

# **COOK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Excellence Starts With You**



## ***STUDENT HANDBOOK*** ***2021-2022***

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**Cook Middle School**  
**“Continuing in Excellence”**  
**Rusty Meadows Ed.S, Principal**

1601 North Elm Street - Sparks, Georgia 31647 - (229)549-5999 - Fax: (229)549-5986

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Dear Students,

Welcome to Cook Middle School, the home of the **Hornets**. CMS is a place where students work to meet their full potential. We challenge all students to build pride and achieve a solid foundation in preparation for high school.

Each new day brings new opportunities, successes, challenges and new ways to achieve goals. Determination to do your best on every assigned task is required to achieve your goals. Your success at the middle school prepares you for high school and sets the tone for your achievements in life. Do your best and reach your goals at **Cook Middle School by working to meet your full potential!**

We want your learning experience to be a productive one and this handbook serves as a guide. The procedures are designed to assist us in working together at our school. We look forward to your participation and contributions to the activities provided in the classroom and in the extracurricular activities.

Cook Middle School provides a solid foundation that allows all students to have a brighter future through hard work, commitment, cooperation, and opportunity. Have a great year at CMS!

Sincerely,

Rusty Meadows  
Principal



## COOK MIDDLE SCHOOL - 2021-22 FACULTY AND STAFF

**Principal** - Rusty Meadows

**Assistant Principal** - Jennifer Green

**Assistant Principal** - Johnny Beard

**Instructional Coach** - Peggy Fulghum

**TEAM 6Black:** Drew Bryan, Sarah Jacobson, Tonya McDaniel\*, Heather Roberts, Brooke Webb

**TEAM 6Gold:** Susan Exum, Tabatha Jones, Lisa Myers

**TEAM 6White:** Kaitie Anderson, Jennifer Harris\*, Randi Hayes

**TEAM 7Black:** Bonnie Boone, Jason Carter, David Ducharme, Ronard White, Troy Williams

**TEAM 7Gold:** Taylor Cross, Haley Nash, Nicole Williams

**TEAM 7White:** Jeri Anna Bearden, Taylor Hendricks, Kayla McIntosh\*

**TEAM 7Silver:** Jamere Harry, Adam Jones, Shelly Wheeler

**TEAM 8Black:** Kayla Craft\*, Wanda Dobson, Jonathan McDaniel, Heather McIntyre

**TEAM 8Gold:** Melissa Duke, Deena Griffin, Bradley Patterson, Candi Rountree, Rachel Serrano, Tabitha Watson

**TEAM 8White:** Chris Craft, Trenton Mathis, Dawn Morris\*, Luis Tyson

**Resource:** Dawn Surrency, Erin Twomey

**Speech:** Brittany Dozier

**CONNECTIONS:** Art: Sherri Youngblood\*, Band: Hailey Brewer, Computer Lab: Sara Sumner, Exp in Ag: Morgan Anderson, Exp in Basic Skills: John Smith, Healthcare Sci: Stephanie Patterson, Exp in Technology: Josh Bryan, Physical Education/Weight Room: Jeremy Brown, Corey Green, Audrey Stacks

**Media Specialist:** Teara Powell

**PACES:** Wanda Dobson

**Counselor:** Lyn Martin, Blake Suggs

**SPI Coordinator:** John Smith

**ESOL:** Tracey Koechlein

**Athletic Director:** Audrey Stacks

**Special Education Coordinator:** Leigh Moore\*

**Migrant Student Services Provider:** Sara Morales

**OFFICE STAFF:** Bookkeeper: Joni Huffstetler, Secretary: Betty Coleman, Linda Tennant

**NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR:** Dennis Hicks

**NURSE:** Patsy Boone

**SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER:** Antonio Carter

**PARENT-SCHOOL RESOURCE:** Cloretta Lane

**IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION:** Stacy Russell

**COOK MIDDLE SCHOOL  
2020-21 FACULTY AND STAFF**

**CUSTODIAL STAFF**

Head Custodian: Mary Way  
Carolette Durden  
Edward Harley  
Gloria Keeley  
Vera Pettigrew  
Ralph Thomas  
Shirley Williams  
Teresa Wooten

**LUNCHROOM STAFF**

Manager, Jeff Stalvey  
Brenda Davis  
Lucia Dillard  
Shelly Fackler  
Cassandra Sims  
Sandra Thompson  
Carla Weeks

**PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Anika Burgman  
Larry Cannon  
Linda Collier  
Cindy Crosby  
Sharon Durden  
Doretha Robinson  
Ellar Simmons  
Almaree Thomas  
Jessica Tillman  
Destry Walker  
Joann Warren

**Cook County School System's Vision:** All students will succeed through **enrollment** in higher education, **enlistment** in the military, or **employment** in the workforce.

**Cook County School System's Mission:** *To empower and inspire all learners to achieve*

### **Cook County School System's Beliefs**

- C**ultivate a safe and positive environment.
- O**ptimize creativity and learning.
- O**ffer support through family and community partnerships.
- K**indle challenging opportunities.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

Cook Middle School is designed to meet the changing needs of students between the ages of 10-14. The middle school offers a program that helps students progress intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally in ways which: a) enhance the individual's self-worth, b) provide opportunities for success, c) foster active learning, d) promote exploration, and e) encourage students to be responsible for their own behavior and become responsible members of society.

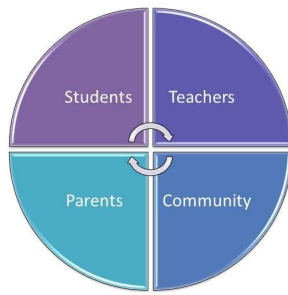
Cook Middle School provides a unique learning experience and a gradual transition between the elementary and secondary educational programs. Emphasized in the educational process are provisions for assisting students to become independent learners, to acquire self-direction and motivation, and to apply mastery of basic skills to new areas of learning.

### **CMS BELIEFS**

#### **We believe:**

- When provided with the opportunity, time, and resources, and with motivation, all students can succeed.
- Our students share responsibility for their learning and take responsibility for the actions in the classroom and school environment.
- An inviting, safe, inclusive, supportive school environment is essential to the teaching and learning environment.
- All stakeholders - teachers, family and community are essential in the education of our students.





## 2020-21 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN/GOALS

Longitudinally increase the number of students achieving levels 2, 3, or 4 in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade English Language Arts and Lexile bands within and above grade level.  
Increase the number of students achieving levels 2, 3, or 4 in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Math/Algebra on the GMAS  
Increase positive, consistent, and meaningful communication with all stakeholders.





Cook Middle School has a variety of clubs and organizations offering students an opportunity to build on personal and vocational interest and community service.

**Y-Clubs:** The purpose of Y-Club is to create, maintain, and extend through the home, school, and community high standards of Christian character. They are dedicated to serving the school and community. Membership is open to any student. Local Y-clubs are sponsored by the State YMCA of Georgia. Advisors are Josh Bryan, Deena Griffin, and Jennifer Harris.

**Academic Bowl:** This group was established to promote academic excellence. The bowl offers students an opportunity to demonstrate their academic knowledge and mental toughness in meets with peers from other schools. Participation builds confidence and encourages continued efforts in the quest for academic excellence. The advisor is Mrs. Deena Griffin

**Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA):** This group is for athletes who choose to participate in a Christian-oriented club. The advisor is Mr. Jonathan McDaniel.

**Future Farmers of America (FFA):** This group is for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The FFA promotes agri-science with a strong knowledge and perspective of agricultural progress and productivity. Mr. Morgan Anderson is the advisor.

**Junior Beta:** The purpose is to promote scholarship, leadership, and good citizenship. Membership is by invitation only and is for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students must have all A's and a 93 average or above. The advisor is Mrs. Wanda Dobson.

**TSA - Science and Technology:** The purpose is to promote and expand the student's knowledge and interest in the technology field.

**FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA (FBLA):** A nonprofit student organization committed to preparing today's students for success in business leadership. The FBLA's mission is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. We bring our mission to life through the application of our motto: Service, Education, and Progress. The advisor is Mrs. Sara Sumner

**Student Council:** The purpose of School Student Council is to promote school spirit, represent the interests of the student body, provide and participate in opportunities for community service, and promote citizenship. A spirit of cooperation among students and faculty is vitally important.



**Hornet Junior Civitan:** The club is a volunteer service organization for young people, dedicated to building good citizenship, leadership development, and helping people with developmental disabilities. Junior Civitans volunteer in their schools and communities, often in partnership with their sponsoring Civitan club. Members join together to clean up their schools, educate their peers about social issues, and volunteer with great local charities. Multiple scholarships will be available for dedicated Civitan members at the High School level. The advisor is Mrs. Tonya McDaniel.

**HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America)** - HOSA is a career and technical student organization for students who are planning to pursue health occupations. The mission is HOSA is to promote career opportunities in the healthcare industry and to enhance the delivery of quality care to all people. The advisor is Mrs. Stephanie Patterson.

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**Club meetings will be held on Fridays from 7:40 – 8:00.**

1<sup>st</sup> Friday: FFA, TSA

2<sup>nd</sup> Friday: Y Club, HOSA,

3<sup>rd</sup> Friday: Jr. Beta Club, Jr. Civitan

4<sup>th</sup> Friday: FBLA, FCA

**If a parent or guardian chooses not to allow their child to participate in a club at Cook Middle School, they must sign on the appropriate line in the letter that must be returned to the school.**



## Organizations



**Band:** 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grade beginning and performing groups. Approximately 160 members participate in the band program. The band director is Mr. Jacob Fortner.

**Sports** activities offered: 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders may participate in all sports. 6<sup>th</sup> graders may participate with permission from the parent, coach, principal/A.D.

First Semester Sports: Basketball, Cross Country, Cheerleading, Football, Softball, Wrestling,

Second Semester: Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Golf, Soccer, Track, Tennis, Wrestling

Head Coaches for each sport are the following:

Baseball – TBA

Boys Basketball - TBA

Girls Basketball – Larry Cannon

Cheerleading - Bonnie Boone

Cross Country -Tonya McDaniel

Football - Jeremy Brown

Golf – Josh Bryan

Boys Soccer - Chris Craft

Girls Soccer – Haley Dobson

Softball - Cassey Folsom

Tennis – Debbie Kelley

Track – Jeremy Brown

Volleyball - Haley Nash

Wrestling - Destry Walker

### Eligibility Policy

Any student that begins the academic year ineligible will sit out of all competition for the first three weeks of school. These students will only be able to practice during the first three week probationary period. The ineligible student must sit out any scheduled games during this three week period. At the beginning of the fourth week the ineligible student's grades will be checked every Wednesday using Powergrade by the Cook Middle School athletic director. The ineligible student will then have an opportunity to become eligible on a week by week basis if ALL classes have a grade of 70 or above. As per GHSA rules, To be eligible for the second semester sports, a student must to had passed 3 out of the 4 academic classes during semester 1.

### Student Extracurricular Activities

All Cook County athletes and coaches are expected to demonstrate behavior that reflects pride and excellence in the athletic program at Cook Middle School. We are proud of the winning tradition, which demands the best out of everyone connected with athletics. Appearance coupled with attitude and actions reflect on the student as an individual and as a representative of the school. Students should strive to be the best in their own eyes thereby strengthening the championship tradition that exists at Cook Middle School.

1. All athletes will follow the school conduct rules and will strive to be model students and good examples. It will be the responsibility of the entire coaching staff to make all athletes aware of their expectations and to see that rules are enforced and adhered to consistently.
2. In order to participate in any athletic activity, each student must meet all current Georgia High School Association eligibility requirements.
3. The coach of each respective sport will have the right and responsibility of selecting and supervising his/her athletes. All athletes will adhere to general rules set by the athletic department.
4. If an athlete violates a school rule or breaks the law, the team coach, athletic director, and principal will decide the proper action to be taken in regard to the athlete's participation in our athletic program. All athletes who are referred to the office for disciplinary action will be treated on the same basis as a non-athlete. **Any student assigned to ISS at 3:00 or is absent on the day of a sporting event MAY NOT participate.**
5. An athlete who elects to "quit" a team during that particular season will be required to "sit-out" the remainder of that regular season before he/she can begin participation in any other sport. All cases will be reviewed by the administration and the coach. Athletes must see that all equipment issued by the school is returned immediately upon his/her quitting.
6. An athlete who consistently does not attend practice or is dismissed from the team by the coach is considered quitting.
7. Athletes will be expected to be neat in appearance during the school year. Hair must be neat and well groomed year round. Athletes in violation of this rule will be suspended from participation until in compliance.
8. Athletes will be transported to out-of-town events by transportation provided by the school. If an athlete travels to an athletic event on a school bus, he/she will return on the bus unless the coach releases the athlete to a parent or legal guardian in writing. **Athletes will be released to their parents/guardians and no one else.**
9. Good sportsmanship conduct will be expected at all times from all athletes. Athletes are expected to exhibit good manners and good behavior at all times.
10. All athletic uniforms must be worn as they are designed to be worn. The coach will decide all uniform policies for his/her sport.
11. Missing practice is a serious violation of athletic conduct. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated. If there is a need to be absent from school athletic practice, it is the responsibility of the athlete to clear this with his/her coach. Each coach will outline the rules for practice requirements.
12. All students participating in athletics, including practice sessions must be properly insured against accidents. Proof of insurance is required to participate. School insurance is available for purchase if needed. The Cook County Board of Education **DOES NOT** provide insurance coverage for athletic competition.
13. All students are encouraged to participate in as many extracurricular activities as they desire. Students wishing to participate in activities, whose seasons coincide, must have written permission from the head coach of each respective sport as well as the athletic director in order to participate.
14. Before a player can be removed from the athletic program, the principal and the athletic director must approve the action.
15. Physical examinations are required by state law. Cook Middle School sets up one appointment during the spring of the school year for physicals. These are free of charge to the athletes and cheerleaders. Any other examination or referrals to specialists are the responsibility of the

parents/guardians of the athlete or cheerleader and will not be paid for by Cook Middle School. All physicals taken after April 1<sup>st</sup> are valid until the end of the next school year.

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING (reworded for 2 counselors)**

The goal of the guidance and counseling program at Cook Middle School is to help you to realize your full potential as a unique, special individual and as a student. Your school counselors are people who have special training to help you to develop personally, academically, and socially. They can work with students individually, in groups or in classroom guidance activities or special programs.

Who does the school counselors work with?

- students, parents, relatives, and friends
- teachers, administrators, and other staff members
- anyone with problems or concerns
- anyone who cares about your well being

Your counselors can work with you to help you to:

- do better in school
- solve personal problems with family, friends, and teachers
- develop positive feelings about self
- find answers to questions
- develop positive attitudes
- learn more about yourself and others
- discover your talents and abilities
- set goals
- explore alternatives
- make suitable decisions about your life
- cope realistically with everyday situations and problems

How can you contact your counselors?

- student requests: ask your teacher or an administrator
- parent requests: call or visit the school counselor
- teacher requests: verbal or written referrals
- friend requests: call, come by, written referrals

Under normal circumstances, your counselors will keep confidential whatever you talk about. However, your counselors will always consider first your safety and well-being and those you come in contact with and will take whatever action is appropriate to protect individuals.



### Visiting a School

Cook County School District welcomes parents and other community members into our schools for special events, meetings, tours and other occasions. However, keeping our students and staff safe while at school is something we take very seriously. In order to increase security at all of our school buildings, we have started using the School Check- In Visitor Management System to track visitors. This system will be used in conjunction with our existing exterior door buzzers and security cameras.

If you'd like to enter the building farther than the school office, you must register by presenting a valid, government-issued ID to the school's office staff. Registration takes a few minutes the first time because it requires an office staff member to complete the process. It will be quicker during subsequent visits.

#### Why do we need a visitor management system like School Check- In?

Part of keeping our students safe is knowing who is in our buildings at all times. The School Check- In system allows us to track visitors, contractors and volunteers in our schools, and assist with student checkout. School Check- In conducts a limited background check against the national database of registered sex offenders.

Visitors entering a school beyond the office receive a printed ID sticker that must be worn and visible during the entire stay. This makes it easier for our school staff to know who is allowed inside the school.

#### What forms of ID will the system accept?

School Check- In accepts any state-issued ID, including state-issued driver's licenses and state ID cards. It also accepts military IDs, government IDs.

#### What if I don't have a valid form of ID or don't want it scanned?

If you don't have a state- or government-issued ID or don't want your ID scanned, there is still a way for you to get access to our schools, but you will not be able to enter the school without a staff member escorting you. You will need to speak directly with school office staff members, who will provide school with some form of legal document showing your legal name, date of birth, you will also be asked your

**relationship to the student and reason for visiting. Office staff will manually confirm your identification from your legal documents and run a background check.**

### **What type of background check does School Check- In run?**

**School Check- In scans your name, date of birth and a photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders, but it does not check criminal or traffic history.**

### **Will you scan my ID every time I visit?**

**Yes. The first time you come to the school office, office staff will scan your ID and register you in the system. Your registration will be good at all Cook County buildings. After you have registered, you will be able to have your ID quickly scanned in the school office when you visit. If you are entering the building beyond the school office, an ID sticker will print for you to wear during your stay. ID stickers make it easy for school staff to know you checked in and are approved to visit.**

### **What information does School Check- In scan and keep?**

**School Check- In collects and stores your full name, date of birth, first four digits of your license number and photo when your ID is scanned. It does not keep a digital copy of your ID.**

### **How does School Check- In keep my data secure?**

**School Check- In uses firewalls, intrusion prevention systems, host integrity monitoring and port filtering, as well as the latest security processes to protect all of its systems and data. All information entered into School Check- In gets encrypted using 256-bit AES encryption. School Check- In does not share data with any third parties.**

### **What if I have an outstanding warrant or am undocumented? Will you report me to the police or immigration?**

**The National Sex Offender Public Registry and Cook County School District's student information system are the only two databases that School Check- In checks. The system will not alert office staff or even know if you have an outstanding warrant or are undocumented.**

**Cook County School District does cooperate with police. If authorities contact us to alert us to someone who might pose a threat to school safety, this information can be entered into the system so administration gets alerted if that person visits one of our schools.**



**Are vendors and other regular school visitors who enter the building required to have an ID scanned?**

**Yes. Everyone who enters the building beyond the school office will be required to have an ID scanned and wear a printed ID sticker.**

**What happens if I am a registered sex offender but have a child at the school?**

**Upon scanning your ID, a silent alert goes to office staff members so they can meet with you privately.**

**According to Cook County Board of Education policy, the superintendent may grant permission for a parent, guardian or custodian of a student to be on district property for the limited purpose of attending meetings with district staff or in other situations where the student may benefit. Permission will be granted sparingly, if ever, and only in situations where the parent, guardian or custodian will be supervised at all times or will not be alone with a child. If the superintendent does not grant permission, the parent, guardian or custodian may seek permission from the board. The superintendent will inform the principal and other relevant district staff of the scope of the permission granted.**

**Do other schools and institutions use a system like this?**

**Yes. Some surrounding districts use School Check- In to help ensure school and student safety.**

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL**  
**2021-2022**  
**Cook County Schools**

This document includes a protocol for addressing and decreasing the incidence of truancy in Cook County. This protocol reflects commitments that various local agencies, offices, and individuals have made to promote the educational progress of children and families in Cook County.

This protocol was created by a local Student Attendance Protocol Committee, which included representatives of the following entities:

- Cook County Superior Court
- Cook County Juvenile Court
- Cook County District Attorney's Office
- Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- Cook County Board of Education Representatives
- Cook County Board of Education Attorney
- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Cook County Department of Family and Children Services
- Cook County Health Department
- Cook County CCY (Family Connection)
- Cook County Chamber of Commerce
- Chief of Police from Adel, Lenox, and Sparks

The purpose of the committee is to make recommendations to the Cook County Board of Education regarding attendance policy and procedures, as well as to create guidelines for collaboration between local and state agencies having an interest or function related to educational achievement and school attendance in Cook County.

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee has agreed upon procedures, which are intended to allow the reduction of truancy at the individual, family, and community levels. It is understood, however, that these procedures are general guidelines, and extenuating circumstances may be considered, as allowable by law, for each student and family. In addition, it is understood that each state and local agency involved must first adhere to its own policies, which were considered in the development of this protocol.

**Operational Authority**

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee is operational under authority of the chief superior court judge as defined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.2. Following adoption of this written protocol and filing with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), the committee will meet quarterly during its first year and twice annually thereafter for the purpose of evaluating compliance and effectiveness, and to modify the protocol as appropriate.

## Tardies and Early Checkout

### Definition of Terms

**Tardy to School:** Any student arriving at school following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal established by the Principal and intended to indicate the start of the school day. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the bell, chime, or other audible signal will be considered tardy to school.

**Tardy to Class:** A student is “tardy to class” when he/she arrives to class following the ringing bell, chime or other audible signal indicating the beginning of instructional time.

**Excused Tardy:** A tardy resulting from events beyond a student’s control shall be determined excused by the Principal or designee. Events may include an accident, road closed due to an accident, area power outage, late bus, or other incidents. Documentation is required to excuse a tardy. .

**Unexcused Tardy:** Incidents including over-sleeping, heavy traffic, errands, delays at a train crossing, or similar excuses determined by the Principal or designee as unacceptable are unexcused. Documentation will not obligate the Principal or designee to excuse an unexcused tardy.

**Early Checkout:** Leaving school prior to the end of instructional time and/or the end of the official school day.

- Excused: Early checkouts for emergency, illness, or other reasons that the Principal deems necessary or reasonable. Documentation is required to excuse an early dismissal. Records will be kept at each school to document the number of days a student misses due to early checkouts. Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the RTI as the Principal deems necessary.

- Unexcused: Early checkouts for reasons other than those approved by the Principal. Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the RTI as the Principal deems necessary.

**Official School Start/End Time:** The time designated by the principal and advertised to students and parents as the official start or end of the school day. Correct time will be the time as determined accurate by the school principal, indicated on a designed school clock, and displayed in a prominent location.

**Response to Intervention (RTI)/Behavior Analysis Team (BAT):** An interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning, behavior, and/or attendance problems of K-12 students in a school.

### **Unexcused Tardies and Early Checkouts:**

Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies to school will receive a referral to the Principal or Principal’s designee for violation of Board Policy JCDA: Student Code of Conduct. At the school system’s discretion, students establishing a pattern of early checkouts may be referred to the Principal or Principal’s designee for disciplinary or other appropriate action. Students leaving early or arriving late to class may be counted present in the class or classes missed

if they are present more than 45 minutes of the entire instructional period.

### **Consequences and Penalties for Unexcused Tardies/Early Checkouts**

The Principal or Principal's designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts that may include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Third Tardy:** Written notification from administration to notify parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) having control or charge of the student of possible consequences for continued tardies.
- **Fourth to Ninth Tardies:**

Elementary and Middle School Students: Referral(s) to the Principal or the Principal's designee for Disciplinary consequences, counselor's referral or other appropriate action.

- High School Students: Upon a student's fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) tardy, a disciplinary referral will be made to the Principal or Principal's designee. Consequences may include loss of driving privileges, detention, in-school suspension, or other action in accordance with local school system policy.
- **Ten or More Tardies:** Ten or more tardies may result in immediate referral to support agencies outside the school system as the Principal deems appropriate. Among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Family and/or Youth Connections, or other external agencies.

### **Truant Students**

#### Definition of Terms

**Truant:** Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences.

**Exception for Suspension:** School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

**Excused Absences:** Local board of education shall adopt policies and procedures excusing students from school under the following circumstances, as a minimum:

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences may require an excuse from medical doctor)
- Circumstances where attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others
- Serious illness in a student's immediate family
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election
- Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly
- **Only five parental notes will be considered for an excused absence**

**Grades and Absences:** Final student course grades shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met.

- Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.
- Make up work for excused absences were completed satisfactorily. Local boards of education are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

**Absence Reduction Plan:** The board of education adopts the following policies and/or procedures to reduce unexcused absences.

**Parental Notification: Statement of Receipt**

- The school system will provide the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school with a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.

**Consequences and Penalties for Violation of Compulsory Attendance**

The Principal or Principal’s designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused absences and/or early checkouts at any time if he/she deems necessary. Consequences and penalties may include, but are not limited to the following:

**Five Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:**

- Schools will notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student when such student has accumulated five unexcused absences in the school calendar year.
- Notice of five accumulated absences will include notification of the penalties and consequences of such absences.
- After five unexcused absences in the school calendar year, each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense.

**Notification**

- Schools will make two reasonable attempts by phone, conference, letter, email, or other appropriate means to notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student when five unexcused absences in an academic year have occurred and of the penalties and consequences for violation of compulsory attendance.
- If two reasonable attempts to notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student have been unsuccessful, the school will send written notice via first class mail. Such notification will include a reminder of previous notice to the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school containing a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.

**Six or More Unexcused Absences in an Academic Year**

**Six Unexcused Absences:** Students accumulating six (6) days of unexcused absences in a semester will receive a referral to the Principal or administrative designee for violation of Board Policy JCDA: Student Code of

Conduct. Upon a student’s accumulation of six (6) or more unexcused absences in the school calendar year, a referral will be made to the Principal or designee for Student Support Team (SST) intervention. Prior to the first SST meeting, a school social worker, school nurse or other appropriate staff member will attempt contact with the student and parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student.

The school social worker will participate as part of the SST to assist with the development of interventions and strategies for improvement of the student's school attendance.

**Ten Unexcused Absences:** Upon a student's accumulation of ten (10) unexcused absences in the school calendar year, the school social worker will refer the student and parent to Cook County Truancy Education and Mediation (TEAM) for contracted participation in the TEAM truancy diversion program. The school social worker will serve to coordinate efforts between the school SST and TEAM in monitoring attendance.

Violation of TEAM Truancy Diversion Contract or refusal to participate in the TEAM truancy diversion program may result in immediate referral to the appropriate court, including but not limited to one or more of the following:

- Students ages six (6) to seventeen (17) and their parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of the student to the Juvenile Court for possible Protective Order or other appropriate disposition.
- Parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of students ages six (6) to seventeen (17) to State Court for Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance.

- **Attendance**

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- Students shall be counted in attendance if they are actually present at school at the time the attendance is taken or are away from school on a school day and engaged in an educational activity that constitutes a part of the school-approved instructional program for the student. (Rule 160-5-1-.10).

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- **Excused/Unexcused Absences**

- **Excused** absences from school are granted under the following circumstances:

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- ● Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others.

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- ● A serious illness or death in a student's family necessitating absence from school.

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- ● A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.

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- ● Celebrating religious holidays necessitating absence from school.

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- ● Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.

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- ● A period not to exceed one day is allowed, for registering to vote or voting in a public election.

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- Absences are **unexcused** for all other reasons, including but not limited to: missing the bus, oversleeping, power outage, vacations, trips, family visits, car trouble, baby-sitting, and running errands.

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- **School-Related Absences**

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- Students will be allowed no more than five (5) days absence per term for school-sponsored non-instructional activities, with the exception of absences required due to state and/or national competitions approved by the Cook County Board of Education. It is the student's responsibility to request, through the principal, that the Board of Education approve school related absences in excess of five.



- 
- Students must make prior arrangements to make up all work that will be missed. Students must have prior approval from all of their teachers to be absent from classes for these activities. Non-approval may only be given if the student has had in excess of 5 days absence for school-sponsored non-instructional activities.
- 
- Students should have all teachers complete a gold slip prior to having their parent/guardian sign the slip. Gold slips will be used to document a school-related absence. All gold slips are to be returned to the teacher/sponsor, not to the front office.
- 
- **Absence Notes**
- 
- Documentation is required when a student returns from an absence. The fact that attendance was impractical or inadvisable must be attested to by a written statement from the student's parent/guardian or a licensed physician within five (5) days of the student's return. These written statements must be turned in to the Attendance Office or the absence will be documented as unexcused. If an absence was due to a court appearance, a copy of the subpoena or other court document must be provided.
- 
- **Documentation for each day of absence (parent notes, medical excuses, etc.) must be on file within five school days following the student's return from an absence.**
- 
- **Notification of Absence**
- - An automated notification will be sent out daily at the end of first block if your child is not in class.
  - After the third (3rd) unexcused absence of a student, a letter will be mailed to the parent/legal guardian. This letter will include the number of days missed, express the school's concern about the number of unexcused absences, and request a parent conference.
  - Any student who has three (3) unexcused absences from a class will be referred to the school system's social worker and the attendance officer.
  - After the fifth (5th) unexcused absence in a class during a term, the student shall have a letter of non-credit mailed to his/her parents/legal guardians from the school.
  - Failure to receive these written notices in no manner absolves the parents/legal guardians of the responsibility in complying with all system/school attendance policies.
  - In the event of prolonged absences due to extenuating circumstances, students and/or parents/legal guardians have the right to request a conference with the Attendance Administrator to discuss attendance and/or non-credit issues.
  - If a student has a serious medical or legal problem, the student's parent/guardian should notify an administrator and the student's counselor. In the event of prolonged illness, the services of the homebound teacher should be requested.
  - *Students who miss more than 20 minutes of a class period will be counted absent for that class.*
- 
- **Late Work Policy**
- The policy that will be followed by all classes for turning in late assignments will be as follows:
  - A. Assignments turned in **one** day late will be reduced by **ten (10)** points.
  - B. Assignments turned in **two** days late will be reduced by **twenty (20)** points.
  - C. Assignments turned in **three** days late will be reduced by **thirty (30)** points.
    - a. After a three (3) day period, the teacher is allowed to give the student a Zero (0). If the teacher chooses to allow the student to turn in assignments beyond the three day period, this is done so at the sole discretion of the individual teacher.

- D. Students in Advanced, Honors, and/or Accelerated classes have the opportunity to turn in work one day late with a twenty (20) point deduction. After this, the teacher may give a zero for the assignment.
- **Make up Work (Cook High School)**
- **It is the student's responsibility to ask for make-up work.** A student has three days to make up work for each day missed. Students are responsible for making arrangements to receive missed assignments upon returning back to school. (High School) **STUDENTS HAVE THROUGH 3:45 p.m. THURSDAY AFTERNOON TO MAKE-UP, RETAKE, OR RESUBMIT ANY ASSIGNMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS FRIDAY (at the teacher's discretion). Teachers will be available until 3:45 each day Mon-Thurs.** Students should use before school, during advisement, and after school to complete assignments. If a student is suspended, it is his/her responsibility to make up any assignments, homework, class work, labs or tests given during the student's suspension. If the student is able to study at home during an **extended** illness of **3 or more days**, the guidance secretary should be contacted for assignments to be made available. A **minimum** of 24 hours will be required for assignments to be collected.



## GRADES

1. The passing grade for core courses is 70. Numerical grades will be given in all courses.
  - A - 90 TO 100
  - B - 80 TO 89
  - C - 70 TO 79
  - Below 70 is failing

## **2. Promotion Criteria Policy**

The Promotion Criteria for Cook Middle School is listed below to determine if a student will be promoted to the next grade level:

### **STATE REQUIRED TESTS:**

- All students must pass **FOUR OUT OF FOUR sections. (8<sup>th</sup> grade) and TWO OUT OF TWO (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>**

**grade).**

- Eighth grade students who do not pass the Language Arts/Lexile score and/or Math sections **MUST** retake and pass the test(s) if the opportunity for remediation is given.

**REPORT CARDS:**

All students must achieve a Yearly Average of 70 or above in FIVE OUT OF FIVE academic areas..

All students must achieve a combined yearly average of 70 or above in Connections classes.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Students may not have more than 10 unexcused absences for the school year.

**APPEALS PROCESS:**

If a student does not meet the promotion criteria policy, the placement committee will make a recommendation for each student.

3. Mid-Term Progress Reports will be sent to parents in the middle of each grading period. Progress reports should be signed by parents and returned to academic teachers.

4. HONOR ROLL: Honor roll will be announced at the end of each grading period. Requirements for honor roll are as follows:

**Principal's Honor Roll –ALL** subjects have a 90 or above.

**Stinger Honor Roll - ALL** subjects have an 80 or above.

5. Students will be recognized for academic achievement at the Hornet Pride Day. Highest average in each subject area as well as top 5 students on each team will be awarded for these achievements.

6. Students achieving the Principal's Honor Roll and/or earning Student of the Week will be recognized during that grading period with invitations to parents to attend an awards program.

7. Students that earn Principal Honor Roll for the entire school term will receive recognition on Hornet Pride Day, as well as students that have earned all grades 90 or above for the three years at Cook Middle School. This is not a grade point average; the student must attain a 90 or better in **ALL** classes.

8. Information concerning a student's educational record shall not be withheld from the noncustodial parent unless a court order has specifically removed the right of the noncustodial parent to such information or unless parental rights have been terminated.



### III. GENERAL CONDUCT

1. Students will be expected to obey all reasonable directions and instructions from all faculty members, at any time during the school day, any school activity, at any place on or near the campus.

#### 2. ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

School begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

a. When students arrive at school they should report to the cafeteria.

b. The faculty parking lots are off-limits to students.

c. Students arriving after 8:00 should be dropped off at the front door and sign in at the office.

d. Student drop off is located at the south side of building at the gym entrance. **Only students arriving after 8:00 or with special permission from administration can be dropped off in the front of building.**

#### 3. STUDENT CHECK-OUTS

a. A parent/guardian must come to the office and sign out his/her student before the office sends for the student.

b. On reporting to school in the morning, students are not to leave the campus until the end of the day.

c. No student will be allowed to checkout past 2:50 unless previous arrangements have been made with the main office.

d. Students will not be released to any individual without the specific request of the person having the lawful custody of the child with the following exceptions: a subpoena, an order of the court, or when a student has been arrested for a criminal offense.

#### 4. RELEASING STUDENTS AT THE END OF THE DAY

a. At 3:00 p.m. the parent pick-up students and walkers are released.

b. All bus students are released and should report to the covered walk beside the cafeteria, when their buses are called.

c. Students with a media center pass and band students who ride early buses are released at 2:58 and will be held in the media center or band room until the tone sounds.

d. When a bus student gets picked up by a parent or rides a different bus, they must have a note from a parent notifying the driver of the change.

#### 5. RAINY DAY SCHEDULE AT END OF DAY

a. Parent drop off/pick-up students will use the gym lobby entrance on rainy days.

b. Students will enter the lunchroom through the hall on rainy days.

#### 6. ENTRY INTO COOK MIDDLE SCHOOL

a. The following documentation is required for entrance: proof of residency, parent/guardian documentation, withdrawal from previous school, transcript of grades, discipline records

b. Students requesting entry from home school in addition to the above list, will be required to take academic competency tests for the grade level requested. These tests are provided by the school.

#### 7. WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

a. When a student is withdrawing from school, a withdrawal form will be secured from the counselor.

b. The media specialist will initial the form to show the student has cleared the media center.

c. When the student has completed this procedure, the form will be signed by the counselor.

*Any unemancipated minor over 16 who wishes to withdraw from school shall have the written permission of a parent or legal guardian prior to withdrawing. Within two days of the request and prior to accepting the withdrawal, the principal or designee shall convene a conference with the student and parent / guardian.*

#### 8. GENERAL RULES

- a. At no time should students block doors or gates into the building or campus by gathering in groups at these doors or gates.
- b. Keep all doors and intersections cleared so that traffic may flow freely.
- c. Keep to the right when moving in the halls and on the catwalks.
- d. Any student in the halls during class time must have a pass.
- e. Students should not enter a classroom if a teacher is not present.
- f. Students are not allowed in the teachers' workrooms.
- g. Cards or any activity related to gambling are not allowed. There will be no participation in games of chance for the purpose of exchanging money.

#### 9. SCHOOL SALES

- a. Students are not allowed to sell food items or other items at school except through school-sponsored activities as set by the organizations/clubs.
- b. Unauthorized goods will be confiscated.

#### 10. LUNCH (assigned seats)

Students are expected to exhibit good table manners and to respect the rights of others in the lunchroom. At any lunch period, there are many students in the cafeteria and even minor problems must be avoided. Keep voices in quiet, conversational tone.

- a. Students will eat lunch in the lunchroom at their assigned table.
- b. Students should take care not to leave napkins, paper cups, plates, or food on or under the table.
- c. Each student is responsible for cleaning up after himself/herself, and helping to maintain the lunchroom in a clean and attractive manner.
- d. Follow directions given by the lunchroom staff and teachers.
- e. You are not allowed to take food, drinks, or lunchroom supplies out of the lunchroom.
- f. Students must key in their lunch number and press enter when they go through the line.
- g. Do not ask for special selections of food.
- h. Breakfast and lunch are FREE.
- i. **Cook County School District (CCSD) will no longer allow parents or students to bring, drop-off or deliver food and beverage that originates from outside eating establishments due to a USDA non-competition regulation. This regulation protects school cafeterias from the competition of outside food establishments, and since food services in our CCSD the system is completely self-supported through sales within our schools, allowing outside items serve as direct competition for their business. Students may continue to bring lunches prepared from home.**

#### 11. RUNNING ON CAMPUS

Students are not to run on campus except as a part of instruction in physical education classes.

#### 12. LOST AND DAMAGED BOOKS

Parents and students are responsible for all textbooks or media center books issued to them. All lost or damaged books must be paid for. If a lost book is found, money will be refunded when the receipt is presented. All money is recorded and paid to the proper fund for replacement purposes.





### 13. BOOK BAG POLICY

The school system continues to strongly recommend the purchase of book bags or backpacks that are constructed from materials that allow the contents of the book bag to be visible, but students will also be allowed to possess those made of canvas, leather, and similar materials. Rolling book bags are not permitted as they pose a hazard in hallways and classrooms.

In classrooms, teachers may develop specific policies regarding book bags. After students arrive in class and remove any needed items from their book bags, teachers may require students to place their book bags in designated areas of the classroom, and they may prohibit students from going to their book bags without permission. On school buses, book bags should always be held securely or placed under the student's seat.

Students are urged to never leave book bags or backpacks unattended. All book bags, backpacks, gym bags, etc. should be clearly marked with the student's name so that the owner of the item can be identified immediately. Students should never carry large amounts of money to school and should not place anything of value in the exterior pockets of book bags or backpacks or in bags that are open at the top.

Student property, including but not limited to backpacks, book bags, athletic bags, and purses, may be searched by school administrators when reasonable suspicion exists. Any search of a student shall be conducted in a manner designed to preserve the privacy and dignity of the student to the extent possible according to the circumstances of the situation.

### Media Center

The media center exists to serve the faculty, staff, and students.

1. The media staff is here to support and help you on your adventure in education by providing opportunities in such areas as: reference and research work, listening, viewing, and recreational reading.
2. There are a few guidelines that will help our cooperative adventure.
  - a. The center will be open for student use from 7:30–3:15 (including lunch time).
  - b. Books may be checked out for two weeks, except for reference books.
- c. Reference books, materials, and magazines may be checked out overnight. They must be turned in before school.
- d. Replacement price will be charged for all lost and excessively damaged books and magazines. Any book no longer in print will be \$10.00.
- e. Students who do not clear cost of the lost books will not be allowed to participate in activities.



g. Media center behavior

1. When students are with a class, the rules of the teacher apply.
2. Students may not chew gum or have candy or other food items in the media center.
3. Students are to keep their hands and feet to themselves.
4. Students who are disruptive will be asked to leave the center; severe infractions will be sent to the office.



**Classroom Discipline**

1. A classroom management plan is posted in each teacher's classroom. All students should have a clear understanding of the rules in the classroom.
2. Students with chronic discipline problem will meet with the Behavior Analysis Team (BAT) to implement a behavior improvement plan.



## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

It is the policy of Cook County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, disability, religion or national origin in any program or activity, employment, admission, service, treatment, admissions to facilities or access to any program or activity operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board. It is the express policy of the Board to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted including Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 and all accompanying regulations.

## **Title IX Information**

The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education program and activities, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"). Such requirement to not discriminate extends to admission and employment.

Effective August 14, 2020, pursuant to federal regulations implementing Title IX published in 2020 scheduled to become effective on August 14, 2020, any complaint involving "sexual harassment" as defined by those federal regulations that occurs in a District education program or activity against a person in the United States shall be addressed pursuant to the District Title IX Grievance Procedure. Should such federal regulations not be implemented for any reason, all such complaints involving a student complainant shall continue to be addressed in the appropriate District policy.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, or to the following:

Henry Acree, Title IX Coordinator for Student Matters  
Director of Student Services  
1109 North Parrish Ave  
Adel, GA 31620  
Phone: 229-896-2294  
[henryacree@cook.k12.ga.us](mailto:henryacree@cook.k12.ga.us)

Courtney Holley, Title IX Coordinator for Employee Matters  
Director of Human Resources  
1109 North Parrish Ave  
Adel, GA 31620  
Phone: 229-896-2294  
[courtneyholley@cook.k12.ga.us](mailto:courtneyholley@cook.k12.ga.us)

## **Title IX Grievance Process**

Equitable Complaint Processes: Under Title IX, both the accuser and accused have equal rights, such as the right to:

Have an adviser of choice present during the process (this includes an attorney if allowed at all by schools)

Present evidence or have witnesses speak on their behalf

Have timely access to information that will be used at the hearing

Be present at pre-hearing meetings that provide an opportunity to present their testimony

Receive the final hearing decision in writing at the same time as the other party without being required to sign a non-disclosure agreement

Have the right to appeal a final decision (The 2017 Interim Guidance states that a school may choose to allow appeals solely by the responding party or by both parties.

## **Title IX Forms:**

Complaint Form: For employees or students to begin a Title IX sexual harassment complaint.

Appeal Form: After a decision or dismissal of Title IX sexual complaint is issued, either party may appeal using this form.

Informal Resolution Permission Form

Title IX Training Materials

Training for Non-Administrators

Training for Administrators

Training for Title IX Coordinators

Training for Investigators

Training for Decision Makers



## **Code of Conduct**

### **For All Middle School Students in the COOK County Schools**

It is the purpose of the COOK County School District 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 Cook County Board of Education has adopted a policy which requires all schools to adopt codes of conduct which provide guidelines of behavior for students in order to facilitate a learning environment for themselves and other students. These standards of 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 the 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 action may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and for the school as a whole. Accordingly, students may be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in this 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 activity, function, or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles provided for transportation by the school system.

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.

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.

### **Authority of the Principal**

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 not covered in this Code, the principal may undertake corrective measures which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and of the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

### **Parental Responsibilities**

The school anticipates the support of parents in dealing with behavioral problems which may arise. Parent cooperation should be apparent to the student/school. Students are expected to show respect for authority and follow school rules, regulations, and procedures at all times.

Cook Middle School strongly encourages parents and guardians to inform children of the consequences of misbehavior at school, including criminal penalties, for violent behavior, underage sexual conduct and crimes for which a minor can be tried as an adult.

### **Teacher Authority**

The school superintendent and principal shall fully support the authority of every teacher to remove a student from the classroom. Any teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior which violates the student code of conduct and repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his/her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn shall file a report of such behavior with the principal or the principal's designee. The principal and teacher shall thereafter follow the procedures set forth in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. 20-2-737-738.

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 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.

The principal or designee shall notify in writing the teacher and the student's parents or guardian of the discipline or student support services which has occurred as a result of the teacher's report within one school day from the imposition of discipline or the utilization of the support services. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that the student's parents or guardian has received the written notification, including information as to how the parents or guardian may contact the principal or designee.

The following disciplinary actions may be imposed by school administrators 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
- Temporary Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parent
- Parent Conference
- Detention / Saturday School Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Short-term Suspension
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement of 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.

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.

The maximum punishments for an offense include long-term suspension or expulsion, including permanent expulsion; however, only a disciplinary tribunal as outlined in the COOK County Board of Education policies will determine those punishments.

In the event that a student is referred to a disciplinary tribunal, parents or the student may elect not to contest whether the 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 student waiving a right to a hearing before a disciplinary tribunal. The tribunal facilitator from the superintendent's office must approve such an agreement or waiver.

### **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

Students and parents are hereby notified that 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. Student vehicles brought on campus, student book bags, school lockers, 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, lockers or any vehicle brought on campus. Metal detectors and drug or weapon sniffing dogs may be utilized at the school or at any school function, including activities which occur outside normal school hours or off the school campus at the discretion of administrators. A student's failure to permit search and seizure will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Assembly Behavior**

Students are expected to behave appropriately during assemblies. They should remain seated until the program is completed even if the bell rings. Provisions will be made for them to return to class without a tardy. Cat calls and unnecessary noises are not appropriate. Sleeping and talking are not appropriate. Students not behaving appropriately will be disciplined, and he/she will not be allowed to attend future assemblies.

### **BAT - (Behavior Team Analysis)**

Once a student receives 2 days of ISS on the discipline chart, they will be referred to the BAT in which a behavior plan process will begin. The assistant principals are responsible for the referral.

### **Book Bags -**

In classrooms, teachers may develop specific policies regarding book bags. On school buses, book bags should always be held securely or placed under the student's seat. All book bags, backpacks, gym bags, etc. should be clearly marked with the student's name so the owner of the item can be identified immediately. Students should never carry large amounts of money to school, and they should not place anything of value in the exterior pockets of book bags or backpacks or in bags that open at the top. Student property, including but not limited to backpacks, book bags, athletic bags, and purses, may be searched by school administrators when reasonable



suspicion exists. Any search of a student shall be conducted in a manner designed to preserve the privacy and dignity of the student to the extent possible according to the circumstances of the situation.

### **Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy**

Electronic Devices include but are not limited to the following:

- Cell Phone
- Earbuds/Headsets
- Smart Watches
- Camera
- IPod/MP3
- Tablets/IPad
- Any device capable of recording, viewing or transmitting information

**Cell phones and all electronic devices and accessories must be turned off, out of sight from 7:00am-3:00pm. Students may access their phones only after exiting the building after dismissal.**

Emergency phone calls can always be made in the main office (229) 549-5999; so, cell phones are not needed during school hours. **If parents must contact their child, they should call the school office.** The school office staff is excellent at relaying emergency messages from parents to students.

We understand that many of the electronic devices are very important to our students; however, they are a huge distraction to the educational process and in some cases can be a safety issue. Texting and videoing has become a major distraction and cannot be tolerated at school.

**A student is considered “USING” a cell phone if the phone rings, vibrates, or the student is looking at and/or touching the electronic device. Text messages and/or social media posts with a timestamp during the school day are considered use of the electronic device.** If a student is observed by an adult with a cell phone or electronic device during the school day, consequences will be assigned accordingly. Cell phone and electronic device consequences will reset each grading period per administration discretion.

Violation 1 - Maximum demerits for the week per team/Loss of earned free time/parent contact by teacher

Violation 2 - Maximum demerits for the week per team/Loss of earned free time/parent contact by teacher

Violation 3 - Maximum demerits for the week per team/Loss of earned free time/parent contact by teacher

Violation 4 and each subsequent offense- Office Referral

\*Excessive Referrals will be considered Disregard of Direction violation

**Cook Middle School is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronic items or accessories and school officials will not investigate these matters.**

**If the cell phone is used as a tool to instigate bullying, terroristic threats, sexual misconduct, it will result in a Tier 3 violation.**

### Courtesy

When students enter Cook Middle School, they are a part of the school and reflect upon the school's reputation. As Cook Middle School wishes to maintain its good reputation, it is important for all students to be polite to fellow students and to treat each other with respect. Faculty, staff members, and adults are to be treated with respect.

### Debt Obligations/Financial Responsibility

Students are responsible for any debts incurred while attending CMS. These debts may include but are not limited to monies owed to the office, library, athletic department, teachers, or school board. Additional monies owed may include damage assessments, fundraisers, or settlements. Students having outstanding debt will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities until all debts have been cleared.

### Dress Code

Conventional dress worn in a traditional manner is the norm for approved dress at Cook Middle School. It is the student's responsibility to come to school fully clothed and to wear clothes that are not dangerous to health or safety, do not disrupt the learning process, and stay within the school dress code. Extremes in dress and grooming are not permitted.

***Hats, hoods, and sunglasses are not permitted inside the building during school. IF SEEN, these items will be confiscated.***

Clothing should be fitted so there is no midriff or underwear showing when standing, bending, seated, or moving.

All pants must be worn at the natural waistline. **Sagging pants** (worn below the waistline) are not permitted. If belts are worn, they must be buckled. Zippers must be zipped, and fasteners must be fastened.

The following items of clothing are **NOT PERMITTED**:

- Outer clothing which resembles sleepwear or underwear, pajama-type pants or bedroom shoes or slippers.(Shoes are required at all times.)
- Fanny Packs
- Tank tops or shirts with shoulder straps narrower than two (2) inches, (Females). Midriff tops, low-cut tops and one-shoulder tops, **see-through blouses covering bras/tube tops**
- Pants should be worn at the same length on both legs. Pants may not be tucked into socks
- Sleeveless shirts for males
- Miniskirts and short shorts – Shorts and skirts must be longer than mid-thigh length. . No tight or sagging sweatpants or wind suits. They are to be worn appropriately.
- **NO HEAD COVERINGS (male or female) unless documented religious apparel. Including Hoodies**
- **Females may only wear hair “bands” ½ inch in width or less. Large bows are not permitted.**
- **NO BANDANAS OF ANY COLOR.**
- Towels, hand cloths, curlers, combs, sunglasses and metal chains
- Bike pants, or other apparel that is extremely tight fitting
- Leggings, jeggings, joggers or any skin-tight pants, must be covered with long loose tops approaching the mid-thigh length.
- Clothing/jewelry with profanity, vulgarities, or other offensive language, references to alcohol or drug use,
- Gangs, social clubs, weapons, or sexually suggestive items
- Clothing/jewelry that could be used as a weapon. No piercings with sharp points.

- Cut-out jeans with holes above the knees. No skin can show. If there are holes in pants above the knee, leggings or shorts must be worn under the pants.
- Any clothing with group, club, or organization names on them, unless the group(s) are approved as school
- Non-prescription glasses or Glasses with no lens
- Face masks worn for medical purposes are permitted but must not cover the eyes.

***Note: Administrator discretion applies to all the above.***

**Dress code discipline will be enforced by both teachers and administrators. Discipline will be assigned and, if necessary, students will be loaned shirts or scrubs to wear or a parent/guardian will be called to bring a change of clothes. Students will not be allowed to remain in the classroom with inappropriate clothing.**

**Dress Code Consequences:**

**Violation 1 - Warning/Parent Contact/Change of Clothes/Documentation in Educator Handbook**

**Violation 2 - Tier 1 Referral/Change of Clothes/Parent Contact**

**Violation 3 - Tier 1 Referral/Change of Clothes/Parent Contact**

**Violation 4 and subsequent violations - Disregard of Directions - Tier 2 Referral**

**Hall Passes**

Students are expected to stay in class. They should not be in the halls unless they are changing class or have an authorized hall pass **with a legitimate excuse**. Any student, who is in a hall, restroom, etc., should have a **visible authorized pass**. Hall passes are provided for each student and must be used whenever a student requests permission to leave a classroom. Medical excuses for restroom breaks will be required of students with temporary or chronic conditions necessitating more frequent restroom visits.

**Internet Policy – Student Use**

Cook County Board of Education policy requires students and parents to sign a Student Network/Internet User Agreement and Parent Permission Form. Any person who is accessing the Internet with school equipment and services accepts responsibility to abide by the Network/Internet User Agreement. Not accepting these responsibilities, or any infraction which shows non-compliance, will lead to restrictions or severance of access to services, as well as other possible disciplinary actions.

**Interrogations and Searches**

CMS endeavors to provide a safe and secure environment for all students. The principal and /or an authorized representative possess the authority to conduct reasonable interrogations of students in order to properly investigate and punish student misconduct.

- To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety of welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student lockers or student belongings based on reasonable suspicion.
- In the event a search of a student’s person, personal possessions, or locker reveals the student is concealing material of which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law enforcement, authorities shall be notified so that they may take appropriate action.

### **Off-Campus Behavior**

Notification from law enforcement, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the court system, or any other social media that a Cook Middle School student has been taken into custody or charged with a felony or a delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult, will prompt the school principal to collect pertinent information and to make a determination whether the student's continued presence at school presents a potential danger to persons or property at the school or may substantially disrupt the educational process. If such a determination is made, the principal may recommend a suspension or expulsion of longer than ten (10) days. A tribunal of school officials will hold a disciplinary hearing to consider and make final decisions on such recommendations. If a student is adjudicated, or found guilty of a felony offense, the principal will make an immediate recommendation of expulsion or assignment to an off-site program. A tribunal of school officials will hold a disciplinary hearing to consider and make final decisions on such recommendations.

***Any student transferring to Cook Middle School from a juvenile YDC or other disciplinary state facility will be placed in alternative school for a length of time to be determined by the principal. Some misdemeanors (especially of a sexual nature) may result in a student not being allowed to attend school also.***

### **Off Limits Areas**

- All parking areas during the school day.
- All hallways before school, at lunch, and after school (unless authorized by a teacher or admin).
- Students must remain inside the building at all times unless accompanied by a faculty or staff member.

### **Pep Rally Behavior**

Any student who is not scheduled to be a part of a pep rally and is on the floor without permission will be disciplined and prohibited from attending future pep rallies.

### **Restrooms**

**Students and employees of Cook Middle School expect and deserve to have clean and sanitary restrooms.** Please help keep restrooms clean by flushing toilets and urinals after use. Be courteous by keeping trash off floors. Please report any writing on walls, broken equipment or other problems to a teacher or the front office, so repairs may be requested before further damage or vandalism occurs. **The only restrooms available for student use before school and during lunch are in the cafeteria area.**

### **RISE - Rewarding Innovative Students for Excellence**

Quarterly reward based on 2 or less absences, 5 or less checkout/tardies, loss of 2 or less earned free team time/or no discipline referrals (office). Quarterly reward will consist of earned free time and a food item.

### **School Wide Guidelines and Expectations**

In addition to classroom rules, there are rules that relate to students when they are not in classrooms, such as in the hall, restrooms, lunchroom, on campus, or in the gym for special events.

- School Wide expectations:
  - walk on campus and in the halls (walk on the right side of the hall)
  - keep the campus clean
  - talk quietly in the lunchroom and in the halls

- keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Rules for lunch detention
  - Lunch detention is held during the student's entire lunch period
  - Students should be facing forward and on task the entire time.
  - No talking or making unnecessary noise is permitted. A violation of any of these rules (1 warning allowed) will result in the student being sent out of lunch detention and assigned 1 day of ISS.
  - Skipping lunch detention will result in the student being assigned in-school detention

**Transportation** The school district provides free transportation to and from school for students living in Cook County. Once a student boards the bus, he/she becomes the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. All students using bus transportation must abide by the rules which are established to ensure the safety of all passengers. Bus drivers may refer students to school administration for misbehavior. Administration will investigate and issue disciplinary action accordingly. Failure to obey rules may result in suspension of the privilege of riding a school bus. Please refer to Appendix A for more details: **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE Descriptive Code: JCDAD-R/EDCB-R**

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Visitors**

All visitors must report to the main office, sign in, and obtain permission to be on campus. There will be no visitors in the classrooms or instructional areas without permission from the office. Visitors without a pass will be asked to report to the office.

### **Telephone**

The clinic telephones are business telephones and will be used as such. In the event of sickness or emergency, students may obtain a pass from the teacher to come to the clinic. Such items as calling for permission to go home with a friend or to bring forgotten materials should be taken care of before coming to school.

### **Severe Weather and Fire Drills**

Drills will be conducted periodically for fire and severe weather. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom and students will be instructed in proper evacuation procedures. Drills for severe weather will include instruction in correct body placement against interior walls.

### **Change of Address/Phone Number**

Anytime a student has a change of address and/or phone number, the new information should be given to the office.

### **Medicine Procedure**

All medicine should be turned into the nurse in the clinic. A school nurse or other assigned staff member shall provide emergency services in case of injury or sudden illness of a child or staff member.

## **BEHAVIOR WHICH WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

The degree of discipline imposed will be in accordance with the progressive discipline process unless otherwise stated.

### **JB – ATTENDANCE - APRIL 1991**

In order to ensure that student progress is a continuous and orderly process, regular attendance is required of all students enrolled in the COOK County School System. Students shall be required to be in attendance for the full session of the school the child is eligible to attend, unless otherwise directed by a juvenile court of jurisdiction. Each principal shall ensure that procedures designed to maintain accurate daily attendance records are instituted. Such records shall be maintained in accordance with policy EFAA.

- **Possession, purchase of, sale, use in any amount, distribution, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, or alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant**

Penalty as prescribed by COOK County Board of Education policy: A recommendation for suspension for the remainder of the semester and loss of credit for course work shall be made to a disciplinary tribunal. For the first offense, the building administrator may but is not required to reduce the suspension to 10 days if the student seeks an evaluation from a board-approved intervention or treatment program and follows the recommendations of the program. Additionally, the student and parent will be required to meet with the Director of Student Services and may be subject to alternative school placement.

- **Possession, distribution, purchase of, attempted sale of substances represented as drugs or alcohol.** Same penalty as described above.
- **Sale, attempted sale, purchase of, distribution, or being under the influence of a prescription or over the counter drug.** The procedures for such medications at school are previously listed in the Student Handbook.

- **Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous instrument.**

A student shall not possess, use, handle or transmit any object that can be reasonably considered a weapon. Students who possess firearms on campus will be subject to a minimum of a calendar year suspension and will be referred to law enforcement officials. This includes hunting guns brought on campus or left in vehicles. COOK County Board of Education policy prohibits all knives of any blade length and toy weapons.

- **Verbal Assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm, disrespectful conduct, including the use of vulgar or profane language, and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.**

An immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal will occur if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon a teacher or other school personnel; possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function



- **Physical assault or battery, including sexual battery or certain acts of sexual harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions**

An immediate suspension and automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal will occur if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon a teacher or other school personnel; possible referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon another student or a person attending a school-related function. If a tribunal determines that a student has committed an act of physical violence resulting in substantial physical injury to a teacher, state law provides for the suspension of the student from all public school programs, including alternative education programs for the remainder of the school quarter or semester.

**Fighting**

First offense: 3-5 days of out-of-school suspension (OSS).

Student will be charged if fight leads to a school disruption.

Second offense: 5-7 days of out-of-school suspension (OSS).

Student will be charged.

Third offense: 7-10 days out-of-school suspension (OSS)

Student will be charged and referred to Tribunal.

**Note:** Joining into a fight that is already in progress will cause the most severe sanctions. If, in the opinion of the administrator, a fight would not have resulted had someone not intervened or interfered, the infraction may be addressed as a school disturbance and carry severe penalties. This includes instigating a fight, videoing, recording, posting, sending or sharing fight through any electronic communication including text messages or social media.

**\*\*NOTE ALL FIGHTING REFERRALS ARE CUMULATIVE, SO DISCIPLINE DISPOSITION WILL APPLY TO REFERRAL NUMBER.**

- **Disrespectful conduct, including use of vulgar or profane language, towards teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.**
- **Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual behaviors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature.**
- **Possession or use of tobacco in any form or related paraphernalia; Including VAPE (see VAPE policy)**

First offense: 3 days ISS, parents contacted, items Confiscated and not returned.

Second offense: 3 days out-of-school suspension (OSS), parents contacted, items confiscated.

Third 5 days out-of-school (OSS), parents contacted, items Confiscated and student will be on a discipline contract.

- **Damaging or defacing personal property, including the property of another student or any person legitimately at the school, or school property (vandalism or graffiti) during school or off-school hours.**

State law provides for referral to a disciplinary tribunal for substantial damages alleged to be intentionally

caused by a student on the premises to personal property belonging to a teacher, other school official, employee, any person legitimately at the school, or student, if, in the discretion of the school principal, the alleged damage could justify the expulsion or long-term suspension of the student.

- **Theft.**
- **Extortion or attempted extortion.**
- **Possession and/or use of fireworks or any explosive.**
- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat.**
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives; disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff.**
- **Classroom and school disturbances.**
- **Bus Misbehavior**

Compliance with the provisions of the code of conduct are enforced on the school bus, including bullying, physical assault, or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior. If a student is found to have engaged in physical acts of violence, bullying, or in physical assault of another person on the school bus, local board policy requires the meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district officials to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Contract provisions may include, but shall not be limited to, assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

- **Violation of school dress code.**

Students will be given three options to correct the violation:

1. Borrow or change into clothes that will comply with the dress code.
2. Check-out through the attendance office in order to go home to change into attire that complies with the dress code (Time out of class counts as an unexcused absence).
3. Have someone deliver to the school the appropriate attire for the student (Time out of class counts as an unexcused absence). Student will report to ISS and remain in ISS until he/she complies with dress code.

- **Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words (spoken or written) or indecent exposure.**
- Usage during school hours of a pocket pager, cell phone or electronic communication device, except for health or other unusual reasons approved by the Board of Education. State law provides that any student in violation shall be subject to disciplinary action. Students may not use any electronic device during the operation of a school bus, including audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones, or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. Students may not use mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.
- **Inappropriate public displays of affection.**
- **Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts will be subject to disciplinary action.**
- **Gambling or possession of gambling devices.**
- **Moving and non-moving driving violations.**
- **Giving false information to school officials or altering school documents.**
- **Cheating on school assignments or tests.**
- **Failure to comply with compulsory attendance, unexcused absences, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission.** Rules for attendance, tardiness, and check out procedures are found elsewhere in the Student Handbook.

**Being in an unauthorized area(s).**

- **Bullying.** Georgia law mandates that upon finding that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense

for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

- **Criminal law violations/Off-campus misconduct.** A student is subject to disciplinary action, including long-term suspension or expulsion, for any off-campus behavior 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.
- **Willful and persistent violation of the student code of conduct.**

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Assault:** Any serious 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. (Example: when one physically attacks or "beats up on" another person). This term should be used only when the intent is to do bodily harm and the attack is serious enough to warrant calling law enforcement or bringing in security.

**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 interferes with the learning process of students around him or her and which is likely to recur.

**Detention:** A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after school. Students are given one day's warning so that the parents or guardians can make arrangements for transportation.

**Disciplinary Tribunal:** A panel of three 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 term drug does not include prescriptions issued to the individual, aspirin or similar medications and/or cold medications that are taken according to product use recommendations and board policy. Caffeine pills are considered drugs. All medications that are taken at school must be brought to the appropriate staff person responsible for administering them in containers clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, and the appropriate dosage.

**Expulsion:** Suspension of a student from a public school beyond the current school quarter or semester. Only a disciplinary tribunal may take such action.

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

**Fighting:** Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and or no major injury. This term does not include verbal confrontations, tussles, or other minor confrontations.

**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 a chance even though accompanied by some skill, and in which a participant stands to win or lose something of value.

**In-school Suspension:** Removal of a student from class (es) or the regular school program and assignment of that student to an alternative program isolated from peers.

**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.

**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.

**Weapons:** The term weapon is defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1 and includes any object that 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: any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, any stun gun or laser, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife, straight-edge razor or razor blade, spring stick, metal knucks, chains, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nunchaku, or fighting chain, throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind.

## **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 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.

**PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PLAN**

- 1<sup>st</sup> **referral** - Appropriate disciplinary action based on level of offense and parent contact.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **referral** – Appropriate disciplinary action based on level of offense and referral to a counselor
- 3<sup>rd</sup> **referral** – Appropriate disciplinary action based on level of offense, parent conference
- 4<sup>th</sup> **referral** – Appropriate disciplinary action based on offense, SST referral, Excessive Referral letter to parent
- 5<sup>th</sup> **referral** - Placement on chronic discipline contract, Implement contract step 1, which is 3days of OSS,
- 6<sup>th</sup> **referral** - Implement contract step 2, which is 3 days of OSS and parent conference
- 7<sup>th</sup> **referral** - Implement contract step 3, which is 5 days of OSS and parent conference
- 8<sup>TH</sup> **referral**- Implement contract step 4, which is a referral to a disciplinary hearing, recommendation of Alternative School or Expulsion.

**\*\*NOTE ALL REFERRALS ARE CUMULATIVE, SO DISCIPLINE DISPOSITION WILL APPLY TO LEVEL OF OFFENSE, FOLLOWED BY REFERRAL NUMBER.**

## **COOK County Middle School Discipline Plan Level of Offenses**

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Disposition</b>
<b>Level 1</b>		
<b>Tier 1</b>		<b>Warning/Loss of Privileges/ Student Conference/Parent contact Loss of Privileges/ Parent/Student Conference /Detention/Saturday School</b>
<b>Tier 2</b>		<b>Parent/Student Conference/Detention/Saturday School (2)/1 Day ISS/Excessive Referral letter</b>
<b>Tier 3</b>		<b>1 - 2 Days ISS/Behavior contract/FBA/BIP Implement contract steps</b>
<b>Academic Dishonesty (32)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Intentional receiving or providing of unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assessments and assignments. May include but is not limited to failure to cite sources. Zero on assignment</b>
<b>Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assignments or exams *Redo Assignment</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a minor classroom assignment or project. Includes but is not limited to Intentional dishonesty on minor classroom projects, assignments, homework, etc. Zero on assignment</b>

	3	Intentional plagiarism or cheating on a major exam, statewide assessment or project or the falsification of school records. Includes but is not limited to cheating on major exams, statewide assessments or other state mandated academic work; Includes the falsification of school records; forgery; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on academic dishonesty three or more times. Zero on assignment
Dress Code Violation (31)	1	Non-invasive and non-suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 1 may include but are not limited to bare feet; trousers, slacks, shorts worn below waist level; no belt; clothing that is excessively baggy or tight; skirts or shorts that are shorter than mid-tPrimary; sunglasses worn inside the building; hats, caps, hoods, sweatbands and bandanas or other headwear worn inside school building
Violation of school dress code that includes standards for appropriate school attire	2	Invasive or suggestive clothing, jewelry, book bags or other articles of personal appearance. Pursuant to local dress codes, dress code violations for Level 2 may include but are not limited to depiction of profanity, vulgarity, obscenity or violence; promote the use or abuse of tobacco, alcohol or drugs; creates a threat to the health and safety of other students; creates a significant risk of disruption to the school environment; clothing worn in such a manner so as to reveal underwear, cleavage or bare skin; spaghetti straps, strapless tops, halter tops, see-through or mesh garments or other clothing that is physically revealing, provocative or contains sexually suggestive comments
Electronic Violation (34) (Possession of Unapproved Items Level 1)	1	Use of any electronic device, including but not limited to paging devices, cellular phones, smart phones, walk-talkies, and similar devices for non-instructional purposes during instructional class time or in areas deemed off limits for electronic device use by administrator.
Other- Attendance Related (30)	1 2	Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardies; ** Failure to report to class, skipping class (beyond 10 minutes), leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions. Examples include but not limited to repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardies; including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions. Will be treated as Level Two Offenses and Level Two discipline will apply. **
Possession of Unapproved Items (34)	1	The possession of any unauthorized item. Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous. Includes but is not limited to possession of toys, gadgets, personal items, etc; includes possession of pepper spray.
The use or possession of any unauthorized item disruptive to the school	2	The use of any unauthorized item (i.e. toys, mobile devices, or gadgets). Does not include the possession of fireworks, matches, toy weapons, or other items that can be construed as dangerous. Includes but is not limited to use of toys, gadgets, personal items, etc.



environment. (Note: The use of fireworks or incendiary devices must be coded as Arson.)	3	The use or possession of unauthorized items including but not limited to matches, lighters, toy guns, or other items that can be construed as dangerous or harmful to the learning environment; Includes the possession of fireworks but the use of fireworks should be coded as Arson; Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to unapproved items. Includes but are not limited to matches, lighters, or the possession of fireworks, bullets, stink bombs, CO2 cartridges; includes the use of pepper spray with injury.
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\*The penalties listed above are general guidelines therefore at the Administrator's discretion more or less severe punishment may be applied i.e. such as criminal charges may be used in extreme cases.

Administration always reserves the right to meet and agree on dispositions when punishment is based on school discipline plan.

Infraction	Tier	Disposition
<b>LEVEL 2</b>		
Tier 1		Detention/RMI/Extended timeout/1 - 2 day ISS/Parent contact
Tier 2		1 - 3 days ISS/Parent contact/BAT Team
Tier 3		1 - 3 days OSS/Parent contact/ Excessive Referral Letter/Behavior Contract
Classroom Disruption- Outside (33)	1	Minor disruption that includes not following hallway, restroom, cafeteria and other school area behavior matrix rules
(Student Incivility)	2	Major disruption outside classroom that requires administrative intervention.
Classroom Disruption (33)	1	Minor classroom disruption that includes not following classroom behavior matrix rules.
(Student Incivility)	2	Major classroom disruption that stops instruction for an extended period of time and requires administrative intervention.
Computer/Internet Misuse (05)	2	Unauthorized use of school computer for anything other than instructional purposes. Includes but not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view inappropriate material, and violation of school computer use policy

Use of a school computer for anything other than instructional purposes or unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data	3	Unauthorized use of a computer or computer network with the intention of deleting, obstructing, interrupting, altering, damaging, obtaining confidential information or in any way causing the malfunction of the computer, network, program(s) or data; includes disclosure of a number, code, password, or other means of access to school computers or the school system computer network without proper authorization. Includes but not limited to hacking, using school computer to change or alter school records (grades, attendance, discipline, etc.) * Refer to Level 3
Defiance/Willful Refusal (33)	1	Failure to comply with instructions
	2	Willfully and defiantly refuses to immediately follow school staff directives; Blatant insubordination
(Student Incivility)	2	Blatant insubordination; willfully and defiantly refuses to immediately follow school staff directives
Disorderly Conduct (06)	1	Creating or contributing to a moderate disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others. Includes but not limited to general bus misbehavior, spitting on property or persons, encouraging disruptive behavior
Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff or others. (Includes disruptive behaviors on school buses)	2	Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the normal operation of the school environment but doesn't pose a threat to the health or safety of others; may represent a repeat action.
	3	Creating or contributing to a severe disturbance that substantially disrupts the school environment or poses a threat to the health and safety of others. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on disorderly conduct three or more times during the same school year. * Refer to Level 3
Disrespect to Teacher/Staff (33)	1	Disrespect to school personnel that is generally considered disrespectful actions.
Inappropriate Language	1	Use of vulgar or inappropriate language towards another student.

(33)		
Other Disciplinary Event (24)	1	Discipline event not listed in Code of Conduct that warrants intervention and consequences. OSS/ISS/Expulsion are not options as consequences.
Taunting (33)	1	Teasing, taunting, demeaning others, picking, emotional stress (not on a repeated basis)
Threat/Intimidation (17)	2	Physical, verbal or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack. Examples include but not limited to physical, verbal or electronic threats.
Any threat through written or verbal language or act which creates a fear of harm and/or conveys a serious expression of intent to harm or violence without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to actual physical attack	3	School-wide physical, verbal or electronic threat which creates fear of harm without displaying a weapon or subjecting victims to physical attack; Note: Students that display a pattern of behavior that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm, threat of harm or visibly bodily harm may be coded as bullying. Includes but not limited to bomb threats or unauthorized pulling of the fire alarm. * Refer to Level 3
Tobacco / Vap Possession (18)	1	Unintentional possession of tobacco products See Tobacco/Vap policy.
Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on transportation to and from school	2	Use of or knowledgeable possession of tobacco products
	3	Distribution and/or selling of tobacco products; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on tobacco three or more times during the same school year.

\*The penalties listed above are general guidelines therefore at the Administrator's discretion more or less severe punishment may be applied i.e. such as criminal charges may be used in extreme cases.

Administration always reserves the right to meet and agree on dispositions when punishment is based on a school discipline plan.

Infraction	Tier	Disposition
<b>LEVEL 3</b>		
Tier 1		1 – 3 Days OSS / Hearing
Tier 2		3 – 5 Days OSS / Hearing
Tier 3		5 – 10 Days OSS / Hearing
<b>Accessory (00)</b>		<b>Causes someone else to commit a violation, helps in commission of violation; or advises, encourages, hires or procures acts in concert with another to commit violation.</b>
<b>Alcohol (01)</b>  Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol. Students under the influence of alcohol may be included if it results in disciplinary action.	1	Unintentional possession of alcohol
	2	Under the influence of alcohol without possession
	3	Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol
<b>Arson (02)</b>	2	<b>Attempt to commit arson or transporting or possessing incendiary devices to school; includes but not limited to the use of fireworks and trash can fires without damage to school property</b>
<b>Unlawful and intentional damage or attempted damage to any real or personal property by fire or incendiary devices.</b>	3	<b>Intentional damage as a result of arson-related activity or the use of an incendiary device and includes but not limited to setting fires to school property</b>
<b>Battery (03)</b>  Intentional touching or striking of another person to intentionally cause bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between battery and fighting and is that fighting involves mutual participation.)	1	<b>Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in no bodily injuries. Includes but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other intentional physical confrontations</b>
	2	<b>Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries. Includes but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical confrontations that result in mild or moderate injuries</b>

	3	Intentional physical attack with the intent to cause bodily harm resulting in severe injuries or any physical attack on school personnel; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on battery three or more times during the same school year. Includes but not limited to choking, pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, slapping, and other physical confrontations resulting in severe injuries; Includes any physical attack on school personnel; includes incidents serious enough to warrant calling the police or security
<b>Bullying (29)</b>  A pattern of behavior, which may include written, verbal, physical acts, or through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology occurring on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm or visibly bodily harm.	1	First Offense of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4. Includes but is not limited to a pattern of unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or using any type of electronic means to harass or intimidate
	2	Second incident of bullying as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4. Includes but is not limited to a pattern of unwanted teasing, threats, name-calling, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, hazing, physical attacks, extortion, social exclusion, coercion, spreading of rumors or falsehoods, gossip, stalking, or using any type of electronic means to harass or intimidate
	3	Repeated acts, as defined in Georgia Code Section 20-2-751.4, occurring on school property or school possession that is a willful attempt or threat to inflict injury, or apparent means to do so, any display of force that puts victim at fear of harm, any written, verbal or physical act that threatens, harasses, or intimidates; causes another person physical harm; interferes with a student's education; so severe and pervasive intimidated or threatens educational environment.
<b>Breaking/Entering - Burglary (04)</b>		Unlawful or unauthorized forceful entry into a school building or vehicle (with or without intent to commit theft). (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.).
<b>Drug Possession (07)</b>	1	Unintentional possession of prescribed or over the counter medication. Does not include the possession of narcotics or any illegal drugs. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-776.

Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics; or any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school	2	Any medication prescribed to a student or purchased over-the-counter and not brought to the office upon arrival to school. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-776.
	3	Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics. Does not include auto-injectable epinephrine as properly administered pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-776.
Fighting (08) ** SEE FIGHT POLICY Mutual participation in a fight involving physical violence where there is no one main offender and an intent to harm (Note: The key difference between fighting and battery is that fighting involves mutual participation.)	1	Physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in no bodily injuries; no injuries
	2	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in mild or moderate bodily injuries. Mild or moderate Injuries may include but are not limited to scratches, bloody noses, bruises, black eyes, and other marks on the body
	3	A physical confrontation between two or more students with the intent to harm resulting in severe bodily injuries. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on fighting three or more times during the same school year. Repeated physical confrontations resulting in severe injuries that require medical attention
Gambling (24)		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
Gang-related Activities (35)	2	Wearing or possessing gang-related apparel; communicating either verbally or non-verbally to convey membership or affiliation with a gang. Examples include but not limited to possession or wearing of gang-related clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or using colors to convey gang membership or affiliation; gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc. to convey gang membership or affiliation; committing any other illegal act or other violation of school policies in connection with gang-related activity.
Any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tatoos, graffiti, or attire which engage in school disruptive behavior	3	The solicitation of others for gang-membership, the defacing of school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans, threatening or intimidating on behalf of a gang, the requirement or payment for protection or insurance through a gang. Level 3 should be used for students who display a pattern of violating the school policy related to gang activity. Examples include but not limited to soliciting students for gang membership; tagging or defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey or promote membership or affiliation in any gang; requiring payment for protection, insurance, otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity; inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity.
Homicide (09)		Includes but is not limited to shooting, stabbing, choking, bludgeoning, etc.



<b>Kidnapping (10)</b>		<b>The unlawful and forceful abduction, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will</b>
<b>Providing False Information (33) (Student Incivility )</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Issuing false reports on other students</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>Issuing false reports to school personnel</b>
	<b>3</b>	<b>Includes but not limited to issuing false reports on school staff.</b>
<b>Repeated Offenses (36)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Collection of state reportable offenses (major incidents) occurring within a single academic year. Students provided Tier 1-3 interventions with no evidence of progress.</b>
<b>Robbery (13)</b> <b>The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. (Note: The key difference between robbery and larceny/theft is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Robbery without the use of a weapon; taking something by force or threat of force</b>
	<b>3</b>	<b>Robbery with the use of a weapon. Weapons may include but are not limited to guns, knives, clubs, razor blades, etc.</b>
<b>Serious Bodily Injury (27)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Infliction of "bodily harm" that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement: or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. Includes but not limited to any behavior that dismembers, disfigures, causes permanent loss of a limb or function of an organ and causes substantial risk of death.</b>
<b>Sexual Battery (14)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Oral, anal, or vaginal penetration against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent; touching of private body parts of another person either through human contact or using an object forcibly or against the person's will or where the victim did not or is incapable of giving consent. Includes but is not limited to rape, fondling, child molestation, indecent liberties and sodomy.</b>

<b>Sexual Harassment (15)</b>  <b>Non-physical and unwelcome sexual advances, lewd gestures or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature; requests for sexual favors; possession of sexually explicit images; gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment</b>	1	Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes or suggestive jokes that are not directed towards specific individuals. Includes but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes.
	2	Comments that perpetuate gender stereotypes, suggestive jokes or lewd gestures that are directed towards specific individuals or group of individuals. Includes but not limited to insensitive or sexually suggestive comments or jokes.
	3	Physical or non-physical sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on sexual harassment three or more times during the same school year.
<b>Sexual Offense (16)</b>  <b>Unlawful sexual behavior, sexual contact without force or threat of force, or possession of sexually explicit images; can be consensual</b>	1	Inappropriate sexually-based physical contact including but not limited to public groping, inappropriate bodily contact, or any other sexual contact not covered in levels 2 or 3. Examples include but not limited to public groping or inappropriate bodily contact.
	2	Inappropriate sexually-based behavior including but not limited to sexting, lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts. Examples include but not limited to sexting; lewd behavior, possession of pornographic materials; simulated sex acts.
	3	Engaging in sexual activities on school grounds or during school activities. Examples include but not limited to oral, anal or vaginal penetration; pimping; prostitution; indecent exposure of private body parts
<b>Theft/Larceny (11)</b>  <b>The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity (e.g., school) without threat, violence or bodily harm. (Note: The key difference between larceny/theft and robbery is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.)</b> <b>*Restitution</b>	1	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$25 and \$100. Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception.
	2	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value between \$100 and \$250. Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception.
	3	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity that does not belong to the student with a value exceeding \$250. Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on larceny/theft three or more times during the same school year. Includes but not limited to theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft by deception.

<b>Trespassing (19)</b> Entering or remaining on a public school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry. (Note: The key difference between Trespassing and Breaking & Entering-Burglary is that Trespassing does not include forceful entry into the school building.)	2	Entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose
	3	Entering or remaining on school grounds or facilities without authorization and with no lawful purpose. Refusing to leave school grounds after a request from school personnel; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on trespassing three or more times during the same school year.
<b>Vandalism (20)</b> The willful and/or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property without consent	2	Participating in the minor destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission
	3	Participation in the willful/malicious destruction, damage or defacement of school property or private property without permission; Level 3 may be used for students that violate the school policy on vandalism three or more times during the same school year.
<b>Weapons/Knife (22)</b> The possession, use, or intention to use any type of knife	1	Unintentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate
	2	Intentional possession of a knife or knife-like item without intent to harm or intimidate
	3	Intentional possession, use or intention to use of a knife or knife-like item with the intent to harm or intimidate
<b>Weapons/Handgun (25)</b>	3	Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a handgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Possession of a firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand; and any combination of parts from which a firearm described above can be assembled. NOTE: This definition does not apply to items such as toy guns, cap guns, bb guns and pellet gun [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]
<b>Weapons/Other (23)</b>	2	Unintentional possession of a weapon, other than a knife or firearm, or simile of a weapon that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Includes but is not limited to razor blades, straight-edge razors, brass knuckles, blackjacks, bats, clubs, nun chucks, throwing stars, stun guns, Tasers, etc.

<p>The possession, use, or intention to use any instrument or object that is used or intended to be used in a manner that may inflict bodily harm (does not include knives or firearms)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Intentional possession and use of any weapon, other than a knife or firearm, in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. Includes but is not limited to razor blades, straight-edge razors, brass knuckles, blackjacks, bats, clubs, nun chucks, throwing stars, stun guns, Tasers, etc.</p>
<p>Weapons/Rifle (26)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Intentional or unintentional possession or use of a rifle or shotgun in a manner that could produce bodily harm or fear of harm. The term "rifle" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger. The term "shotgun" means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger. [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]</p>
<p>Weapons/Other Firearms (23)</p>		<p>Intentional or unintentional possession or use of any firearms other than rifle, shotgun, or handguns (including starter pistols) and any other destructive device which includes explosives. Includes any weapon (including started gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e. bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. (NOTE: This does not include toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or Class-C common fireworks). [Pursuant to Gun-Free Schools Act - Public Law 107-110, Section 4141]</p>

\*The penalties listed above are general guidelines therefore at the Administrator's discretion more or less severe punishment may be applied i.e. such as criminal charges may be used in extreme cases.

\*\*Administration always reserves the right to meet and agree on dispositions when punishment is based on school discipline plan.

## Bullying

The Cook County School District believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the district have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation.

### HB 131-End to Cyberbullying Act

Issue: O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4 requires every local board to have a policy prohibiting bullying and to notify students and parents of such prohibition in the student handbook or code of conduct. Effective now, the bullying definition is revised as to acts of bullying that involve electronic communication. The old definition was limited to an act “by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system,” that otherwise complies with the statute. The new definition also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, “whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students’ or school personnel’s person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.”

The school district policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any student who engages in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school or a school-sponsored activity and during a school-sponsored activity.

Bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

- Loss of a privilege
  - Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus
  - Reassignment of classes
  - In-school suspension
  - Out-of-school suspension
  - Detention
  - Expulsion (through appropriate due process hearing)

- Assignment to an alternative school (through appropriate due process hearing)

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member by using the school district's complaint procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP

(1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school shall keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal designee.

The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

#### 1. Investigate

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School police, school counselors, school social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

#### 2. Notify

At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

#### 3. Discipline

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals.

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

#### 4. Follow Up

Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. Implement a planned method to provide aftercare and follow up. Reiterate to all the previously stated prohibition on retaliation.

## ANTI-VAPING CODE

The Cook County School District is committed to the health, safety, and welfare of its students. The District has determined that the use of vapes, vaporizers, e-cigarettes, or other devices used to inhale vapor by means of an electronic device (“vaping”) is harmful to the health of students and the good order of the School District. Vaping requires the use of a purpose-made or homemade device that vaporizes oil that may contain flavoring, nicotine, Cannabidiol (“CBD”) oil of varying concentrations, tetrahydrocannabinol (“THC”) oil of varying concentrations, or other substances that may or may not be legal to possess (“vape”). A vaping device is generally composed of a vaporizer, battery, reservoir for smoking oil, and a battery charger. By way of example and not as a limitation, vaping devices may be called vapes, Juuls, e-cigarettes, e-cigs, dab pens or other brand names.

It will be a violation of the Cook County Discipline Code to possess, use or transfer a vape as provided below.

For purposes of this section, the following definitions will apply:

- Cannabis. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) are the two primary cannabinoids that occur naturally in the cannabis sativa plant.
- CBD Oil. CBD oil is derived from a cannabis plant called hemp. Hemp contains a very high concentration of CBD and less than .3% by volume of THC.
- Low-THC Oil. Low-THC oil is derived from the cannabis plant that produces marijuana. Low-THC oil contains no more than 5% by volume of THC and may only be possessed or used under a doctor’s supervision with a prescription. Possession of Low-THC oil without a valid prescription is a felony.
- THC Oil. THC oil is derived from the cannabis plant and contains more than 5% by volume of THC. Some THC oil may contain up to 98% by volume of THC (3 - 5 times stronger than typical marijuana). Possession of THC oil is a felony.
- Vape. A vape is a purpose-made or homemade device that electronically vaporizes liquid to allow a user to inhale the vapor created in the lungs (i.e. vapes, juuls, e-cigarette, e-cig, dab pen, vape sticks, etc.) Vape will include individually or together vape battery(ies), reservoir(s), vaporizer(s), and/or vape charger(s).
- Vape Juice. Vape juice is a slang term for the liquid used by the vaporizer to create vapor. Vape juice may contain flavored juice, CBD oil, Low THC oil or THC oil.

*At present, there is no proven technology to quickly, easily and accurately test vape juice to identify its composition as flavored juice, nicotine juice, CBD oil, Low-THC oil or THC oil. Because of the documented, extreme health effects associated with high concentration THC oil this code creates a rebuttable presumption that vapes and vape juice contain THC oil. Absent clear and convincing evidence to the contrary the possession and/or use of vape juice will be treated as a Level 5 violation of this code.*

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**1 THE USE, ATTEMPT TO POSSESS, OR THE POSSESSION INDIVIDUALLY OR IN CONNECTION WITH OTHERS OF VAPE JUICE CONTAINING NICOTINE OR CBD OIL IN OR OUT OF A VAPE.**

**Disposition:**

- Circumstances will determine which one or more of the following alternatives will be considered:
  - o Counseling with student, parents, and
  - o Use 5 Days OSS
  - o Attempt to Possess 3 Day Oss
  - o Possession Individually 5 Days Oss
  - o Connection with others 3 Days OSS
  - o If the offense occurs on a bus or at a bus stop, in addition to the school disposition, the student may be suspended from bus transportation, 10 school days.

**REPORTING** None

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**2 THE USE, ATTEMPT TO POSSESS, OR THE POSSESSION INDIVIDUALLY OR IN CONNECTION WITH OTHERS OF VAPE JUICE CONTAINING NICOTINE OR CBD OIL IN OR OUT OF A VAPE. THE SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT USE, OR ATTEMPT TO POSSESS OR POSSESSION OF A VAPE IN ANY GIVEN SCHOOL YEAR.**

**Disposition:**

- An immediate external suspension for Ten days from school; and because of serious nature of the infraction, a Tribunal **may** be scheduled with a recommendation for long-term assignment to alternative school or expulsion.
- If the offense occurs on a bus or at a bus stop, in addition to the school disposition, the student may be suspended from bus transportation Remainder of school year but no less than 90 days.

**REPORTING** None

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**3 THE USE, ATTEMPT TO POSSESS, OR THE POSSESSION INDIVIDUALLY OR IN CONNECTION WITH OTHERS OR THE DISTRIBUTION OF VAPE JUICE CONTAINING LOW-THC OIL OR THC OIL IN OR OUT OF A VAPE.**

**Disposition:**

- An immediate external suspension for Ten days from school; and because of the serious nature of the infraction, a Tribunal will be scheduled with a recommendation for long-term assignment to alternative school or expulsion.
- If the offense occurs on a bus or at a bus stop, in addition to the school disposition, the student will be suspended from bus transportation 1 school calendar year from date of incident.
- Distribution a recommendation for a multi-year expulsion.

- **REPORTING** CCSD Police

## Message to Parents: Vaping Policy



Dear Parents:

While CCSD's student discipline code already prohibits the possession or use of vaping devices and oils anywhere on campus, this new policy adds more serious repercussions.

There has been a rising number of students not only using these devices at school to inhale nicotine, but also marijuana-based CBD and THC oil and other oils with dangerous contents that often are unknown to the student due to lack of regulation of these products. Students are becoming ill, overdosing, having seizures, passing out and requiring 911 response and hospitalization due to vaping. Students are encouraging classmates to try their devices at school and are using devices in shared spaces such as restrooms... further expanding the number of students negatively impacted by vaping.

Any students found with vaping devices or oil will be treated as if they are in possession of felony-level marijuana CBD and THC oil. Punishments will include immediate external suspension from school, long-term reassignment to an alternative school and possible expulsion.

Students must prove that their devices and oils do not contain marijuana-derived CBD and THC oil in order to avoid the most serious punishments, but even if that is proved, students still will face discipline for possessing nicotine-based or other vaping products (if you are not aware, these products are not legal for children younger than 18 to purchase or possess anywhere in Georgia).

We agree there are many other negative issues that impact students, from bullying to academic stress to economic struggles, and all of those are a priority and addressed through different policies and practices. Vaping is a new and serious threat to our students that is not yet on the radar of all parents. We need you to join us in helping protect the health of students by talking with your children about the dangers of vaping.

Information about this discipline code policy is being shared with all middle and high school students during school today by their Principal, and that message is online here. The U.S. Surgeon General website lists tips on how to talk with your child about vaping. If your child already is vaping and may be addicted to nicotine or THC, please seek assistance for them. For free help, visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

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POSITIVE,  
&  
POSITIVE  
THINGS  
WILL  
HAPPEN**

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**Program to Accelerate, Challenge, and Enrich Success**

**GIFTED EDUCATION**  
**COOK COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
**2019-20**

**DEFINITION:** The definition of a student eligible for gifted education services in Georgia may be found in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. This section defines services for students as intellectually gifted. The definition is expanded in Georgia Board of Education Rules 160-4-2-.08 Gifted Education and 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students. The latter states in section (2) definitions, (a) Gifted Student: ". . . a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual, creative and/or artistic ability(ies), possesses exceptional leadership skills, or excels in specific academic fields and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities."

**REFERRAL PROCEDURES:** Student referrals shall be non-discriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or economic background. Students may be referred in the following ways:

1. Automatic Referral: Any student who scores 90% on state adopted norm referenced test on total reading, total math, or total battery shall be referred for further testing. Reasonable consideration shall be applied to this referral procedure concerning the number of times a given student should be referred after mental ability testing indicates he/she is not qualified. Factors to be considered include difference between obtained score and required score; possibility of detriment to the student's self-esteem; and social or developmental factors that indicate the need for additional testing.
2. A teacher or any responsible person who has knowledge of the student's intellectual functioning may also refer a student. This may include teachers, parents, self or peers.
3. Re-evaluation of Ineligible Students: Unless there is compelling evidence that a child's performance level has changed, a two year waiting period is recommended.



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Address 1

Address 2

City, GA Zip

Phone

Email

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

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification,

evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.

12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

### **Section 504 Procedural Safeguards**

**1. Overview:** Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing.

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

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

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

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

**4. Hearing Procedures:**

The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.

Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.

The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.

The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.

The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.

The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.

The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.

The hearing shall be closed to the public.

The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.

Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.

Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.

Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.

Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

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

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



**Cook County School District**  
**Bus Rider's**  
**Safety Management Plan Handbook**

**Transportation Office**  
**(229) 896-2294**

Dear Parent:

The CCSD provides transportation to and from school as a courtesy for eligible students residing in the district. The State of Georgia prescribes the conditions governing school bus operations and funds the service by allowing the District a given amount for eligible students transported.

Eligible students are defined by State statute as those residing in the District at least two miles from the school they should attend, as measured by the nearest practical route. The nearest practical route is the nearest traveled public road which may or may not be the road used by the school bus. However, in Cook County, we transport all students regardless of the distance that they may live from the school. Address eligibility is continually audited year round so that we may determine whether a student is riding the proper bus. CCSD

does not run buses on private roads.

In order to meet the conditions outlined by the State and provide safe, prompt movement of students, the School district has adopted standard regulations and procedures and has provided restrictive measures for violations of the rules. For your information, these guidelines and regulations are outlined in this handbook.

The School District is pleased to provide transportation for its eligible students and solicits your assistance in helping create a safe and healthy operation. You may do so by reading this handbook and acknowledge receipt by completing a consent form provided by the bus driver and return this form within three days to the bus driver. We ask your cooperation with school personnel in developing proper behavior for those who ride buses.

If you should need information concerning bus routes, call the Transportation office.

Thank You

# Bus Safety Information

## Bus Rules

Parents or guardians are responsible for the safety, conduct, and timely arrival of their children to, from, and at the designated school bus stop before the arrival of the school bus for pick-up and transport to school and the timely departure of the child after the school bus leaves the designated school bus stop after transporting the children from school.

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School bus transportation plays a critical role in the education of our nation's students and is the direct link between a neighborhood and the classroom. More than 25 million children ride the yellow bus every school day. Here are tips to keep our children safe at the bus stop from the National Association for Pupil Transportation.

## **Getting Ready for School**

- Have your children put everything they carry in a backpack or school bag so that they won't drop things along the way.
- Encourage them to wear bright, contrasting colors so they will be more easily seen by drivers.
- Make sure children leave home on time so they can arrive at the bus stop before it is due, ideally at least five minutes early. Running after or in front of a bus is dangerous.

### **Walking to the Bus Stop**

- Walk young children to the bus stop or encourage children to walk in groups. There is safety in numbers; groups are easier for drivers to see.
- Practice good pedestrian behavior: walk on the sidewalk, and if there is no sidewalk stay out of the street. If you must walk in the street, walk single file, face traffic and stay as close to the edge of the road as you can.
- Stop and look left, right and then left again if you must cross the street. Do the same thing at drive -ways and alleys. Exaggerate your head turns and narrate your actions so your child knows you are looking left, right and left.

### **At the Bus Stop**

- Have children wait in a location where the driver can see them while driving down the street. Try to avoid waiting in a house or car.

- Do not let children play in the street. Playing with balls or other toys that could roll into the street is also dangerous.

### **Getting On and Off the Bus**

- Warn children that if they drop something getting on and off the bus, they should never pick it up. Instead, they should tell the driver and follow the driver's instructions.
- Remind children to look to the right before they step off the bus.
- If you meet your child at the bus stop after school, wait on the side where the child will be dropped off, not across the street. Children can be so excited to see you after school that they dash across the street and forget the safety rules.

### **Mobile Devices**

Cell phones and other electronic devices can be permitted on the school bus as long as:

- The Bus driver has given permission to use electronic devices on the bus.
  - They are in backpacks or other holders, keeping hands free to use handrails while boarding and departing the bus.
  - Sound is muted or headphones, ear buds or similar devices are used.
  - Content does not violate the law or school district policy and procedures.
  - Students cannot use communicate or video on cellphones while on the bus.
  - Use does not create a distraction for the driver.

## **Bus Expectations**

### **Bus Safety:**

1. Obey bus driver instructions at all times
2. Remain seated, facing forward
3. Be respectful by keeping hands to self and using appropriate language
4. Do not throw items inside the bus or out of the window
5. Keep all noise levels low, including voices, cell phones, or anything the bus driver indicates is too loud or distracting

6. Bus drivers have the right to assign seats to students.
7. Obey Bus drivers rules that may be posted on the bus.

**Driver will enforce disciplinary rules for SAFETY, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY**

***PARENTS & STUDENTS: Remember these important safety policies:***

1. Cell phones, audio, video recording, or any other items determined by driver to cause disruptive or unsafe conditions may not be transported. Students are responsible for any and all electronics brought onto the bus.
- B. Please note - bus driver will give your child(ren) a Consent Form/Receipt of Handbook form that must be completed, signed and returned to the bus driver within 3 days
- C. Students must depart the bus at their **designated bus stop** except when the student has a signed bus stop assignment form from the parent/guardian, approved through the school office, giving permission to get off at another stop. No more than two bus stops may be authorized for each student.
4. Students are responsible to use seatbelts when provided.
  5. Parents or guardians are responsible for the safety, conduct, and timely arrival of their children to, from, and at the designated school bus stop before the arrival of the school bus for pick up.
  6. Students, parents, or guardians shall arrive at least 10 minutes prior to pick-up or drop off scheduled bus stop times.
  7. **Kindergarten students** may not be left unattended or released without authorized adult at a bus stop. By registering students for home-to-school transportation, parents acknowledge all other grades have the ability to get themselves home.
  8. Parents may be financially responsible for any damage done by their student.
  9. Prohibited Items: Live animals, weapons, skateboards, scooters, bikes, balloons, glass containers. Large



products should be transported by parent/guardian.

## **SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE**

### **COOK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION**

The Cook County District Transportation system exists to provide safe and efficient transportation to and from each child's educational learning environment. Students who have the opportunity to ride district school buses may do so as long as they display behavior that is reasonable and safe. Choosing to engage in unacceptable behavior will result in loss of bus service. As per Georgia law "Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right."

- Every time a student violates a bus rule raises the chance a driver is distracted.
- Therefore, every time a student violates a bus rule directly raises the chance of a bus being in an accident.

The responsibility for student supervision by the District shall begin when the lights are activated on the bus in the morning and is retained until the child leaves the bus at the end of the day; or until released to the parent/guardian in a manner consistent with guidelines on release of students. Drivers are responsible for student conduct on their bus.

The Student Transportation Code of Conduct, as well as, each school Student Code of Conduct is in effect on the bus and at bus stops. When necessary, the Transportation Supervisor will conduct a preliminary investigation for violations of these rules that have occurred on the school bus or at bus stops. All student codes of conduct are in accordance with the Cook County School District Board Policy **JCDAD-R/EDCB-R** Code of Conduct.

The following information is a guideline for disciplinary actions when rules are violated. These guidelines are subject to change depending upon the severity of the student's actions. The transportation administrator and Student Services Director will review as required disciplinary consequences so it's effective and fair to all stakeholders to ensure a safe, orderly, and effective bus environment. Any violation of District school bus policy could be recommended for an expulsion hearing or could be removed from all Cook County public school buses for the remainder of the school year.

## Bus Discipline

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all routes. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extra-curricular events (i.e., field trips or competitions) will be the sole discretion of the school district. Parents or guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges.

Special Ed. students will receive discipline in conjunction with the student's I.E.P.

Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school may also result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual school building and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of serious misconduct will be provided to the School SRO and Student Services. Records may also be maintained in the transportation office.

Students damaging school buses will be responsible for the damage. Failure to pay such damages/ restitution (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks will result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

In cases involving criminal conduct (i.e., assault, weapons, possession or vandalism), the transportation office will press charges on the student involved and will inform the Superintendent, local law enforcement officials and the Director, Student Services

Except as otherwise set forth herein, the general progressive discipline plan for bus misbehavior is as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> Violation:** A documented warning from the Principal or Designee. Parent contacted and documented. Disciplinary action will be at the principal's discretion.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary (Loss of School Privilege) Middle School two (2) days. High School three (3) days

**3<sup>rd</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary one (1) day, Middle School three (3) days. High School five (5) days

**4<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary three (3) day, Middle School five (5) days. High School seven (7) days

**5<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary five (5) day, Middle School seven (7) days. High School ten (10) days

**6<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary seven (7) day, Middle School ten (10) days. High School, A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

**7<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary ten (10) day, Middle School, A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

**8<sup>th</sup> Violation:** PK -3 and Elementary, A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

Once students has reached to the accumulative number of referrals based on grade level he/she will automatic be suspended from bus school, pending hearing with the District Hearing Officer.

During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy. If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus. At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.

### **Level One: Disorderly Conduct**

Disorderly conduct includes any activity in which a student engages that tends to impede the orderly operation of or disturbs school bus operating procedures or activities.

Acts of disorderly conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Delaying the operation of the school bus
  
- Lying to the driver or aide/monitor
  
- Acting in a manner that is not safety related but that interferes with the operation of the school bus
  
- Using profanity among other students
  
- Failing to carry out directions issued by a staff person with supervisory responsibility

- Getting on or off the bus at an unauthorized stop without driver or aide/monitor permission
- Eating or drinking on the bus without driver or aide/monitor permission;
- Standing or sitting improperly while the bus is moving
- • Pushing, tripping, engaging in general horseplay
- Encouraging others to misbehave
- Defacing/destroying property (under 50 dollars damage student will be responsible for restoring the property before they can ride bus)
- Littering
- Throwing objects out of the bus without inflicting damage/injury
- Refusing to sit in an assigned seat on the bus
- Having hands, arms, head, and so on, out of the bus windows and/or doors when the bus's main passenger loading door is closed; or open to release students from the bus.
- Violating other non-safety-related procedures

During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy. If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus. At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.

### **Level Two: Disruptive Conduct**

Disruptive conduct includes those activities in which student engage that are directed against persons or property and the consequences of which tend to endanger the health or safety of themselves or others. Some instances of disruptive conduct may overlap certain criminal offenses, justifying both administrative sanctions and court proceedings

. Acts of disruptive conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fighting (physical contact) \* Automatic Removal\*
- Stealing (under 50) student will be responsible for restoring the property
- Making threats against others;
- Defacing property (damage 50-100 dollars student will be responsible for restoring the property before they can ride bus)
- Spitting, harassing, threatening, intimidating, or physically abusing or hitting anyone • Using profanity, abusive language, and/or obscene gestures directed at school official ( Min 5 Days off bus)

- Acting in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of the school bus
  
- Refusing to obey school personnel or agents (such as volunteer aides or chaperons) whose responsibilities include the supervision of students ( Min 5 Days off bus)
  
- Occupying or blocking the school bus in any way with the intent to deprive others of its use;
  
- Operating an electronic devices radio or other audio device, a video, or other such devices that jeopardies the safety of others
  
- \* Tobacco /Vapors Pipes/ Electronic Cigarettes (Follow vaping Policy)
  
- \* Verbal sexual harassment \* Administrative referral\*
  
- Acting in any other manner that interferes with the safe delivery of student transportation services. (Min 5 Days off bus)
  
- Blatant refusal to obey a reasonable request of school administrator/ transportation administrator consequence as appropriate by administrator (Min 5 Days off bus)

**Fighting on a bus is among the most serious offenses committed by students, as it endangers everyone riding the bus by causing the driver's attention to be diverted. Fighting on a school bus may result in immediate suspension from the bus and/or school with no prior warning or progressive disciplinary action being taken.**

During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy. If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus. At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.

### **Level 3: Criminal Conduct (along with school Discipline plan)**

Criminal conduct includes those activities in which students engage that result in violence to themselves or to another's person or property or that pose a direct and serious threat to the safety of themselves or others in or around the school bus and at the school bus stop while the bus is present. These activities usually require administrative actions that result not only in the immediate permanent removal of the student from the school bus and the school but also in the intervention of law enforcement authorities and/or in action by the board.

Acts of criminal conduct include, but are not limited to, the following on school-supervised property, equipment (including state- and district-owned school buses) and at school bus stops when the school bus is present:

- Assault and battery, extortion
  
- A bomb threat or other threat that directly endangers the safety of a person or the school bus;
  
- The possession, use, or transfer of a weapon;
  
- Sexual offenses physical (school SRO will be notified)
  
- The defacement or vandalism of property that results damages over \$100 (student will be responsible for restoring the property)
  
- The theft, possession, or sale of stolen property (over \$50 student will be responsible for restoring the property)
  
- Arson or the threat of arson;
  
- Threat to the bus driver, aide/monitor, a teacher, principal, or the district's designee.
- Furnishing, selling, or possessing controlled substances unauthorized substances, as defined by board policy (drugs, narcotics, or poison, prescriptions)



- Violation of the District Drug Policy. (Suspension or expulsion from school and bus)

\*The Board adopts the stipulations of the Drug Act passed by the Georgia Legislature. This act states that it is unlawful for any person to knowingly or intentionally possess a controlled substance (depressant, stimulant, counterfeit or illegal drug). Any students who violate this act are subject to suspension and/or expulsion from school and prosecution by law enforcement officer.

\* Students are not allowed to knowingly possess, use, transmit, or to be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, nor to knowingly possess, use or transmit paraphernalia related to the illegal use of drugs: on the school grounds during and immediately after school hours; on the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group; OR, off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event. Drug Paraphernalia: Possession is construed to mean on the person himself, in his locker, books, desk, book bag, or any other student property, which at the time is or was on school property. "Paraphernalia" means any instrument,

Consequences for level three Violation will result in automatic suspension from bus /school and will result in referral to the District Hearing Office.

### **Prohibited Items**

- Tobacco
- Live animals or insects
- Glass containers
- Alcoholic beverages
- Weapons, explosive devices, harmful drugs or chemicals
- Objects that do not fit in the student's lap or on the floor between the knees

without extending above chin level.

- Matches or cigarette lighters
- Food or drinks (eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted.)
- All electronic equipment including cell phones must be turned off
- Any balls not in backpacks (footballs, soccer, basketballs, tennis, etc.)

- Backpacks with wheels and handles
- Aerosol sprays of any kind
- Cosmetics out on bus (perfume, lipstick, fingernail polish, etc.)



### **Seclusion and Restraint**

Cook County Schools shall require that all schools and programs within the district comply with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.35 concerning "seclusion" and "restraint," as those terms are defined within the rule.

*Rationale:* Cook County Schools is committed to the mission of providing a safe learning environment for all students. However, it may be necessary at some times to utilize physical restraint of a student in situations of immediate danger. This policy provides the requirements regarding the use of physical restraint of students.

*Definition:* Physical restraint is direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly reduces a student's movement. Physical restraint does not include providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing guidance to a location, or providing comfort.

*Use:* Physical restraint of a student may be used only in those situations in which a student is an immediate danger to self or others and is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques.

Physical restraint will be terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to self or others or if

the student is observed to be in severe distress.

**Requirements:** The designated staff members must be trained in the use of physical restraint utilizing a common restraint curriculum selected for Cook County Schools. The curriculum will include information about positive techniques, prevention strategies and de-escalation strategies as well as restraint techniques. Staff members will not participate in a restraint prior to being trained in the restraint curriculum and in this policy. Parents will be provided information about the program's policy governing the use of physical restraint. Parents will be notified in writing within one school day when physical restraint is used with their student. Each use of restraint will be documented by staff participating in or supervising the restraint using the Cook County Schools incident report form A log of the use of physical restraint will be maintained by each school site administrator and will be submitted regularly to the special education director. Incident reports will be reviewed by Cook County leadership staff or restraint curriculum trainers on a minimum of a monthly basis. Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that incidents of physical restraint are observed by another staff member who is trained in the restraint curriculum. Documentation of training in the restraint curriculum will be maintained by each school site principal and submitted to the special education director at the completion of each training activity. No Cook County staff member shall participate in the restraint of a student without being trained according to Cook County's chosen restraint curriculum. Students in immediate danger to himself/herself or others will be moved if possible by the team to a supervised area until behavior is no longer a threat to himself/herself or others.

**Prohibited Actions:** The use of prone restraint, mechanical restraint and chemical restraint is prohibited. The use of seclusion is prohibited. Seclusion is a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. Physical restraint is prohibited as a form of discipline or punishment, when the student cannot be safely restrained, or when the use would be contraindicated due to the student's psychiatric, medical, or physical conditions as described in the student's educational records.



# COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES



## **STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

**Grievance Procedure:** This procedure is established in order to provide a formal method for the resolution of any grievance concerning the treatment of students by district personnel which is alleged to violate either district policy or student legal rights. These formal procedures should not be used unless informal conferences with the appropriate teacher(s) and principal do not resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the grievant. A grievance may be brought by any students, or the parents of such students, rights under any district policy or applicable law have allegedly been violated. However, when a grievance is brought by a minor student, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be a party to the proceedings. Grievances should be settled as close as possible

to their point of origin. It is important that grievances be settled quickly. The number of days specified on each level should be considered a maximum, but may be extended by mutual agreement. All hearings should be as informal as possible, but must be conducted in accordance with due process. A grievant may be represented by counsel and shall be allowed to introduce all relevant evidence and to cross examine adverse witnesses. A grievant who chooses to be represented by counsel must give sufficient advance notice to enable the school district to be likewise represented. All decisions shall be in writing, shall be confined to matters brought forth in the hearing, and shall state the facts and reasoning upon which they are based. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, the grievant shall be given reasonable notice of the time and place for the hearing. All such hearings shall be private except that any hearing before the Board shall be public unless the grievant declares the subject matter to be private and the Board chooses to go into executive session. The district Title IX Coordinator shall be consulted whenever sex discrimination is alleged in a formal grievance.

### LEVEL ONE

Grievant who cannot resolve a matter informally may submit a grievance in writing to the principal of the school in which the grievance arose. All grievances must be submitted within ten school days after the date on which the action complained of has occurred. It must clearly state the district policies or student legal rights which are alleged to have been violated. A hearing may not be necessary at this level because the principal may not have become aware of all pertinent information through previous informal conference.

However, a hearing will be held at the request of either the principal or the grievant. Such hearing shall be held within five school days after the grievance is submitted unless a later date is mutually agreeable. The principal shall render a decision within three school days after submission of the grievance or holding of a hearing as appropriate. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision or if no decision is given within the allotted time, the grievance may be taken to level two, provided that notice of appeal is made within five school days.

### LEVEL TWO

Grievances may be initiated at this level by the filing of timely notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five school days. Such notice must be in writing and accompanied by copies of the original grievance and the decision, if any, made at level one.

If the notice of appeal contains a request for a hearing or the Superintendent believes one to be necessary, a hearing shall be held within ten days of such notice unless a later date is agreeable to both parties. The Superintendent shall render a decision within five school days of the notice of appeal or hearing as appropriate. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision or if no decision is given within the allotted time, the grievance may be taken to level three provided that notice of appeal is made within ten school days.

### LEVEL THREE

The grievant may request a hearing before the Board by submitting timely notice of appeal with the Superintendent within ten school days. Such notice shall be accompanied by a copy of the original grievance and the decisions, if any, made at level one and two. In addition, such notice shall contain a statement of reasons why such decisions are unacceptable. If the Board choose to hear the appeal the grievant will be given reasonable notice of the time and place of the hearing. The Board will render a written decision within a reasonable time after such hearing.

## **DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin (Title VI), sex (Title II & Title IX), or disability (Section 504) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Employees, students and the general public are hereby notified that the Cook County School System does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies. The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for





2. whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications of certification criteria have been waived;
3. the college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
4. whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If a parent wishes to request information concerning his/her child's teacher's certification, he/she should contact the principal at 229-549-5999.

**[Section 1111(h)(6)]**



# Georgia Professional Standards Commission

*Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning*



## **FERPA**

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

FERPA affords parents and eligible students (over 18 years of age or attending a postsecondary institution) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal (or appropriate official) a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The principal or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. To request amendment of a student record, parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request, specifying the part of the record they want changed and why it is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. If the school decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided with the notification of the right to a hearing.
- (3) The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that disclosure without prior written consent is authorized by FERPA and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. § 99.31. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her

professional responsibility. A school official is a person employed by the school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including school nurses and school resource officers); a member of the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or online educational services provider); a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the school district has outsourced services, such as electronic data storage; or a 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. The district allows school officials to access only student records in which they have a legitimate educational interest. School officials remain under the district's control with regard to the use and maintenance of PII, which may be used only for the purpose for which disclosure was made, and cannot be released to other parties without authorization.

Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks/intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) FERPA requires the school district, with certain exceptions, to obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student's education records. However, the district may disclose appropriate designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent or eligible student has advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from the student's education records in certain school publications, such as the annual yearbook, graduation or sports activity programs, honor roll or other recognition lists, or on websites or social media sites affiliated with the school or school district.

The School District has designated the following information as directory information:

- (a) Student's name, address, & telephone number;
- (b) Student's date and place of birth;
- (c) Student's e-mail address;
- (d) Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
- (e) Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
- (f) Dates of attendance at schools within the district;
- (g) Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
- (h) Photograph; and
- (i) Grade level.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school districts receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers unless parents have advised the school district that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within 10 business days after officially enrolling in school or within 10 business days of the date of the release of this notice.

(5) You are also notified that from time to time students may be photographed, videoed, or interviewed by the news media at school or at some school activity or event. The principal will take reasonable steps to control access to students by the media or other individuals not affiliated with the school or district. However, your submission of a written objection does not constitute a guarantee that your student will not be photographed, videoed, or interviewed, or that such information will not be posted on websites or social media



sites not affiliated with the school or district, or in circumstances which are not within the knowledge or control of the principal.

(6) You have the right to file with the U. S. Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the school 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  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

(7) The Georgia Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act affords parents and eligible students the right to file a complaint with the school district regarding a possible violation of rights under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-667 or under other federal or state student data privacy and security laws. Such complaints may be filed with:

Superintendent of Cook County Schools; 1109 N. Parrish Ave., Adel, GA 31620

### **Parents Right to Know**

In compliance with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act the Cook Middle School would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teachers. The following information may be requested:

- 1.) Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- 2.) Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualification criteria have been waived;
- 3.) The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- 4.) Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualification.

### **VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHY NOTIFICATION**

At various times during the school year, your student might be photographed or videotaped participating in activities at Cook Middle School such as yearbook pictures, club activities, and award presentations. These pictures may be published in both the school newspaper and the Adel News Tribune. CMS news, which is broadcast over closed circuit television, may also highlight various students participating in class activities or team sport activities.

As a parent you have the right to participate in the decision whether to allow your student to be videotaped or photographed. If you do not give permission, please sign on the appropriate line on the letter that was provided to you and return it to school.

### **INTERNET USE WHILE AT SCHOOL**

The Cook County Board of Education working with the Cook County Schools Administration has provided internet access for all students in the school system. The use of the internet connects teachers, staff and students to each other and to people and materials worldwide. It is the policy of the Board to support resources that enhance learning; however, the Board will not be responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through the internet.

At Cook Middle School, the privilege of use of the internet is provided under the direct supervision of the teachers. Students' access without supervision is not allowed. A student's misuse or abuse of this privilege

will result in two days in ISS under the Code of Conduct as stated in the CMS Agenda and/or loss of the privilege to be determined by the CMS administration.

As a parent you have the right to participate in the decision whether to allow your student this supervised access to the internet. You should review this privilege and its accompanying responsibilities with your student. If you do not give permission, please sign on the appropriate line on the letter that must be returned.