ I may change this request at any time by contacting the school principal in writing.
- ✓ This opt-out remains in effect for the current school year unless revoked in writing.



4 SCHOOL USE ONLY

Date Received: _____

Received By: _____

Principal/Designee: _____

Effective Date: _____



PANTHER REMINDER:

Clubs provide opportunities for leadership, service, academic enrichment, creativity, and personal growth. Families are encouraged to explore available club offerings with their child before choosing to opt out of participation.

*Panthers
Lead. Panthers
Achieve.*



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM MEDICATION — AUTHORIZATION FORM —

ONE TEAM. ONE PURPOSE. ONE SUMTER.

School Year: _____

This form must be completed before any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) can be administered at school.



1. STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ Teacher/Homeroom: _____



2. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Primary Phone: _____ Secondary Phone: _____

Emergency Contact (if parent cannot be reached):

Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone: _____



3. MEDICAL INFORMATION

Medical Condition(s) (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Asthma ☐ ADHD
☐ Diabetes ☐ Heart Condition
☐ Severe Allergy ☐ Other _____
☐ Seizure Disorder _____

Known Allergies:



4. MEDICATION INFORMATION

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Medication	Reason	Dosage	Route (Check one)	Time(s) / Frequency	Start Date	End Date
			☐ Oral ☐ Inhaled ☐ Injection ☐ Topical			
			☐ Oral ☐ Inhaled ☐ Injection ☐ Topical			

NON-PRESCRIPTION (OVER-THE-COUNTER) MEDICATION

Medication	Reason	Dosage	Route (Check one)	Time(s) / Frequency	Start Date	End Date
			☐ Oral ☐ Topical			
			☐ Oral ☐ Topical			



5. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please include any important administration instructions, side effects, dietary restrictions, or precautions.



6. SELF-CARRY / SELF-ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION

(Complete only if applicable.) I request that my child be permitted to possess and self-administer prescribed medication while at school.

- ☐ Asthma Inhaler ☐ Epinephrine Auto-Injector ☐ Diabetes Medication/Supplies
☐ Other _____

A licensed healthcare provider must certify that the student is capable of safely carrying and self-administering the medication.

If requesting diabetes care at school, a completed Diabetes Medical Management Plan (DMMP) must accompany this form.



7. HEALTHCARE PROVIDER AUTHORIZATION

Medication: _____

Dosage: _____

Time/Frequency: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Provider Name: _____ Phone: _____

Provider Signature: _____ Date: _____



8. PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION

I request that authorized school personnel administer the medication listed above according to the instructions provided. I understand:

- Medication must be supplied in the original pharmacy-labeled container (prescription) or original manufacturer's container (over-the-counter).
- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing and replacing medication before it expires.
- The school should be notified immediately if medication changes.
- Medication not picked up at the end of the school year may be disposed of according to district procedures.
- I authorize communication between the school nurse/designee and the prescribing healthcare provider regarding this medication, when necessary.
- I release and hold harmless the Sumter County School System, its Board of Education, employees, and agents from liability resulting from the administration or non-administration of medication in accordance with this authorization and applicable law.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____



9. SCHOOL USE ONLY

Medication Received By: _____ Date Received: _____

Medication Count (if applicable): _____ Expiration Date: _____

Returned to Parent: ☐ Yes ☐ No Date: _____ Initials: _____

PANTHER REMINDER

For your child's safety, all medications must be delivered to the school by a parent or guardian in the original labeled container. Students should never share medications or bring unauthorized medications to school.

Panthers Lead. Panthers Achieve.



SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM STUDENT IMAGE, AUDIO, VIDEO & MEDIA RELEASE FORM

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

ONE TEAM.  ONE PURPOSE.  ONE SUMTER.

The Sumter County School System celebrates student achievement through school publications, district communications, and social media. This form allows parents/guardians to choose how their child's image, voice, and work may be used.



STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Teacher/Homeroom: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN MEDIA PERMISSION

Please select **ONE** option below.



FULL PERMISSION (RECOMMENDED)

I give permission for the Sumter County School System to photograph, videotape, audio record, interview, or publish my child's:

- ☒ Photograph or image
- ☒ Video recordings
- ☒ Audio recordings
- ☒ Student work
- ☒ First name and last initial (when appropriate)
- ☒ Academic, athletic, artistic, or extracurricular achievements

These materials may be used in:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ School publications | ☐ Newsletters |
| ☐ District website | ☐ Newspapers |
| ☐ District social media | ☐ Television or radio news |
| ☐ School social media | ☐ Educational presentations |
| ☐ Yearbook | ☐ Promotional materials |



NO PERMISSION

I DO NOT give permission for my child's:

- ☐ Photograph
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Audio recording
- ☐ Student work

to be published or shared in district or school publications, websites, social media, promotional materials, or news media, except as permitted or required by law.



I understand my child may still appear incidentally in public settings such as athletic events, performances, graduations, assemblies, or other events that are open to the public or covered by outside media.



PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand that:

- ☒ This authorization remains in effect for the current school year unless revoked in writing.
- ☒ Images and recordings may be used without compensation.
- ☒ Once information has been published in print or online, the District cannot guarantee its complete removal from third-party websites or media.
- ☒ The District will make reasonable efforts to honor my selection.



PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____



STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT (OPTIONAL FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS)

I understand my parent/guardian's media selection and agree to follow school expectations when participating in photographs, videos, interviews, and school publications.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____



SCHOOL USE ONLY

Received By: _____

Date Received: _____

Entered into Student Information System:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Staff Initials: _____



PANTHER REMINDER:

Every student deserves to be celebrated. We respect every family's privacy choices while showcasing the outstanding achievements of our Panther students in a safe and responsible manner.





SUMTER COUNTY

— HIGH SCHOOL —

— HOME OF THE PANTHERS —



WEBSITE

www.sumterschools.org



FACEBOOK

[@SumterCountySchools](https://www.facebook.com/SumterCountySchools)



INSTAGRAM

[@sumtercountyschools](https://www.instagram.com/sumtercountyschools)



PANTHER PRIDE

Every Student. Every Day.
Every Opportunity.