

# SOUTHWEST GEORGIA STEM CHARTER SCHOOL

185 Pecan Street  
Shellman, Georgia 39886  
Phone: 229.345.3033  
Fax: 229.679.2018

## 2023-2024 STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK



Ginger Almon  
Principal

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

**District Information**

**Faculty & Staff**

**School Calendar**

**General Information**

Arrival/Dismissal

Transportation

Book Bags  
Cafeteria Information  
Communication Devices  
Field Trips  
Lost/Damaged Textbooks  
Parent Involvement Policy  
Parent Teacher Conferences  
School Telephone  
Visitors

**Academics**

Curriculum and Instruction  
Homework Policy  
Report Cards and Progress Reports  
Promotion and Retention Policy  
Infinite Campus Parent Portal  
Testing  
Section 504 Procedural Safeguards  
Student Recognition  
CCRPI and Student Growth Percentiles  
Educational Acronyms

**Health**

**Attendance Protocol**

**Extra-Curricular Activities**

**Code of Conduct & Student Discipline**

**Board of Education Policy Statements**

Equal Education Opportunities  
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)  
Gender Equity  
Homeless Students  
Legal Guardianship  
Technology

**School Supply Lists**

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**School Vision and Mission Statement**

**SGSC Vision**

*A focused, competitive, hands-on, and joyful learning environment for all students that will prepare them to become successful, gracious, scholarly citizens.*

**SGSC Mission**

*Provide distinguished and integrated instruction in an environment that cultivates respect, is inclusive of all, and lays the foundation for excellence and life-long learning.*

**Members of the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board of Education**

Anthony Lee, Chairman - tlee@sowegastemcharter.org  
Chris Weathersby, Vice Chairman - cweathersby@sowegastemcharter.org  
Patricia Goodman, Secretary - pgoodman@sowegastemcharter.org  
Russell Nuti - rnuti@sowegastemcharter.org  
Erwin Thomas - ethomas@sowegastemcharter.org

**Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Central Office Staff**

Ginger Almon, Superintendent/Principal, Title IX Coordinator  
Lori Wilson, Chief Financial Officer and Human Resources  
Kadie Phillips, Director of Federal Programs, Parent Engagement Coordinator, Homeless Liaison  
Kathy Hayes, District Data Coordinator and Nutrition Manager

**FACULTY & STAFF**

<b><u>Pre-K</u></b> Julie Jackson Kayla Foxworth	<b><u>Instructional Coach</u></b> Kim Crowdis
<b><u>Kindergarten</u></b> Alex Redding Mackenzie Willis	<b><u>Graduation Coach</u></b> Courtney Greenway <b><u>Counselor - 49%</u></b>

	Belinda Smith
<b><u>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</u></b> Mary Martha Ivey Jordan Scarborough	<b><u>Physical Education</u></b> Sandi Henson Jay Tully Bubba Redding
<b><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</u></b> Sonja Griffin Katy Jackson	<b><u>Administrative Assistant</u></b> Deborah Richter
<b><u>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</u></b> Tonya Germany Ashley Perryman	<b><u>Athletic Director</u></b> Eric Lumpkin
<b><u>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</u></b> Becki English Amy Ferri	<b><u>Custodial</u></b> LRL Ventures and Management - Renee Bentley
<b><u>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</u></b> Angie Bell Michael Duke	<b><u>Cafeteria</u></b> Cadie Kelley Stephanie McGruder Vanishia Allen Mark Peavey
<b><u>Middle School and High School Teachers</u></b> Ben Crowdis - Middle Grades Math Haley Kintzinger - Middle Grades Math Tessa Bell - Middle Grades ELA Shawn Banks - Middle Grades Science Tiffany Bagwell - Middle Grades Social Studies Hope White - High School History/Spanish Gina McNair - Middle/High ELA Leigh Ann Walton - High School ELA Michelle Horne - Middle/High School Math Cristy Busby - High School Math Cindy Fincher - Middle/High School Science Venecia Lowry - Middle/High School Science Keith Beck - Middle/High School History Heather Page - Computer Science/CTAE Director Jay Tully - Physical Education/Health Courtney Greenway - High School Marketing Scott Wilkerson - Middle/High School Art	<b><u>Special Education Teachers</u></b> Velvet Scoggins - Director Kimberly Moore Christy McNamara Lindsey Giddens Kimberly Wilburn Myles Gay
	<b><u>Paraprofessionals</u></b> Jessica Hunter Kayla Foxworth Jill Lee Summer Fuller Gina Atchley Wanda Smith Alicia Babb Pattie Holmes
<b><u>Early Intervention Program</u></b> Annette Spoon - Math Becky Peachey - Math	<b><u>School Nurse</u></b> Kristen Roland

Georgia Moye - Reading Tammy Taylor - Reading Toni Avera - Reading	
<b><u>Gifted</u></b> Cindy Carlson Kim Peak	<b><u>Maintenance</u></b> Wayne Harrison
<b><u>Media Center</u></b> McKenzie Ragan	<b><u>MTSS Coordinator</u></b> Leslie Presley
<b><u>Transportation</u></b> Richie Smith - Lead Porter-Moore Phyllis Slaughter Wilson Harris McGruder	Sarah Karen Hawkins Stephanie <b><u>Title IX Coordinator</u></b> Ginger Almon

**EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or sex in any student program. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and all accompanying regulations.

Any student, parent or other person who believes he or she or any student has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

**CLOSED CAMPUS**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School maintains a closed campus while in operation. This includes exterior entry doors, as well as classroom interior doors, once instruction begins for each class period. All visitors and students must enter the main building from the main entrance at the front of the school. Door open for brief periods must have a staff member in the entry for direct monitoring. No exterior doors may be propped open at any time.

**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their education records. (An “eligible student” under FERPA is a student who is 18 years of age or older or who attends a postsecondary institution at any age.) These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. receives a request for access. A student should submit to the school leader a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. The school leader will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where

the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the school leader she advises the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. A student who wishes to ask the school to amend a record should write the school official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified 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 FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The School discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is typically includes a person employed by the School in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person serving on the board of trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the School who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent or a student volunteering to assist another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the School. Upon request, the school also discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.] Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School 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, DC 20202

### **2023-2024 Letter To Parents:**

August 4, 2023

### **Notice of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Policy to Parents**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to the contrary in accordance with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their scholar's information disclosed without their prior written consent. [Note: These laws are Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).] If you do not want Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School in writing by August 31, within two weeks of receiving notice of updated directory/FERPA policies, or—if your child is not enrolled on the first day of class— within one week of enrollment. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Scholar's name.
- Address Electronic mail address.

- Photograph.
- Date and place of birth.
- Major/field of study.
- Dates of attendance.
- Grade level.
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports.
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams.
- Degrees, honors, and awards received.
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended.
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.
- A student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

Again, if you do not want Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to disclose any or all of the types of the information designated as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School in writing by August 31, 2022. If you have any questions about this notice, please contact the school - 229.345.3033.

### **THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors ("eligible students") certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the following rights:

1. To consent before students are required to submit a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED).
  - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
  - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
  - Sex behavior or attitudes;
  - Illegal, anti-social, self-incrimination, or demeaning behavior;
  - Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  - Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;



- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
  - Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility
2. To receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
    - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
    - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and
    - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others;
  3. To inspect, upon request, and before administration or use of the following:
    - Protected information surveys of students;
    - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
    - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will directly notify parents/guardians and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will also directly notify parents and eligible students, through this Student Handbook, letters to parents/guardians, or email, at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates of and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in the following activities:

1. Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution
2. Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the Georgia Department of Education
3. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Ave., SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

### **GENDER EQUITY**

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school may be submitted to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.

### **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ON HOMELESSNESS** If your family lacks Then your children have

the right to:  Enroll in school without proof of residency, immunization, school records, or other documents.  Attend school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.  Receive all the school services available to other students. Local Contact: Kadie Phillips, Homeless Liaison, 185 Pecan Street, Shellman, GA 39886 - Phone: 229-345-3033 - Email: kphillips@sowegastemcharter.org

Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) that requires each state to ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth. If your family lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and is forced to live in any of the following situations your child is considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (example: evicted from home, etc.).
- In a motel, hotel, campground or similar setting due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- In an emergency or transitional shelter
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans.
- In a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or a similar setting.
- Awaiting Foster placement
- Abandoned in a hospital or other setting

If you and your child(ren) are homeless, your child has the right to:

- a. Enroll in school without proof of residency, immunization, school records, or other documents.
- b. Attend school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless.
- c. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- d. Receive all the school services available to other students.

The School is committed to ensuring that homeless and other factors such as lack of transportation, difficulty completing assignments do not affect the educational progress of homeless students. If your family experiences homelessness, please contact Federal Programs Director Kadie Phillips to discuss assistance the District may provide you.

### **Limitation of Liability**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware. While Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School employs filtering and other safety and security mechanisms, and attempts to ensure their proper function, it makes no guarantees as to their effectiveness. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for unauthorized transactions conducted over the school network.

### **LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP**

There are occasions when forms are sent home requiring the signature of a parent or guardian. These documents are valid only if the custodial parent or legal guardian signs them. Consequently, if someone other than the custodial parent enrolls a student in school, proof of legal guardianship will be required within 30 days of enrollment.

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board of Directors whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to do their

tasks more effectively.

Members of the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board of Directors have confidence in the professional staff and desire to support their actions in order that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. This policy does not supersede any employee’s or citizen’s right to contact Board members directly. However, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will be referred to the administration for study and possible solution.

The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of and most effective way to resolve complaints involving instruction, discipline, transportation, or learning materials is as follows:

**CHAIN-OF-COMMAND**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Transportation</b>
Teacher	Teacher	Lead Bus Driver
Principal	Principal	Principal
Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent
School Board Member	School Board Member	School Board Member
State Department of Education	State Department of Education	State Department of Education

\*ANY ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THIS CHART ADDRESSED BY PRINCIPAL

**Grievances**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is a public charter school, chartered by the State Charter Schools Commission. The following outlines our governance and grievance policies:

The Board of Directors of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

The purpose of the Board is to set the general direction and policy of the school, not to manage it on a daily basis. Rather, the School Leader and other administrators manage the school by implementing the policies the Board has enacted. Furthermore, Directors are charged with fostering a positive relationship with school faculty and staff, parents, students, and the community at large. The Board selects and evaluates the School Leader, oversees the finances of the school, recruits and orients high- quality candidates to serve on the Board, and ensures effective long-range planning. All Board decisions should be made within the parameters of the school's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and previously enacted policies.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is a separate entity from its authorizer and the school district in which it is located. By its decisions, the Board shall guard and steward this separateness, both for its own sake and for the sake of the charter school movement.

**Grievance Policy**

**Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances Policy**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for parents and students for filing complaints against the school or employee of the school on any and all matters including complaints concerning Federal Programs.

**Process for Presenting a Complaint or Grievance:**

The complaint or grievance should first be presented at the lowest level of authority as follows:

- Classroom related concerns – to the Teacher
- Extracurricular related concerns – to the Coach/Athletic Director
- All other School related concerns – to the Principal

If the Parent, Guardian, or Student does not agree with the result the complaint or grievance should be presented to the next level of authority as follows:

- Teachers – to the Principal
- Extracurricular Coach/Athletic Director – to the Principal
- The Principal – to the Superintendent or CFO depending on the nature of the complaint

If the Parent, Guardian, or Student does not agree with the result, an appeal may be filed with the next level of authority as follows:

- The Principal – to the Superintendent or CFO depending on the nature of the complaint
- The Superintendent or CFO – to The Board (All official complaints must be presented to The Board in accordance with the Public Participation at Meetings of The Governing Board)

**Responses to a Complaint or Grievance:**

1. The faculty and administration shall make an honest and forthright effort to resolve complaints or grievances as quickly as possible at the most immediate level of authority.
2. Decisions rendered by the Governing Board shall be considered final.

**When Presenting a Complaint or Grievance:**

1. Communication MUST be respectful and in a conversational tone at all times.
2. Any teacher, staff member, or administrator shall have the authority to table any meeting considered to be unproductive, threatening, hostile, inappropriate, or lacking appropriate representation.

**Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School - 2023-2024 School Calendar**

Date	Event
July 31-August 3	Pre-Planning for Teachers - (TWD)
August 4	First Day of School
September 4	Labor Day - NO SCHOOL
September 6	Progress Reports - 1st Quarter
October 5	End of 1st Quarter
October 6, 9	Fall Break, Columbus Day - NO SCHOOL
October 10	Teacher Workday
October 11	Report Cards - 1st Quarter / 2nd Quarter Begins
November 10	Veterans' Day Observance - NO SCHOOL
November 9	Progress Reports - 2nd Quarter
November 20-24	Thanksgiving Holidays - NO SCHOOL
December 15	End of 2nd Quarter
December 18-January 2	Christmas Holidays - NO SCHOOL
January 3	Teacher Workday - No School for Students

January 4	Return to School/Report Cards - 2nd Quarter/3rd Quarter Begins
January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day - NO SCHOOL
February 2	Progress Reports - 3rd Quarter
February 16	Teacher Workday - No School for Students
February 19	President's Day - NO SCHOOL
March 8	End of 3rd Quarter
March 11	Report Cards - 3rd Quarter / 4th Quarter Begins
March 29	Teacher Workday - No School for Students
April 1-5	Spring Break - NO SCHOOL
April 19	Progress Reports - 4th Quarter
April 29th-May 3rd	EOG Georgia Milestones Assessment - 3rd-8th
May 6th-10th	EOCT - High School
May 17	End of 4th Quarter / Early Release ½ day
May 20-21	Teacher Workdays

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

#### **School Hours**

Pre-K through twelfth grade school hours are from 8:00 AM until 3:30 PM each day. Students are not to arrive on campus prior to 7:30 AM for any reason. Students may enter the building at 7:30 AM for breakfast and must be in their classrooms no later than 8:00 AM.

Students who are late - after 8:00 am - to school must report to the front office - in the main building - accompanied by their parent. Classes begin immediately after attendance is checked. Students should be in school by homeroom, so as not to miss any instructional time.

#### **After School**

Students not riding the bus must be picked up no later than 3:30 PM unless they are involved in after school activities (in which case they must report to that area immediately). All students are expected to go directly home after dismissal in the afternoon. If students are staying for a school related activity, the student must inform his/her parents in advance of the activity and establish appropriate means for getting home after this activity. Students cannot make arrangements at school to visit a friend when parents do not know of this in advance.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### **Bus**

We look forward to transporting your child to and from school this year - provided there is enough room on the bus route for the identified county. To ensure that your child will have a safe riding experience, we ask that you review the safe riding instructions that follow, now and periodically throughout the school year.

### **Safe Riding Instructions**

Statistics show that children riding a school bus are much safer than riding any other form of transportation on the roadways. The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board of Directors considers the school bus as an extension of the classroom; therefore, all the same rules for the classroom will apply while on the bus.

### **While on the Bus**

Once students board the bus, the driver is in full charge of the safety of your child. Students must follow the driver's directions and instructions at all times. The bus is an extension of the classroom therefore all rules of behavior and conduct identified in the Student Handbook are enforced and apply anytime students are on board the bus. Electronic devices may be used on the bus, but if privileges are abused (cyber bullying, loud music, etc.), the same consequences apply as when school is in session.

### **Bus Evacuation**

Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the bus driver's control, your child may have to evacuate a bus at some time during the year. When evacuating a bus is necessary, students are placed in a safer location while waiting for assistance. When any type of evacuation occurs, students must follow the instructions of the driver to safely unload and to relocate in a safe location away from any hazard. All buses are designed with several "Emergency Exits"; these locations are, but not limited to the entrance/exit door, rear door, emergency exit windows and roof hatches. Students should always use the front entrance/exit doors whenever possible during evacuations.

### **Transportation Changes (Bus)**

Transportation changes for the student's bus pick up point (am route) must be submitted - in writing (hand-written note or email to [transportation@sowegastemcharter.org](mailto:transportation@sowegastemcharter.org)) - by 1:30 pm the day before the intended change in transportation change is supposed to take place. Any transportation changes to the student's drop-off point (pm route) must be submitted - in writing (hand-written note or email to [transportation@sowegastemcharter.org](mailto:transportation@sowegastemcharter.org)) - by 10:00 am on the day of the intended change in transportation change is supposed to take place. Front office staff will reply to let you know if your request can be fulfilled (bus capacity) in a timely manner. In order to ensure the identity of the parent and safety of the student, no transportation changes will be accepted by telephone. Students transported to school are expected to behave in a manner which is conducive to the safety and welfare of all riders. Students who violate bus conduct regulations will be suspended from the privilege of bus transportation.

### **Procedures for Car Riders**

#### **Drop Off**

1. Morning drop-off occurs on the side entrance of the main building. **NO students should be dropped off before 7:30 AM.** Students drop off begins at 7:30 AM when teachers begin morning duty and there is an adult present to monitor students.
2. Please come to a complete stop in the drop-off/pick-up area to let your child out of the car.

**Please do not leave your car unattended along the way or take too much time at the drop off point.**

3. If you need more time, please park in a designated parking spot and escort your child into school. **ALL PARENTS/VISITORS MUST ENTER THE SCHOOL THROUGH THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND OBTAIN A VISITOR'S BADGE.**
4. **DO NOT** use your cell phone while driving.
5. **DO NOT** pass other vehicles to pull in front of them to drop off your child.
6. After 8:00, please park in a designated area and escort your child into the main entrance of the building to obtain a tardy slip in the front office.
7. Please proceed slowly and cautiously when exiting the drop-off/pick-up lane and the campus.

### **Pick-Up**

1. **EARLY CHECKOUTS ARE DISCOURAGED AFTER 2:30 PM.**

Early checkouts after 2:30 PM are discouraged due to ongoing instructional practices that include remedial and acceleration opportunities for students. In addition, students are also transitioning to various areas to prepare for dismissal.

Although early checkouts are discouraged, we do realize that extenuating circumstances such as doctor's appointments and family emergencies will occur. In the event that an early checkout is necessary, every effort will be made to accommodate our students and their families.

2. **ALL CAR RIDERS ARE DISMISSED AT 3:10 PM.**

3. Afternoon pick-up will take place each day on the side entrance of the main building (same as morning drop off). Students will be in line on the sidewalk near the drop-off/pick-up area and grouped by grade. Students will be waiting the hallways of the school until their name is called.
4. Students will be dismissed to the staff member standing by the car line. A staff member will monitor students being loaded into the cars. **Please do not leave your car unattended.** This will allow the car line to move quickly and smoothly as students are dismissed.
5. **DO NOT WALK UP AND GET YOUR CHILD TO TAKE TO THE CAR.** This is for the safety of all students. If you plan to exit your vehicle to pick up your child, please arrive before 2:30 PM and report to the front office. Your child will be called to the front office and you will be required to sign your child out of school. This will be considered an early check-out. **DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM.**
6. Please notify your child's teacher if you will be walking onto campus and not utilizing a vehicle to pick up your child. A monitor will walk with your child to the front entrance of the school to meet you.
7. **DO NOT** use your cell phone while driving.
8. **DO NOT** pass other vehicles to pull in front of them to pick up your child.

9. Please proceed slowly and cautiously when exiting the drop-off/pick-up lane and exit the campus.

10. **Car riders should be picked up no later than 3:30 PM.**

### **DRIVING & PARKING ON CAMPUS**

Students operating motorized vehicles on campus must have a state-approved license and parking permit from the front office staff.

**All vehicles parked on campus are subject to search by school officials without warning.**

Students must leave the parking lot area immediately upon arrival on campus and report directly to the school building. Students are not permitted to return to their vehicles during the school day except in an emergency and only when approved by the principal or designee. Please restrict speed to 10 mph on school grounds. **THE ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO PROHIBIT ANY STUDENT FROM DRIVING ON THE SCHOOL CAMPUS.** Students that drive to school are allowed to park on the side of the mobile units in the grassy area - we will designate the place for students to park on the first day of school. No students should leave trash or vandalize the area - if so, driving on campus will be revoked for those students.

### **BOOK BAGS**

Students are allowed, but not required, to use a book bag to carry their textbooks and school supplies. Book bags should be simple in design with no offensive messages or language on them. For safety reasons, book bags may not be placed in the center aisle of the bus. Book bags may be inspected at any time by school officials when **school officials have reasonable suspicion to believe a search of a students' book bag would reveal evidence that the school rules have been violated.**

### **LOCKERS**

Students in high school (9th - 12th grade) will be assigned a locker during the 2023-2024 school year. A lock and key will be provided to students. The homeroom teacher will keep up with the student name, locker number, and extra key throughout the year. **All lockers on campus are subject to search by school officials without warning if school officials have reasonable suspicion to believe a search of a students' locker would reveal evidence that the school rules have been violated.**

### **CAFETERIA INFORMATION**

#### **Breakfast**

The breakfast line will open at 7:30 AM. During the 2023-2024 school year, students will eat breakfast in the classroom. Students are expected to get their breakfast and report to the classroom immediately afterwards.

#### **Lunch**

Eating will be allowed only in designated areas. Students may not leave the lunchroom during lunch



without permission from the teacher/administrator assigned for duty in the lunchroom. No food/drink is to be removed from the lunchroom. It is very important that the cafeteria is kept clean and orderly. Appropriate discipline measures will be taken for students who abuse the tables and chairs or otherwise disrupt the lunchroom routine. This includes breaking in line, throwing food, repeatedly leaving their table messy, etc. If you are bringing your child a lunch to the school, please make sure you arrive approximately 5 minutes prior to their lunch period to ensure that they receive their food on time. Students will not be allowed to receive and eat lunch after their lunch period has ended.

**CEP allows for free breakfast and lunch for all students at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School for the 2023-2024 school year.**

### **COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, students, and parents with information related to the use of cell phones at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.

1. Students are not permitted to use cellular phones or other electronic devices not issued by the school during school hours.
2. Cell phones/smart watches should be turned off upon school arrival and students should store cell phones in their locker or bookbag upon arriving at homeroom. Cell phones may not be kept in clothing pockets.
3. Phones must be turned off at all times while in the school building. If a phone rings during class, the teacher will invoke the Cell Phone Use Policy. "Forgetting" to turn off the cell phone is not an excuse.
4. Use of a cell phone during a test will be considered cheating and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.
5. Students are prohibited from using a cell phone to take photographs or record video at any time on school property. This includes taking photographs or video recordings in restrooms, locker room areas, etc.
6. If a student violates the Cell Phone Use Policy, the teacher or school staff member shall confiscate the cell phone and take it to the office.

**First offense** - the phone/electronic device is taken away until the end of the day and kept in the front office.

**Second offense** - the phone/electronic device must be picked up by a parent or guardian.

**Third offense** - either the student is assigned to ISS for two days or the phone is taken away for ten school days to be kept at the school (parent's choice).

*Additional offenses* - will result in the student not being allowed to have a cell phone on school property. Furthermore, students who do not adhere to these guidelines will be subject to other disciplinary actions.

Please note:

\* A student is required to hand over the cell phone and all its individual parts, including but not limited to the battery and memory card(s), to a teacher or school staff member when requested. Failure to do so will result in ISS or OSS.

\* The student assumes all risks in bringing such cell phones and other electronic devices onto school property or to school related functions.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Students on a school sponsored field trip are subject to all school rules. As an ambassador of the school, you will be held to a higher account of school rules. Excessive absences and substantial discipline referrals may result in loss of field trip privileges. Also, keep in mind the Dress Code will be in effect on any school sponsored field trip, unless permission is granted by the principal.

### **LOST AND DAMAGED TEXTBOOKS**

A student who loses or damages a textbook will not be denied the use of a textbook in classes; however, he/she will NOT be issued another textbook until the lost/damaged textbook has been paid in full. At the end of the school year, lost/damaged textbooks or library books amounts should be paid in full.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is identified as a Title I school as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Title I is designed to support State and local school reform efforts tied to challenging State academic standards in order to reinforce and enhance efforts to improve teaching and learning for students. Title I programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support parental involvement. All Title I schools must jointly develop with all parents a written parental involvement policy.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will provide opportunities to improve parent engagement to support student learning. We value the contributions and involvement of parents in order to establish an equal partnership for the common goal of improving student achievement..

The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School welcomes parent input and comments at any time regarding our parent engagement plan. All parent feedback will be used to revise the plan for next year. We invite parents to come out to the revision meetings throughout the year for this policy. The Parent Coordinator, Kadie Phillips, is also always open to one on one parent revision meetings. All students participating in the Title I, Part A program, and their families, are encouraged and invited to fully participate in the opportunities described in this plan. Parents can obtain more information about Title I at our Annual Title I Parent Meeting at the beginning of the school year. Parents can also retrieve a copy of the plan sent via email. Just send your request to [kphillips@sowegastemcharter.org](mailto:kphillips@sowegastemcharter.org). The plan will also be available on the school website.

The Board of Directors recognizes and values parents and families as children's first teachers and decision-makers in education. The Board believes that student learning is more likely to occur when there is an effective partnership between the school and the student's family. Such a partnership generally results in higher academic achievement, improved student behavior, and reduced absenteeism.

The term "families" is used in order to include children's primary caregivers, who are not their biological parents, such as foster caregivers, grandparents, and other family members.

Through this policy, the Board directs the establishment of a Parental Involvement Plan by which a school-partnership can be established and provided to the parent of each child in the Academy. The plan must encompass parent participation, through meetings and other forms of communication. The Parental Involvement Plan shall reflect the Board's commitment to the following:

I. **Relationships with Families**

- a. cultivating school environments that are welcoming, supportive, and student-centered;
- b. providing professional development for school staff that helps build partnerships between families and schools;
- c. providing family activities that relate to various cultures, languages, practices, and customs, and bridge economic and cultural barriers;
- d. providing coordination, technical support and other support to assist schools in planning and implementing family involvement activities.

II. **Effective Communication**

- a. providing information to families to support the proper health, safety, and well-being of their children;
- b. providing information to families about school policies, procedures, programs, and activities;
- c. promoting regular and open communication between school personnel and students' family members;
- d. communicating with families in a format and language that is understandable, to the extent practicable;
- e. providing information and involving families in monitoring student progress;
- f. providing families with timely and meaningful information regarding academic standards, State and local assessments, and pertinent legal provisions;
- g. preparing families to be involved in meaningful discussions and meetings with school staff.

III. **Volunteer Opportunities**

- a. providing volunteer opportunities for families to support their children's school activities;
- b. supporting other needs, such as transportation and child care, to enable families to participate in school-sponsored family involvement events.

IV. **Learning at Home**

- a. offering training and resources to help families learn strategies and skills to support at-home learning and success in school;
- b. working with families to establish learning goals and help their children accomplish these goals;
- c. helping families to provide a school and home environment that encourages learning and extends learning at home.

V. **Involving Families in Decision Making and Advocacy**

- a. involving families as partners in the process of school review and continuous improvement planning;
- b. involving families in the development of its school-wide parent involvement policy and plan, and distributing the policy and plan to families.

VI. **Collaborating with the Community**

- a. building constructive partnerships and connecting families with community-based programs and other community resources;<sup>1,2</sup>
- b. coordinating and integrating family involvement programs and activities with Academy initiatives and community-based programs that encourage and support families' participation in their children's education, growth, and development.

**The information included is pertinent to the following Federal Programs.**

**Programs for which Southwest Georgia STEM Charter receives funds are bold italics:**

- ***Title I Part A*** (CFDA 84.010)- State Program Code 1750
- Title I Part A Academic Achievement Awards (CFDA 84.010)-State Program Code 1752
- Title I School Improvement 1003(a) (CFDA 84.010)-State Program Code 1770
- Title I, Part A Reward Districts Awards (CFDA 84.010)-State Program Code 1753
- Title I, Part D Neglected and Delinquent (CFDA 84.010)-State Program Code 1755
- Title I, Part C Migrant (CFDA 84.011)-State Program Code 1762
- ***Title II, Part A Teacher Quality*** (CFDA 84.367)-State Program Code 1784
- Title III, Part A Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students (CFDA 84.365A)-State Program Codes 1811 and 1816
- ***Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment***
- Title X Part C McKinney-Vento Ed. For Homeless Children and Youth (CFDA 84.196)-State Program Code 1800
- Title VI, Part B Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) (CFDA 84.358)-State Program Code 1847
- School Improvement 1003(g) (SIG) (CFDA 84.377)-State Program Code 1777
- Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers
- ***Title VI-B IDEA Flowthrough Grant-Section 611of IDEA***

- **IDEA Preschool Grant-Section 619 of the IDEA 2004**

### **TITLE I – NOTIFICATION**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is a Title I school.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

The Parent Resource Center is located in the Federal Program Director's Office. The hours of operation are from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm. Parents will be notified of very beneficial Parent Involvement meetings that will be held throughout the year which will help ensure parent participation in the public education of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter. For more information, please contact the Federal Programs Director, Kadie Phillips, at 229-345-3033. The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Parent Involvement Policy and the Parent Involvement Calendar is posted on our school website and available for viewing in the Federal Program Director's office. We are always open to suggestions for improvement of our Parent Involvement activities.

### **PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is a Title I school. One of the requirements of being a Title I school is to inform parents of their rights.

#### **Parents have the right:**

- to know the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s) including the degrees and certifications held, and whether the teacher is certified in their respective area of instruction.
- to know the school improvement status of the school.
- to know the level of achievement of their child in each area of the state assessment.
- to know if their child has been assigned, or has been taught for at least four consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet the highly qualified definition.
- to be involved in the planning and implementation of the parent involvement program in their school.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Kadie Phillips at 229-345-3033 or email me at [kphillips@sowegastemcharter.org](mailto:kphillips@sowegastemcharter.org).

### **SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACTS**

All Title I schools are required to have parent compacts. It is the responsibility of the principal in coordination with the Federal Programs Director to make sure that all compacts are reviewed and revised annually. The review and revision will occur in the summer during our Input meeting, school council meetings, and parent workshops. Revision dates will be clearly marked on each compact. An invitation will be sent home to all parents in the school and meeting dates will be given through social

media and through the school's website. The Federal Programs Director will be responsible for setting up meetings and collecting required information (agenda, meeting notes, and sign in sheets). Parent compacts will include responsibilities for the teacher, parent, and students. Compacts will be distributed to all parties involved for signatures in the fall of the year. Compacts go home with students in the registration packets.

Copies of the signed parent compacts are kept on file. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter believes that public schools belong to the people who create them and that student educational goals should reflect the goals of the community. We affirm and assure the rights of parents to participate in the development of the goals and objectives of the public school and encourage involvement in all areas of their children's educational experiences.

### **TEST SECURITY PRACTICES AT SOUTHWEST GEORGIA STEM CHARTER SCHOOL**

- Test materials are kept in a secure location. The office of the system testing coordinator remains locked at all times. The testing materials are locked in a cabinet while not in use for test administration.
- All test administrators are reminded of security procedures before each administration. They are to never leave tests unattended in their classroom or any other location. While not administering the test, the materials must be locked in a secure location.
- The test coordinator or designated person signs test materials in and out on the testing days. The materials are counted before and after the administration to ensure the count is accurate and no materials have been misplaced.
- During administration, the test coordinator or school administrator regularly observes the testing classrooms to ensure that the best testing practices are being followed.
- All on-line testing is administered by a certified teacher in a secure testing lab. All security measures are observed.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Testing Coordinator: Mrs. Ginger Almon  
School Phone: 229-345-3033

### **ETHICS AND FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE AND CORRUPTION POLICIES**

The Federal Programs Director reviews the ethics and fraud, waste and abuse policies with administrators, faculty and staff during pre-planning. An agenda and sign in sheets are kept by the Federal Programs Director to document this has been completed. The Federal Programs Director keeps agendas and sign-in sheets to verify the policies have been reviewed with all staff, including Board Office staff. The Superintendent/Principal is expected to inform his/her faculty about policies and updates as they are approved throughout the year.

### **ETHICS**

(e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Misusing public or school-related funds;
2. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

### **REPORTING SUSPICION OF FRAUDULENT ACTIVITIES**

Purpose: To ensure the reporting of suspicion of fraudulent activity, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter provides employees, clients and providers with confidential channels for such reporting.

Definitions: Fraud: A false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words, by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds.

Statement of Administrative Regulations: Southwest Georgia STEM Charter thoroughly and expeditiously investigates and reports cases of suspected fraud to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery and/or criminal action should be taken.

Confidentiality: All reports of suspected fraud must be handled under the strictest confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be provided information regarding the allegation. Informants may remain anonymous but should be encouraged to cooperate with investigators and should provide as much detail and evidence of alleged fraudulent acts as possible.

Procedures and Responsibilities:

1. Anyone suspecting fraudulent activity should report their concerns to the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Superintendent at 229-345-3033.
2. Any employee with the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter (temporary staff, full-time staff and contractors) who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity must report this information within the next business day.
3. Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud. All reports can be made in confidence.
4. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter shall conduct investigations of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors.
5. If necessary, the person reporting will be contacted for additional information.
6. Periodic communication through meetings should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Substantial state and federal requirements exist pertaining to standards of conduct and conflict of interest. It is the intent of the district for all employees to conduct all activities associated with procurements in compliance with the highest ethical standards, including the avoidance of any real or perceived conflict of interest. It is also the intent of the district to impose appropriate sanctions or disciplinary actions, including but not limited to termination and/or prosecution, for any employees who violate any of these requirements.

No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest.

To receive federal funds, the district adheres to the GaDOE Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy. In addition to state requirements pertaining to standards of conduct and disclosure of conflict of interest, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.13(c)(1) Southwest Georgia STEM Charter adheres to the federal standards with regard to selection, award, and administration of federal contracts.

The LEA will disclose in writing any potential conflict to the federal awarding agency in accordance with applicable federal awarding agency policy. Any violation of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award will be disclosed in writing in a timely manner

### **DISPUTES (COMPLAINT PROCEDURES)**

Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that SGSC is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing. To file a complaint that a violation of federal regulation has occurred with the Flexible Learning Program (Southwest Georgia STEM Charter has no Flexible Learning Program FLP), an individual should follow these procedures:

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Any complaints issued as a result of federal programming will be asked to follow district complaint procedures policy.

#### **A. Grounds for a Complaint**

Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

#### **B. Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed**



- Title I, Part A: Disadvantaged Children, Academic Achievement Awards, Schoolwide Programs
- Title I, Part C: Migrant Education Program
- Title I, Part D: Programs for Neglected or Delinquent Children
- Title II, Part A: Teacher and Leader Effectiveness
- Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
- Title III, Part A: English to Speakers of Other Languages
- Title VI, Part B, Rural Education Achievement Program

### **C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level**

As part of its Assurances within the ESEA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 within the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), an LEA accepting federal funds must have local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education until every effort has been made to resolve through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter to no avail, the complainant must provide the Georgia Department of Education written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter.

### **D. Filing a Complaint**

A complaint must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

- A statement that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program.
- The date on which the violation occurred.
- The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation).
- A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information.
- Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency.
- Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position.
- The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

*Kadie Phillips, Federal Programs Director, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter, 185 Pecan Street, Shellman, Georgia 39886*

Once the complaint is received by the Federal Programs Director, it will be copied and forwarded to the Superintendent/Principal.

### **E. Investigation of Complaint**

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

- The date Southwest Georgia STEM Charter received the complaint.
- How the complainant may provide additional information.
- A statement of the ways in which Southwest Georgia STEM Charter may investigate or address the complaint.
- Any other pertinent information.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, SGSC will have sixty (60) days from receipt of the information to complete the investigation and issue a Letter of Findings. If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, a timeline for corrective action will be included. The sixty (60) day timeline may be extended if exceptional circumstances occur. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant, as well as the other parties involved.

#### **F. Right of Appeal**

If an individual, organization, or agency is aggrieved by the final decision of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter, that individual, organization, or agency has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. For complaints filed pursuant to Section 9503 (20 U.S.C. 7883, complaint process for participation of private school children), a complainant may appeal to the Georgia Department of Education no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the complainant receives the Letter of Findings. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

#### **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

We share a common interest in the most precious commodity in the world - your child. We look forward to sharing communication frequently regarding every aspect of your child's education. We do ask, however, that you schedule conferences with the teachers through the office with our secretary. ***Interruptions during classroom instruction are to be kept to emergencies only.***

#### **SCHOOL TELEPHONE**

- The school telephone is a business phone and may be used by students only in case of illness or an emergency. The following suggestions are made for parents:
  - Have an understanding with your child about how he/she will get home each day and if arrangements will be different.
  - Write a note to your child's teacher or email [transportation@sowegastemcharter.org](mailto:transportation@sowegastemcharter.org) if arrangements for getting home are different than usual for your child.
  - Ask your child to make sure the teacher receives the note.
  - Plan how your child will be picked up if staying for activities or detention before he/she leaves home in the morning.

- Parents may call the office to leave emergency messages for their children.

## **VISITORS**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has deemed safety as a top priority for our students and staff. As a result, we require that all visitors sign in at the front office and wear the Visitor's Badge the entire time on campus.

Visitors please remember to always use the main entrance to our school and have ID ready - if needed. You should expect the following when you visit all school buildings during regular school hours:

- All visitors who enter the building will need to report to the front office where they may be asked to show ID and sign in.
- After checking in, an identification badge will be issued that contains the visitor's full name, the date, and their destination within the building.
- Front office staff records tardies and early check outs as well. After 8:00 AM please remember to escort your child to the front office for a tardy slip.
- All visitors will need to return to the front office to sign out prior to leaving the building.
- Classroom instructional time is valued and visitors without a preset appointment through the classroom teacher and principal will not be allowed.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

Instruction is the most important aspect of each day at school. Comprehensive instruction coupled with effective classroom management provides your child with an optimum learning environment. Georgia's Standards of Excellence serve as the basis for all instructional planning.

### **HOMEWORK POLICY**

Homework provides students with the opportunity to apply the information they have learned and develop independence. Meaningful and quality homework is limited to 30 minutes per night. However, students are encouraged to pursue non-assigned, independent leisure reading.

### **REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Mid-term progress reports are sent home every 4-1/2 weeks and report cards are sent home after each 9 week grading period. Students receive an evaluation of their achievement and general conduct. The teacher will be happy to discuss the report card if necessary. Also, you may call the main office if you need to set up a conference with any one or all of your child's teachers. Outstanding debts or non-payment of debts *may* result in report cards being withheld until all debts are settled.

The following criteria are used in determining grades:

**1st – 12th Grades**

**A**  
90-100

**C**  
70-79

**B**  
80-89

**F**  
Below 70

We encourage you to contact your child’s teacher if you have questions regarding your child’s progress.

**PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY.**

The following criteria must be met in order to be promoted to the next grade:

**Elementary - Kindergarten**

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, kindergarten students must demonstrate mastery of the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory Developing Skills (GKIDS) for language arts and math as well as all other kindergarten assessments. Also, other assessments, such as MAP Growth. In addition, the student must meet all attendance requirements as specified by Sowega STEM Charter School.

**Elementary - Grades 1st - 5th**

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, students in grades 1st - 5th must:

- pass reading/ELA with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass math with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass the Reading/English Language Arts state assessment (if one is given)
- pass the Math state assessment (if one is given)
- meet all attendance requirements as specified by Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

**Middle School - Grades 6th - 8th**

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, students in grades 6th-8th must:

- pass reading/ELA with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass math with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass Science OR Social Studies for the year (must have a final grade of at least 70%)
- pass the Reading/English Language Arts state assessment (if one is given)
- pass the Math state assessment (if one is given)
- meet all attendance requirements as specified by Sowega STEM Charter School

**High School - Grades 9th - 12th**

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, students in grades 9th and 10th must have the minimum number of required credits needed to be promoted to the next grade level.

**Grade Placement/Units Required for Graduation - Class of 2021 and beyond**

The following units will be necessary **at the opening of school each year.**

Please see guidance counselor for any questions:

**23 Units of credit required for graduation**

- 5 Units passed = sophomore
- 12 Units passed = junior
- 20 Units passed = senior

*Any student not meeting the criteria above will be **retained**. Should a parent or teacher wish to appeal a retention, a committee will be formed consisting of no less than a parent, teacher, and administrator, to decide if retention is in the best interest of the student. If the committee decides it is not in the best interest of the student to be retained, then the student will be **placed** into the next grade level.*

**High School**

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, students in high school must have the minimum number of required credits needed to be promoted to the next grade level.

**Grade Placement/Units Required for Graduation - Class of 2021 and beyond**

The following units will be necessary **at the opening of school each year.**

Please see guidance counselor for any questions:

**23 Units of credit required for graduation.**

- 5 Units passed = sophomore
- 12 Units passed = junior
- 20 Units passed = senior

Transfer students may fall under different requirements. Please see the school counselor for any questions.

**Graduation**

**(Requirements to Participate) Please See Guidance Counselor for clarification**

1. Students must have been enrolled in high school for a minimum of eight (8) semesters to receive a diploma. Exceptions to this rule may be appealed to the LBOE.

2. **Approved 13 April 2011 by the GA State Dept of Education: Rule 160-3-1-.07 TESTING PROGRAMS and Rule 160-4-2-.13 STATEWIDE PASSING SCORE.** Students entering ninth grade on or after July 1, 2011 no longer must take or pass the GHSGT (ELA, MA, SCI, SS) however they will be required to take the EOC, which will count for 10% of the student's final grade in core areas. (See Guidance)

3. All student debts must be cleared. (i.e. cafeteria, dues, media center, athletics, clubs)


4. Additional requirements may be given to the seniors at the beginning of each new school year.

**Students will not be allowed to march at graduation ceremonies unless they meet all the above criteria related to the year they enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. See Guidance Counselor for clarification.**

**Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School  
Graduation Requirements**

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Classes</b>	<b>SGSC Diploma</b>	<b>SGSC Diploma with Distinction</b>
English/ Language Arts	One English class in each year of high school, including: -Ninth-Grade Literature and Composition (Honors) -10th Grade Literature -American Literature/Composition -English 12 (British Literature)	<b>4 credits</b>	<b>4 credits</b>
Mathematics	One Math class in each year of high school, including: GSE Algebra I GSE Geometry GSE Algebra II College Algebra or other 4th math.	<b>4 credits</b>	<b>4 credits</b>
Science	One Science class in each year of high school, including: Physical Science (Honors) Biology Chemistry Environmental Science Human Anatomy and Physiology	<b>4 credits</b>	<b>4 credits</b>
Social Studies	One Social Studies class in each year of high school, including: World History United States History American Government Economics	<b>3 credits</b>	<b>3 credits</b>
Modern Language	Students planning to attend a 4-year college or university immediately after high school	<b>2 credits</b>	<b>2 credits</b>

	must earn a minimum of 2 credits in a foreign language. Spanish /Computer Science		
Career Technical and Agricultural Education and Fine Arts	Students must earn 3 credits, in any combination, from these curriculum areas. (Pathway Required)	<b>3 credits</b>	<b>3 credits</b>
Health and Physical Education	½ credit per course. The course is one semester in length. Typically taken in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade.	<b>1 credit</b>	<b>1 credit</b>
Electives	Electives can be taken in any curriculum area. Students planning to attend a 4-year college or university are encouraged to take at least 2 electives from academic curriculum areas.	<b>4 credits</b>	<b>4 credits</b>
SGSC Diploma With Distinction	Two of the four must be completed: -200 Community Service Hours -Membership in National Honor Society -Completion of at least 2 Dual Enrollment courses -Senior Capstone Project	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Required</b>
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>23 credits</b>	<b>23 credits</b>
<b>Promotion to the next grade</b> is based upon credits earned. 10 <sup>th</sup> = 5 credits 11 <sup>th</sup> = 12 credits	<b>GEORGIA MILESTONES</b> Some courses require students to take the Georgia Milestones End of Course Exams to earn credit for the course. The following		<b>1 credit</b> consists of one semester. SGSC is now on a 4X4 block schedule. Students can earn

<p>12<sup>th</sup> = 20 credits</p> 	<p>courses require students to take the Georgia Milestones :</p> <p>American Lit/Comp GSE Algebra I Biology U.S. History</p> <p>The Georgia Milestones will count as a percentage of the student's final grade.</p>	<p>four credits a semester and eight credits/school year. Credit is earned when a minimum passing grade of 70 is achieved. A semester lasts 18 weeks.</p>
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**COUNSELING SERVICES**

Counseling services are available to every student at SGSC. These services include assistance with course/college/career planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational information, study help, help with home/social concerns, or any questions the student may feel he or she would like to discuss with the counselor.

**Dual Enrollment**

The Dual Enrollment (DE) Program provides for participation in Dual Credit Enrollment for Eligible High School and Home Study students. These students earn postsecondary credit hours while simultaneously meeting their high school graduation or Home Study completion requirements. State revenues provide funding for this program in accordance with the Dual Enrollment Act, Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) §20-2-161. The total amount of funds appropriated for the program is established each year by the Georgia General Assembly during the prior legislative session and is subject to change during the Award Year. Effective Summer term 2019 (FY2020), GSFC publishes the approved annual award rates for Tuition, Mandatory Fees and Books. Effective Summer term 2020 (FY2021), eligible high school students, enrolled in 10th, 11th and 12th grades, may receive Dual Enrollment funding for eligible core courses in English, math, science, social sciences and world (foreign) languages, or Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) career pathway courses at eligible participating postsecondary institutions, up to the 30 semester or 45 quarter hours program Funding Cap.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School reserves the right to allow for a Dual Enrollment facilitator on campus to provide a space for those students to work during the day on their assignments. There will be a certain window of time that students MUST sign up for Dual Enrollment classes. After the time window, students will not be allowed to sign up for the courses until the next semester begins. Students that wish to be off campus to complete their Dual Enrollment courses must be Seniors and have completed the required paperwork before the window closes.

**Extra-Curricular Activities**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School offers a range of extracurricular activities. These include but are not limited to: athletics, fine arts, service, and academic clubs. Certain extracurricular activities are regulated by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). Students participating in these are subject to all rules of GHSA, including eligibility to participate. According to the GHSA, any student assigned to the

In-School Suspension (ISS) will be eligible for extracurricular activities (practice only) unless otherwise stated by the principal. Students will be ineligible for participation in any competitive events until the



day following the last day assigned to ISS. Any student suspended out of school or expelled is excluded from extra-curricular events or practices. Other activities have specific school, state, or national requirements. Contact the sponsor for more information. Many of these activities are highly visible to the public (athletics, honor society, etc.) Therefore, the students involved in these activities become ambassadors of the school and are expected to represent the school well. The school discipline policy and dress code will be in effect at all times, unless approved by the Principal or her designee (at events, traveling to and from, etc.) However, the coach/sponsor may place further requirements on the students (i.e. higher expectations for academics, behavior, increased dress requirements - ties, etc.) **Remember, participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and can be revoked at any time.**

All student athletes in Middle/High School must have a permission slip and proof of insurance in the form of a card or a copy of an insurance policy. Insurance and parent permission in writing on the form provided by the school must be secured before the student athlete may participate in any organized event be it conditioning, practice, or any sort of competition sanctioned by the school.

**Eligibility** for GHSA activities begins on the day a student enters the 9th grade. From that point, the student has four (4) years of possible eligibility. To be eligible for spring semester, the student must pass 3 of the 4 subjects of the preceding fall semester and be on track for graduation. To maintain eligibility for the fall semester, the student must pass 3 of the 4 subjects of the preceding year and be on track for graduation. Summer school is an extension of the second semester. Also, students must have a current physical and proof of insurance on file with the Athletic Director before participating. **For more information/clarification on GHSA eligibility, please go to [www.ghsa.net](http://www.ghsa.net).**

The extracurricular activities offered at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School include but is not limited to:

Soccer	Softball	Track
Baseball	Basketball (MS/HS)	Cheerleading
Cross Country	Football	Drama Club/One Act Play
Math Team	National Honor Society	NJHS
FFA	Robotics Club	NEHS

### **Honor Graduate Criteria**

- The status of Honor Graduate will be awarded to those students who have met all curriculum requirements and have a 3.6 cumulative grade point average, or above, by the beginning of the second semester of their Senior year. Grades earned prior to ninth grade will be used in calculation only if the student was awarded a Carnegie unit of credit for the course. These students will be awarded distinctive regalia to wear at graduation.

### **Honor Roll Criteria**

A student must meet the following criteria to be on one of the honor rolls each term:

- Principal's Honor Roll: Makes all A's in courses taken that semester.
- Honor Roll: Makes any combination of A's and B's in all courses taken that semester.

### **Hope Scholarship**

HOPE Scholarship (students seeking a degree) basic eligibility requirement for HOPE 1 Scholarship have NOT changed: be a US citizen, a Georgia resident, register with the Selective Service (if

applicable), be in compliance with Georgia Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990, attend a Georgia eligible school, graduate with a 3.0 GPA in core courses, maintain a 3.0 while in college.

For information on the HOPE or Zell Miller Scholarship, College/Scholarships, or How to Complete the FAFSA, visit: <https://www.gafutures.org/>

### **Salutatorian/Valedictorian**

To be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian honors, a student must enroll no later than the first day of their junior year (11th grade). The valedictorian shall be the student who has met all curriculum requirements and has earned the highest cumulative grade point average in the class. The salutatorian shall be the student who has also met all curriculum requirements and has earned the 2nd highest cumulative grade point average in the class. The calculations will be determined at the end of the first semester during senior year. If there is a tie, all ties will be named as Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian accordingly. However, if scholarships or financial grants are to be awarded based on class ranking as Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian, and the scholarships or grants cannot be shared among the students tied for Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian the following applies:

1. The higher overall SAT score (achieved by November of their Senior year) will be the determining factor. If students are still tied then,
2. The higher Math score on the SAT (achieved by November of their Senior year) will be the determining factor. If students are still tied then,
3. The higher Reading score on the SAT (achieved by November of their Senior year) will be the determining factor. If they are still tied then,
4. The higher numerical grade point average at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the Senior year, will be the determining factor.

### **Schedule Change Procedure**

Students will be allowed to change schedules only for a VALID reason. Students must complete a schedule change request form (online or on paper) and secure any and all signatures within two (2) days after the beginning of each semester and submit it to the counselor. Schedule change sheets are available in the counselor's office. The counselor's office will notify the student if the request is approved or rejected. If approved, the student will be scheduled for an appointment to make the change. The following are valid reasons for changing schedules:

1. To meet graduation requirements.
2. To make up credit(s) for a class previously failed.
3. To schedule out of a class previously passed.
4. Any other reason approved by the principal.

### **Star Student**

The student with the highest SAT score (meeting minimum scores in both Math and Verbal) and in the top ten percent of the senior class (only grades and transcripts from state-accredited schools will be considered) will be the Star Student. The SAT must be taken by November of their senior year. This student must be enrolled in Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School for the full senior year.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL:** **HIGH SCHOOL -**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Summer Credit Recovery is for current Southwest Georgia STEM Charter students only. Students in grades 6-8 are not allowed to enroll in High School Courses. A maximum of 2 courses may be taken during Summer School by one student.

**Option for High School Summer Credit:**

**2 Options for Summer Credit:**

**1. SGSC Credit Recovery** – Having failed the course previously, the student can attend SGSC Credit Recovery in person during the summer. The course will be completed on the Georgia Virtual School platform, and students will receive the credit once they have completed the online course and shown mastery on topics from the previously failed class. By attending the program in person, students will have access to not only the technology to be successful, but also textbooks, research materials, and a Credit Recovery Facilitator who will be available for any assistance that is needed.

**2. Virtual Credit Recovery** -With this option students will complete Credit Recovery on their own through Georgia Virtual School. If students do not pass this portion of credit recovery, they may incur a fee to complete the course through GAVS later. SGSC will not provide the technology needed to complete the courses online, this option will be completed independently.

**Class Dues & Officers – High School**

**Dues must be paid for each school year that a student attends Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, up to and including their Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior class years, in order to qualify to attend the Homecoming dance, Junior/Senior Prom and Graduation.** All Class Dues payments are payable to the Class Sponsor after the first class meeting of the year. Freshmen, Sophomore, and Junior dues are to be paid no later than the first Monday after Labor Day. Failure to pay class dues will result in loss of privilege to participate in any class activities or athletic teams. Students transferring after August will need to make payment arrangements with the class sponsors.

Class **members** elect officers, take trips, plan social **activities** and raise money to supplement dues that pay for activities such as **incentives, social events, legacy gift, homecoming and prom.**

**Outstanding debts or Non-payment of debts may result in report cards and/or school records being withheld and/or restriction from participation in future school-sponsored activities until all debts are settled.**

**NINTH GRADE: FRESHMEN**

A class sponsor shall be approved by the principal in July of the year prior to assuming responsibilities as the freshman class sponsor. This sponsor shall be responsible for initiating, overseeing, and advising all freshmen business during the following school term, including the election of freshman class officers and representatives.

**Freshman Class Officers:**

Class officers are to be elected in the first month of their freshmen year, work closely with the class sponsors and are responsible for:

- planning for potential fund raisers
- planning class events
- dealing with issues of concern to their class
- planning for potential freshmen class trip

Freshman Class officers shall be:

President- shall be the class liaison who works directly with the class sponsors

Vice President- shall act as President in their absence and shall be the Student Council Class Rep

Secretary- shall take notes during all class meetings and email them to the class sponsor

**Freshmen Dues:**

Class dues payments are payable to the Class Sponsor after the first class meeting of the year and are due in order to participate in school/class activities. Failure to pay class dues will result in loss of privilege to participate in any class activities to include athletic teams.

Ninth Grade: \$ 10.00

\$ 10.00

**TENTH GRADE: SOPHOMORES**

A class sponsor shall be approved by the principal in July of the year prior to assuming responsibilities as the sophomore class sponsor. This sponsor shall be responsible for initiating, overseeing, and advising all sophomore business during the following school term, including the election of sophomore class officers and representatives.

**Sophomore Class Officers:**

Class officers are to be elected in the first month of their sophomore year, work closely with the class sponsors and are responsible for:

- attending student government meetings
- fundraising activities
- planning for potential sophomore class trip
- planning of Homecoming activities
- these students attend at least one meeting per month

Sophomore Class officers shall be:

President- shall be the class liaison who works directly with the class sponsors

Vice President- shall act as President in their absence and shall be the Student Council Class Rep

Secretary- shall take notes during all class meetings and email them to the class sponsor

**Sophomore Dues:**

Class dues payments are payable to the Class Sponsor after the first class meeting of the year and are due in order to participate in school/class activities. Failure to pay class dues will result in loss of privilege to participate in any class activities. Students transferring after August will need to make arrangements with the class sponsors .

Sophomore Class dues are **\$20.00**.

Tenth Grade: \$ 20.00

## **ELEVENTH GRADE: JUNIORS**

A class sponsor shall be approved by the principal in July of the year prior to assuming responsibilities as the junior class sponsor. This sponsor shall be responsible for initiating, overseeing, and advising all junior business during the following school term, including the election of junior class officers and representatives.

### **Junior Class Officers:**

Class officers are to be elected by their class in the first month of their junior year and play an integral role in planning the various activities sponsored by the junior class. These activities may include the following:

- attending student government meetings
- preparing/planning for the Junior/Senior Prom
- resolving issues of concern to the junior class
- planning for the potential junior class trip

These students attend a minimum of one meeting per month.

Junior Class officers shall be:

President- shall be the class liaison who works directly with the class sponsors

Vice President- shall act as President in their absence and shall be the Student Council

Class Rep

Secretary- shall take notes during all class meetings and email them to the class sponsor

### **Junior Dues:**

Class dues payments are payable to the Class Sponsor after the first class meeting of the year and are due in order to participate in school/class activities. Failure to pay class dues will result in loss of privilege to participate in any class activities. Students transferring after August will need to make arrangements with the class sponsors. Class dues are **\$40.00**.

Eleventh Grade: \$ 40.00

## **TWELFTH GRADE: SENIORS**

A class sponsor shall be approved by the principal in July of the year prior to assuming responsibilities as the senior class sponsor. This sponsor shall be responsible for initiating, overseeing, and advising all senior business during the following school term, including preparations for graduation.

### **Senior Class Officers:**

Class officers are to be elected in the first month of their senior year by their classmates. They play an integral role in planning various activities sponsored by the senior class. These activities may include the following:

- attending student government meetings
- preparing for the potential Senior Class Trip
- preparing the Senior Legacy (gift to school)
- preparing for Senior Week activities

Senior Class officers shall be:

President- shall be the class liaison who works directly with the class sponsors

Vice President- shall act as President in the President's absence and serve as the Student Council

Class Rep

Secretary- shall take notes during all class meetings and email them to the class sponsor

### **Senior Dues:**

Class dues payments are payable to the Class Sponsor after the first class meeting of the year and are due in order to participate in school/class activities. Failure to pay class dues will result in loss of privilege to participate in any class activities. Students transferring after August will need to make arrangements with the class sponsors. Class dues are **\$60.00**.

Twelfth Grade: \$ 60.00

Students who have not paid their dues by the end of the school year may not participate in graduation activities.

**Outstanding debts or Non-payment of debts may result in report cards and/or school records being withheld and/or restriction from participation in future school-sponsored activities until all debts are settled.**

### **Dances – School Sponsored**

All students attending a school sponsored dance will be expected to follow appropriate school dress code on and off campus. Dresses worn to school dances should be school appropriate length. You may be asked to leave the dance and face possible disciplinary actions if these rules are violated. Middle School sponsored dances are intended for SGSC students only. This includes SGSC students in grades 6 – 8 only. Any others wishing to attend must be approved by the principal or her designee before the day of the dance.

High school sponsored dances are intended for SGSC students. However, SGSC students are allowed to bring out of school dates to these dances if the following conditions are met:

- Date must be at least 14 years of age and in the 9th grade and not older than 20 years of age.
- Proper documentation must be completed, submitted and approved before the day of the dance by the principal or his designee.
- See the dance sponsor for forms or questions.

### **Homecoming Court**

Students wishing to qualify for Homecoming Representative will become ambassadors of the school and are expected to represent the school appropriately. **All students attending the homecoming dance will be expected to follow appropriate school dress code on and off campus. Dresses worn to school dances should be school appropriate length.**

**Qualification for the Homecoming court is a three-step process.**

#### **1) Nominations:**

Students can be nominated in 2 ways:

- A. Nominated by other students
- B. Nominate themselves

Nominated students will pick up an application from the Sophomore sponsors and return the completed form to the sponsor.

#### **2) Qualifications:**

The following qualifications must apply to be eligible to run for Homecoming Representative:

1. Student must be in good academic standing with a 2.5 GPA or higher.

2. Student must have not had any major discipline offenses in their discipline history (includes current semester). This includes no OSS and/or no more than one ISS.
3. Attendance record must be acceptable. No more than 5 unexcused absences or 5 unexcused tardies during the current semester.

\*Students may request an appeal in writing for failing to meet the above criteria to the homecoming committee. See Sophomore Class Sponsors.

### **3) Voting Process:**

1. Each grade (9-11) shall have one (1) representative on the Homecoming Court.
2. A ballot will be distributed to each class (grades 9-12) containing a list of all girls that signed up and qualified. Each student in each class may vote for one (1) girl to be the class representative. The girl receiving the most votes in each class will be named class representative for the homecoming court, excluding seniors. The senior class will be represented by the top four (4) girls chosen (voted on by the senior class), all of whom will be on the Homecoming Court.
3. Once the Senior Homecoming Court is chosen, a ballot will be distributed to each student (grades 9-12) listing the four senior finalists. Each student may vote for one (1) girl for Queen. The senior girl receiving the most votes will be named Queen on the night of the Homecoming Football game.
4. In the event of a tie, a run-off will be held. A ballot will be distributed to each student (grades 9-12) listing the tied senior finalists. Each student may vote for one (1) girl for Queen.

**Campaign signs will be allowed on campus, in approved areas with administrative approval only.**

### **SGSC Prom King/Prom Queen**

In the spring of each year, four female and four male seniors will be nominated by their peers and recommended by 2 teachers to serve on the CCHS Prom Court. Students nominated should meet the following criteria:

1. The senior must have paid his/her Senior Dues.
2. Student must be in good academic standing with a 2.5 GPA or higher.
3. Student must not have any offenses in their high school discipline history that resulted in OSS (includes current semester).
4. Attendance record must be acceptable. No more than 5 unexcused absences or 5 unexcused tardies during the current semester.

\*Students may request an appeal in writing for failing to meet the above criteria to the Prom committee. See Junior Class Sponsors.

Those nominations will be tallied by the Jr. Prom Advisors. The top four candidates of each sex will be placed on a ballot for the students in attendance at the Prom to vote for their choice for SGSC Prom King and Queen. The King and Queen will be announced at the Jr. /Sr. Prom each year. However, any member not in attendance at the Prom by the time the winners are announced will be removed from the court and the next highest individual will replace him/her on the SGSC Prom Court. Students chosen to the Prom Court will be ambassadors of the school and should represent the school well.

### **SGSC Prom Prince/Princess**

In the spring of each year, two female and two male juniors will be nominated by their peers and recommended by 2 teachers to serve on the SGSC Prom Court. Students nominated should meet the following criteria:

1. The junior must have paid his/her Junior Dues.

2. Student must be in good academic standing with a 2.5 GPA or higher.
3. Student must not have any discipline offenses in their High school discipline history that resulted in OSS (includes current semester).
4. Attendance record must be acceptable. No more than 5 unexcused absences or 5 unexcused tardies during current semester.

\*Students may request an appeal in writing for failing to meet the above criteria to the Prom committee. See Junior Class Sponsors.

Those nominations will be tallied by the Jr. Prom Advisors. The top two candidates of each sex will be placed on a ballot for the students in attendance at the Prom to vote for their choice for SGSC Prom Prince and Princess. The Prince and Princess will be announced at the Jr. /Sr. Prom each year. However, any member not in attendance at the Prom by the time the winners are announced will be removed from the court and the next highest individual will replace him/her on the SGSC Prom Court. Students chosen to the Prom Court will be ambassadors of the school and should represent the school well.

**All students attending the Prom will be expected to follow appropriate school dress code on and off campus. Dresses worn to school dances should be school appropriate length.**

### **Fundraisers**

Only fundraising activities sponsored by Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's organizations will be allowed. No student is required to participate in any fundraising project. However, once a student agrees to participate, he/she is responsible for the cost of any merchandise received and is required to pay for items unless the faculty sponsor indicates that the merchandise may be returned without penalty. Non-payment of debts may result in school records being withheld and/or restriction from participation in future school-sponsored activities.

### **Off-Limits Areas**

In order to insure an atmosphere conducive to learning and to permit adequate supervision of the school, the following areas are off-limits to students:

- Teacher Lounges (**includes before and after school**)
- Receptionist area
- Any area behind the school
- Any unsupervised location on campus (softball field, track, etc.)

Exception: Areas assigned by teachers/facilitators.

### **Voter Registration**

The Georgia Election Code authorizes principals and directors of vocational schools to be deputy registrars to register those who are qualified enrolled students within the school or employed by the school. Voter registration will be scheduled during the month of April.

### **REMEDICATION**

Remediation may be available to students that have been determined to need remedial help in reading and/or mathematics. Students qualify based on test scores and daily academic performance.

### **INFINITE CAMPUS PARENT PORTAL USER GUIDE**

Infinite Campus's Parent Portal is a web-based student information system used by Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to maintain student data including attendance, grades, and course



information.

**If you already have a portal account:**

LOGIN with your Infinite Campus username and password

**If you have an account but have forgotten your log in information:**

Follow these instructions or contact the student's school for assistance.

**If you do not have a portal account, follow these simple steps:**

First Time Users ONLY. Please Read ALL Directions First.

Go to LOGIN page.

Scroll down to the New to Campus Portal? [CLICK HERE](#) Section. See EXAMPLE

Enter the student's social security number and the month, day and year of the student's birth.

Click SUBMIT to receive an ACTIVATION KEY. Write this key down. You will need it for step 6.

On the Infinite Campus Log-in Page, click the link to activate your parent portal account. See

**EXAMPLE**

Enter the Activation Key, Click SUBMIT.

Choose and enter a User Name and Password. Your password must be at least 8 characters and include letters and numbers. Select a User Name and Password that will be unique to Infinite Campus.

Write down your User Name and Password and keep it in a safe place.

Click CREATE ACCOUNT.

You will find a link to Infinite Campus on the district and school webpages. There are also Parent and Student Apps you can download to your mobile device.

**TESTING**

The State Department of Education requires standardized testing at certain grades. Students here also receive additional testing. You will be notified well in advance of test dates so that you can prepare for testing.

- The **Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)** provides diagnostic information about kindergarten students' developing skills in language arts, math, science, social studies, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning.
- **The Georgia Milestones** is a comprehensive summative assessment which measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. It is administered to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- **End of Course Testing** Improved teaching and learning are the main focus of Georgia's

education system. The EOCT align with Georgia's state mandated content standards and include assessment of specific content knowledge and skills. The assessments provide diagnostic information to help students identify strengths and areas of need in learning, therefore improving performance in all high school courses. The EOCT also provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom instruction at the school, system and state levels. In 2011 – 2012, the EOCT became Georgia's high school accountability assessment as part of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). It is 10% of a student's total grade in the course.

- **Benchmark Assessments** are designed to measure student progress in Pre-K through 9<sup>th</sup> grade and will be administered as pre-assessments at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year, and post-assessments at the end.
  - The MAP assessments are used to screen students for their reading and math achievement levels. **MAP** assessments help determine reading and math achievement levels in order to place students into the Accelerated Reader program. **MAP Fluency** assessments help educators monitor students' growing literacy skills and students' progress toward becoming independent readers. MAP assessments are also used to monitor student growth throughout the year, to estimate students' understanding of state standards, and predict students' performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. In addition, MAP also helps teachers determine appropriate instructional levels and skills that students are ready to learn.
  - **Progress Learning** is utilized to monitor the student growth of 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders throughout the year in the content areas of Science and Social Studies.

## **SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

### **1. Overview:**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation of 1973, "Section 504," prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities and seeks to ensure that students with disabilities have the same educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School has designated its Special Education Director, as the Section 504 coordinator.

A summary of rights under Section 504 shall be provided to any parent upon request, or at such times as the School believes a student may be eligible for services under Section 504.

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. A parent may also file a grievance pursuant to Board Policy S29 for any concerns or complaints unrelated to a student's rights or eligibility under Section 504.

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

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

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the 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:**

- A. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
- B. 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.
- C. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
- D. 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.

- E. 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.
- F. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
- G. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
- H. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
- I. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
- J. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
- K. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.

#### **Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that 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 our school's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School  
Julia Scoggins, 504 Coordinator  
185 Pecan Street  
Shellman, GA 39886  
[vscoggins@sowegastemcharter.org](mailto:vscoggins@sowegastemcharter.org)

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.

### **STUDENT RECOGNITION**

#### **Perfect Attendance** (Kindergarten – 12th Grade)

This award is given to students without any absences, tardies or unexcused early check-outs per nine week period. If any tardies or early check-outs occur during the nine weeks, they must be accompanied by a written excuse from the doctor in order for the student to be eligible for the award. It is given at the end of each semester.

#### **Principal's List** (1st – 12th Grade)

This award is in recognition of those students who earned all A's in the core content areas only (excluding PE and specials). It is given at the end of each nine weeks as well as the end of the year. **For end of the year recognition, students must receive the Principal's List recognition for each semester - this will not be an average.**

#### **A/B Honor Roll** (1st - 12th Grade)

This award is in recognition of those students who earned A's and B's in the core content areas only (excluding PE and specials). It is given at the end of each nine weeks, as well as the end of the year. **For end of the year recognition, students must receive the A/B Honor Roll recognition for each semester - this will not be an average.**

#### **Aggie Award** (Kindergarten – 12th Grades)

This award is given to students who have shown considerable improvement in academics during the nine week grading period. It is given at the end of each semester.

#### **End of the Year Awards** (1st – 12th Grades)

These awards are given to the student with the highest average for each content area per homeroom.

### **COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS PERFORMANCE INDEX (CCRPI)**

The College and Career Ready Performance Index – CCRPI – is Georgia's annual tool for measuring how well its schools, districts, and the state itself are preparing students for the next educational level. It provides a comprehensive roadmap to help educators, parents, and community members promote and improve college and career readiness for all students.

The CCRPI includes five main components each scored on a scale of 0 to 100: Achievement, Progress, Closing Gaps, Readiness, and Graduation Rate (high school only). These components, encompassing multiple indicators, are combined for a total CCRPI score on a scale of 0 to 100. The CCRPI also reports other information, such as the performance of student subgroups, school climate, and financial efficiency status.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School earned a score of 59.6 on the 2019 CCRPI.

### **Student Growth Percentiles**

The new growth score, called a student growth percentile answers the question “How much did a student grow over the previous year compared to his/her academic peers?” It is an accurate and fair way to capture the process students make through the course of an academic year.

Student growth percentiles not only show how individual students are progressing, but they also can be aggregated to show how groups of students, schools, districts, and the states are progressing. Students also receive growth projection and growth targets, which describe the amount of growth needed to reach and exceed proficiency in subsequent years.

The Georgia Growth Model will include multi-year projections, giving a long-term view of what is required for students to reach or exceed proficiency.

Example:

Anna’s reading growth percentile is 54. The median reading growth for Anna’s school is 65. This means that Anna grew at a rate greater than 54% of academically-similar students in reading. On average, she grew at a lower rate in reading compared to the other students in her school.

### **EDUCATIONAL ACRONYMS**

**These are common acronyms and abbreviations that are used in the educational environment**

**ADD**

Attention deficit disorder

**BD**

Behavior disorder

**BOE**

Board of Education

**CCGPS**

Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

**CCRPI**

College and Career Readiness Performance Index

**DFACS**

Department of Family and Children Services

**DOE**

Department of Education

**IDEA**

Individuals with Disabilities Act

**IEP**

Individualized Education Plan

**ISS**

In school suspension

**LD**

Learning disability

**LRE**

Least restrictive environment

**O.C.G.A.**

Official Code of Georgia

**OSS**

Out of school suspension

**EIP**  
Early Intervention Program

**Pre-K**  
Pre-Kindergarten

**ELL**  
English Language Learner

**PTO**  
Parent-Teacher Organization

**GaDOE**  
Georgia Department of Education

**RTI**  
Response to Intervention

**GPA**  
Grade point average

**SST**  
Student Support Team

**GPS**  
Georgia Performance Standards

**GKIDS**  
Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

**GSE**  
Georgia Standards of Excellence

## HEALTH

### NURSE

Students may not be allowed to go to the school nurse at any time unless you have a note from a teacher or administrator. Entrance without permission may result in discipline. The school nurse will check the student and make a decision regarding notification of parents. In the event of an injury or other emergency, parents and an ambulance will be called. Make your visit to the clinic as quick as possible in order to avoid missing class time.

### MEDICATIONS

#### **Asthma**

Students diagnosed with asthma and require the use of asthma medication must have a prescription and bring the box with contents to be administered at school. A **Self-Administration of Asthma Medication at School** form must be signed by parent/guardian and physician before students are allowed to carry and self-administer asthma medication at school.

#### **Allergy**

Students diagnosed with asthma and require the use of asthma medication must have a prescription and bring the box with contents. If a student has an allergy that requires the use of an EpiPen, etc., then parents must provide an EpiPen, etc., with proper pharmacy label to be kept in the school nurse's office.

In order for a student to carry and self-administer EpiPen, etc., then parent/guardian and physician must complete one of the following forms:

- **Self-Administration of EpiPen, EpiPenJr.**
- **Twinject Medication at School**



## **Diabetes**

Any student diagnosed with a diabetes must have parent/guardian and physician complete a **Diabetes Action Plan form**.

## **Diabetes Medical Management Plan (DMMP)**

This form must be completed **EVERY SCHOOL YEAR** by the **parent/guardian and physician**.

## **Seizures**

Any student diagnosed with a seizure disorder must have parent/guardian and physician complete a **Seizure Action Plan form**.

## **Gastronomy Feeding**

A student with a Gastronomy appliance must have the following form completed by a **parent/guardian and physician** annually.

## **STUDENT ILLNESS/INJURY**

The main reasons for keeping your child home are **he/she's too sick to participate** comfortably at school or **he/she might spread a contagious disease to other students**. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, please contact the front office or school clinic so other students' parents and school staff may be alerted of the symptoms. A doctor's note is required before a student is readmitted when there is a contagious disease/infection involved. Students should stay home from school if there is:

- Fever > or equal to 100.4°F
- Vomiting more than once
- Diarrhea
- Frequent cough
- Persistent pain (ear, stomach, etc.)
- Widespread rash
- Head lice, until treated
- Chicken pox, until lesions have scabbed (usually 5-7 days)
- Impetigo, Ringworm, or Scabies until under treatment and lesions covered
- Bacterial Pink Eye (thick eye drainage and redness of the whites of the eyes) until under treatment
- Open Wound Drainage (ears, wound, etc.)

## **Fever**

Check your child's temperature with a thermometer, and if they have a temperature equal to 100.4\* F or over 100.4\* F, they are considered to have fever. **Children must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of medicine, before returning to school.**

## **Vomiting/Diarrhea**

Until we know that these are not signs of a contagious illness, such as a stomach virus, your child should be kept home. Your child should be vomiting/diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school.

### **Skin Rashes or Open Wounds**

If the rash or wound has any fluid or drainage coming from it, the child must remain out of school until the rash or wound has been treated and a note from the doctor states it is ok to return to school, or until the rash is gone, dried, or scabbed over with no new spots appearing. Anytime a rash is associated with fever, the child may not come to school until that fever is gone for 24 hours without medication.

### **Red Eyes with Drainage or Crusting Around the Eye**

This can often mean your child has conjunctivitis, also known as pink-eye. We must have a note from the doctor stating the condition is not contagious or when the student may return to school. If no doctor's excuse is available, your child must remain out of school until the redness and drainage are completely gone.

### **Pediculosis (Head Lice)**

Head lice are an especially common problem for all school aged children. If, during the screening process or individual inspection, an infestation of head lice is confirmed, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The student will be removed from the classroom. Parent/guardian will be contacted and required to check-out the student and provide the appropriate treatment.
2. When the students have left at the end of the school day, the school classroom where an incidence of head lice has been found will be cleaned to help prevent the spread of the condition.
3. After the parent/guardian has administered the first treatment and the nits have been manually removed, the child may return to school. The school clinic will conduct an examination. All students must be cleared by the school nurse and found to be free of all nits and/or live head lice prior to being allowed to ride the school bus or return to class. If the student is not lice and/or nit free, he or she **WILL NOT** be readmitted to school.
4. A second inspection (7 – 10 days later) may be conducted by school officials to ensure that another infestation has not occurred. If an exam during this period reveals lice or nits, you will be notified to pick up your child and the absence will be unexcused because it will be considered a continuation of the original head lice condition.
5. Absences of one or more days due to head lice infestation will be unexcused. Chronic or recurring cases that result in excessive absences will result in a referral to the school attendance clerk and may cause failure to progress to the next grade or to receive credit for the course.

### **GENERAL TREATMENT INFORMATION**

- Repetitive and frequent use of pediculicide treatments is not recommended because of the associated hazards and potential resistance. Treatment labels should always be followed.

- There are several alternative treatment methods available; please consult your local pharmacist or school nurse for more information. (Examples: mayonnaise, olive oil, tea tree oil and Vaseline)
- If live lice remain after treatment, a second treatment is recommended around 7-10 days after the first treatment.
- Children should be referred to a physician for repeat (more than 3, in most cases) lice infestations.
- The key to eliminating head lice is diligence. The following measures will also assist in ridding the household environment of any infestation:
  - Check all household members (including adults) of children with live lice. Close friends of the infested child should be examined and treated if necessary.
  - Launder linens, pajamas, and towels of the infested person; wash hairbrushes/combs in hot water
  - Vacuum mattresses, pillows, stuffed animals, furniture, carpeting and car seats. Discard the contents of the vacuum in a plastic trash bag after each use.



Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., **Commissioner**

Brian Kemp, **Governor**

2 Peachtree Street, NW, 15th Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

[dph.ga.gov](http://dph.ga.gov)

May 21, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness that affects the brain and the spinal cord. Meningitis can cause shock, coma and death within hours of the first symptoms.

To help protect your children and others from meningitis, Georgia law requires students be vaccinated against this disease, unless the child has an exemption.

Before starting the 2020-2021 school year, all students entering or transferring into 11th grade will need proof of a meningococcal booster shot (MCV4), unless their first dose was received on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If your teen has not been vaccinated against meningococcal disease, we strongly recommend getting your child vaccinated. Getting MCV4 (meningococcal conjugate vaccine) now will not only help protect your child against the ongoing threat of meningitis, it will also meet the new school entry requirement.

Ask your pediatrician or local health department about other shots your child may need including:

- the human papillomavirus (HPV) series
- the tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis shot (Tdap or Td booster)
- an annual flu vaccine; and
- catch-up immunizations, including chickenpox, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and hepatitis B.

If your child does not have health insurance or their health plan won't cover these vaccines, call your local health department and ask about getting no or low cost vaccines. For more information, visit <http://dph.georgia.gov/vaccines-children> or call (800) 848-3868.

Sincerely,

Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner & State Health Officer

## ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

**Purpose:** Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SGSC) believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, provides opportunities for important communication between teachers and students, and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance for the benefit of the student.

**Policy Statement:** It is the policy of SGSC to expect students to be punctual and present for the entire school day. As such SGSC Parents, Guardians, and Students shall operate under the following:

**The School Day** - The official SGSC school day shall begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:10 p.m. Students must be in their assigned classroom by the beginning of the official school day to be considered on time. *Students ARE NOT allowed to enter or be left at school before 7:30 a.m.*

**Tardies** - A student is considered tardy when he/she fails to arrive to their assigned classroom by the start of the official school day. In the event that a student is tardy he/she: **MUST** be signed in by a parent or legal guardian at the front office, or If the student has driven to school he/she **MUST** sign themselves in at the front office.

- Excused Tardies - For a tardy to be classified as Excused the reason for late arrival must be the result of any reason listed herein as an accepted excuse for absence. In the event of a doctor or dental appointment or court ordered appearance an appointment card or other form of verification should be presented to the office to be kept in your child's file.
- Unexcused Tardies - Tardies due to oversleeping, missing the bus, car trouble, or any other reason not classified as an Excused Tardy shall be Unexcused.

**Early Dismissals** - In the event that a student leaves the school after 11:30 a.m. but prior to regular dismissal time it shall be classified as an Early Dismissal. Any student leaving the campus early must sign out with the front office otherwise the student will be considered truant. Any student who leaves campus without properly checking out will receive disciplinary action.

**Absences** - A student shall be marked absent as follows:

1. If the student does not come to school for the day,
2. If the student is checked out of school before 11:30 a.m.,
3. If the student is checked in to school after 11:30 a.m., or
4. If the student accumulates 5 unexcused tardies and/or early dismissals, the time out of school due to unexcused tardies and early dismissals will be calculated and every 4 hours accumulated will be counted as one (1) unexcused absence.
5. High School absences will be handled on a period-by-period basis.

**Absences will be designated as Excused or Unexcused. In the event of each absence, the student must return with a written note within 3 days of the absence that is signed and dated by a parent, guardian, or doctor.**

**Excused Absences** - State law governs Excused Absences from school therefore; absences shall be considered Excused as defined by law and in the rules of the Georgia Board of Education. A student may be excused from attending school in the following circumstances:

1. Personal Illness of the student (A parent/guardian note will be accepted for illness for up to 3 absences, however if your child has more than 3 absences for illness a doctor excuse will then be required for the absence to count as an excused absence.);
2. Instances where attendance by the student would endanger the health of the student or others
3. Serious Illness or Death in the immediate family;
4. Recognized Religious Holidays observed by the faith of the student;
5. Court Order or an order by a government agency, including Pre-induction Physical Examinations for service in the Armed Forces, mandating the absence from school;
6. Voter Registration or Voting, which shall not exceed 1 day, for students eligible to vote in a public election;
7. A student whose parent or legal guardian is serving in military service in the armed forces or the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to 5 days per school year to visit with the parent or legal guardian prior to the parent or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.
8. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
9. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the School Administration to have merit based on circumstances.

Additionally, students shall be marked present and not counted as absent in the following circumstances:

1. Students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly shall be counted as present for days missed from school for such service;
2. Foster Care students shall be credited as present and shall not be counted as absent for any day, portion of a day, or days missed when attending court proceedings related to the students foster care.
3. Students who successfully participate in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program shall be counted as present and given full credit for the school day during which he/she served in the STEP program. No student shall be permitted to be absent from school to participate in the STEP program for more than 2 school days per year.

**Unexcused Absences** - Absences shall be considered Unexcused any time a student is out of school for any reason that does not qualify as an Excused Absence as defined above.

*Truancy* State law requires school attendance for all students between the ages of 6 and 16 years with penalties including fines and/or prison for non-compliance. Truancy is any intentional or unauthorized absence from compulsory education. School days missed as the result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused absences for the purposes of determining truancy. *Five or more Unexcused Absences during the school calendar year will*

result in the student being classified as *Truant*. Truancy is a serious offense that requires stern corrective action on the part of SGSC and the parent/guardian. A truant student will be referred to the School's Attendance Protocol Committee and the Attendance Protocol Committee or other designated truancy officer of the student's home county.

**Extended Excused Absences** - When a student misses 10 or more days of school due to illness the absences may be classified as Extended Excused Absences. In such instances the student may qualify for Hospital/Homebound services. For a complete description of eligibility see the SGSC Hospital/Homebound Services Policy.

**Notification and Actions** - In the event of excessive tardies, early dismissals, and absences the following notifications and actions shall occur:

**Tardies and Early Dismissals**

Five Total of any combination of Tardies and/or Early Dismissals – Letter of Notification to the student's Parent/Guardian(s).

After a student accumulates 5 tardies and/or early dismissals, the total time out of school due to tardies and early dismissals will be calculated and every 4 accumulated hours accumulated will be counted as one (1) absence.

**Unexcused Absences**

\*All Letters of Notification shall be sent to the Parent/Guardian via Certified Mail with Return Receipt Requested.

- **5 Unexcused Absences** - Letter of Notification to the student's Parent/Guardian(s) and parent conference to discuss further action of unexcused absences.
- **7 Unexcused Absences** - Letter of Notification to the student's Parent/Guardian(s) that 3 more unexcused absences will result in withdrawal.
- **10 Unexcused Absences** – Withdrawal from the school; a certified letter of notification will be sent to the parent/guardian.

\*If a student is withdrawn for lack of attendance and all attempts to secure proof of transfer to another school or to receive a homeschool declaration fail within 45 days of the withdrawal, then the student/parent will be referred to the Department of Family and Children Services and local law enforcement/juvenile court system (based on state truancy laws). Students withdrawn for lack of attendance are eligible for re-enrollment in accordance with the *Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Enrollment Policy*.

**Grievance Process**

Any grievance related to this policy may be addressed through the process outlined in the *Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances Policy*, which can be found on the school website, Parent/Student Handbook, or requested from the front office.

## CODE OF CONDUCT & STUDENT DISCIPLINE

It is the desire of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School that all students should have every possible opportunity to take advantage of the instructional programs. Whatever distracts from a favorable learning environment lessens that opportunity.

### **EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Students enrolled in Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School that will be expected to demonstrate the following:

In an effort to fully implement school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports, along with maximizing students' engagement and instructional time, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School teachers will utilize corrective strategies in **Level 1** (Classroom Managed) prior to referring a student to campus administration for an office discipline referral (**Levels 2**). These corrective strategies include but are not limited to:

- Remove distractions
- Proximity control
- Proactively prompt desired behavior
- Increase opportunities for active participation
- Increase use of specific praise statements
- Increase wait time for response
- Redirect student
- Review/Re-Teach expectations
- Provide opportunities for student to practice expected behaviors and provide descriptive feedback
- Loss of recess or other free choice time
- In-class privileges revoked
- Teacher/student conference

### **Incentives and Rewards**

Our school wide incentive program focuses on students who are following school rules and rising to school expectations. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will be celebrating those students who do not have any office referrals during each nine weeks grading period. At the end of the nine weeks, these students will receive a prize and/or celebration. An end of the year celebration will take place for those students receiving no office referrals for the year.

Each month, teachers will nominate a student from their homeroom who shows tremendous character, academic growth/performance, and has appropriate attendance. These students will receive a prize, certificate, and recognition. Each month these students will participate in a kindness committee for the month where they will spread kindness throughout the entire school.

It is important that we are respectful of students in our disciplinary responses. Consequences



should focus on teaching, remediation, or logical consequences as much as possible. In providing consequences we also want to be mindful of the instructional time students are missing with the goal of minimizing the amount of instructional time missed.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Minor Offenses</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Classroom Managed Behavior</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Major Offenses</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Office Managed</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Illegal Offenses</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Office Managed</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Running in the hallway</li> <li>● Loud voices/yelling</li> <li>● Off-task behavior</li> <li>● Noise making</li> <li>● Class Disruption</li> <li>● Failure to complete assignments and/or bring materials to class</li> <li>● Out of Seat</li> <li>● Horseplay</li> <li>● Breaking cafeteria rules</li> <li>● Breaking playground rules</li> <li>● Inappropriate behavior in the bathrooms</li> <li>● Distracting paraphernalia (games, phones, tablets, etc.)</li> <li>● Chewing gum or eating candy except by teacher permission</li> <li>● Violation of Dress Code</li> <li>● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Major verbal altercation/major disruption</li> <li>● Fighting/physical aggression</li> <li>● Harassment/bullying</li> <li>● Persistent/Willful Disobedience</li> <li>● Insubordination</li> <li>● Leaving class/campus without permission</li> <li>● Property destruction/misuse</li> <li>● Theft</li> <li>● Forgery</li> <li>● Unauthorized use of electronic devices/Internet misuse/cyberbullying</li> <li>● Trespassing</li> <li>● Offensive Touching</li> <li>● Disorderly conduct</li> <li>● Cheating</li> <li>● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assault/Battery</li> <li>● Sexual Acts/Sexual Harrassment</li> <li>● Use or possession of alcohol' under the influence of while on campus or a school sponsored event</li> <li>● Weapons (possess, use or transmit)</li> <li>● Threatening staff</li> <li>● Bullying students</li> <li>● Use or possession of drugs; under the influence of while on campus or a school sponsored event</li> <li>● Terroristic Threats (staff/students)</li> <li>● Arson</li> <li>● Threatening to destroy school property (bomb, fire, shootings)</li> <li>● Extreme property damage/vandalism</li> <li>● Blatant disrespect of teachers/staff</li> <li>● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category</li> </ul>



## CONSEQUENCES

Level 1 Minor Offenses Classroom Managed Behavior	Level 2 Major Offenses Office Managed	Level 3 Illegal Offenses Office Managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>1<sup>st</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø Teacher warning</li> <li>Ø Parental contact</li> </ul> </li>   <li>· <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø Teacher warning</li> <li>Ø Parent conference</li> </ul> </li> <li>· <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø Administrative referral</li> <li>Ø Invitation for parent/guardian to accompany student to school or classes</li> </ul> </li>   <li>· Successive offenses may result in after school detention or out of school suspension (OSS) as assigned by administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1<sup>st</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø Administrative Discretion</li> <li>Ø Parental contact</li> </ul> </li>   <li><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø After school detention</li> <li>Ø Parent conference</li> </ul> </li>   <li><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø After school detention (2 Days)</li> <li>Ø Behavior contract implementation</li> <li>Ø Invitation for parent/guardian to accompany student to school or classes</li> </ul> </li>   <li>Ø Successive offenses may result in out of school suspension (OSS) as assigned by administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>1<sup>st</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø Out of school suspension (3 - 5 days)</li> <li>Ø Parent conference</li> <li>Ø Student behavior contract</li> </ul> </li>   <li>· <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø OSS (5 days)</li> <li>Ø Parent conference</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ø Follow-up of behavior contract</li>   <li>· <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Offense</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø OSS (7days)</li> <li>Ø Parent conference</li> <li>Ø Possible tribunal</li> </ul> </li>   <li>· All Level 3 violations are zero tolerance offenses. Successive offenses may also result in expulsion</li> </ul>

The principal will be the final say in the decisions related to identified behaviors. The chart above is meant to serve as a guide for educators and administrators - these are not the exact consequences for each violation. Decisions are subject to administration.

- As with any incident of student behavior, school administrators must exercise informed judgment as to whether a student's actions constitute a violation of the Board policy and/or the Code of Student Conduct. The levels shown on the previous page assist in guiding administrators to use progressive interventions to change student behaviors. The administrator always has the option to use an intervention from a lower level as long as one from the prescribed level is also employed.
- Three or more discipline referrals per 9-week period will result in the revocation of privileges (field trips, special events/programs, etc).

## **ALCOHOL, NARCOTICS, STIMULANTS, & OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS**

Students in the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, transmitting, intending to transmit, or being under the influence of alcohol and substances made illegal by the O.C.G.A 16-30-70 et. seq. (Dangerous Drug Act) and O.C.G.A 16-13-20 et. seq. (Georgia Controlled Substance Act):

1. On the school grounds during, immediately before, or immediately after school hours;
2. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group;
3. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
4. Within legal proximity to school grounds as designated under Georgia Statutes;
5. En route to and from school;
6. At any school-sponsored function, whether held during or after regular school hours, and whether held on or off school property;
7. En route to and from school functions, activities, or events;
8. During any time that students are under the jurisdiction of school authorities.

Substances defined by local and state laws governing dangerous illegal substances are covered by this policy. Such substances include, but are not limited to:

- a. Drugs (stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, inhalants, opiates) including, but not limited to narcotic drugs, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, cocaine, or any other contraband or controlled substance or prohibited drug;
- b. Alcoholic beverages or intoxicants of any kind;
- c. Prescriptive medicine or drugs, with or without medical cause or medical permission, unless such medications have been registered with the school's guidance department according to the school's procedures. In all schools, medicines must be registered with the principal.
- d. Possession of non-prescription drug/medicine (over the counter) is also prohibited. ALL MEDICATION (Prescription/non-prescription/over-the-counter) IS TO BE TURNED IN PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL DAY.

## **BULLYING**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter 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.

The Governing Board of Southwest Georgia Stem Charter hereby adopts the following anti-bullying policy which shall be effective on the date the policy is adopted by the Board (July 30, 2020). The school's Governing Board believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Parents and students are encouraged to report any instances of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school authorities. In addition to possible disciplinary action, when a school administrator determines that an act of bullying has occurred, the principal or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student found to be bullying and the victim(s) of the bullying by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically. If necessary, counseling and other interventions may be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying or students who bully others. If a student or his/her parent feels that an appropriate resolution of an allegation of bullying has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent should contact the school board. In accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15, a student who has been found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, shall be sent to an alternative school.

### **CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

The rules listed in this policy apply to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. This list is not all inclusive, and a student committing an act of misconduct not covered by this policy will be subject to the discretionary authority of the principal. More severe punishment may be necessary in extreme cases. The policy represents a progressive discipline process. Factors taken into account in determining dispositions include (but are not limited to):

- Student's history
- Degree of premeditation
- Age
- Disability
- Evidence
- Willingness to cooperate
- Seriousness of offense

**Because of these factors, punishment imposed may vary from student to student for the same offense.**

Federal and state laws and regulations that are in conflict with this or its application shall take precedence. All disciplinary action is subject to review and disposition under the discretionary authority of the principal.

### **Section One: Purpose**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ("School") is committed to creating a safe, positive environment for all of our students, staff, parents, and community partners. The school will work to assure that all students and staff are well-motivated, fully aware of their potential and dedicated to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. The School believes that all children can thrive in a safe learning environment. The School utilizes a range of activities to recognize,

celebrate, and reward positive behavior at the classroom, school, and district levels.

The purpose of this policy is to support the creation of a safe learning environment for all members of the school community. The purpose of this policy is to state clearly our standards for acceptable conduct of students. The policy also explains the consequences for not meeting these standards of conduct. This policy a strict policy for conduct that endangers the safety of the schools and/or disrupts the educational experience for other students. The School does not permit corporal punishment.

The policy also sets forth the discipline procedures for the students who have committed violations. This policy is not meant to be a contract between the District and the students, and may be amended at any time.

### **Section Two: Scope of the Policy**

Every student is entitled to a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The rules and regulations in this policy are designed toward that end and shall apply during the following times and in the following places:

- a. On school grounds at any time;
- b. Off school grounds at a school bus stop, on a school bus, school activity, function, or event;
- c. When either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is en route to and/or from school, or to or from a school activity, function or event;
- d. Off school grounds when the behavior of a student (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.5(c)).
- e. Off school grounds while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities such as field trips, conferences, or athletic events; or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities;
- f. Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a school student or employee and is related to the victim's school affiliation, or when the off-campus conduct directly affects the safety and welfare of the school community or the orderly mission and function of the school; and
- g. Off school grounds and when a student leaves without permission of a school official or any time Rule 10 would apply.

The rules of this policy do not apply to student speech that occurs off campus if the speech is at a non-school sponsored event and does not cause or is not likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or a school activity.

### **Section Three: Equal Opportunity Statement**

The School complies with all federal, state and local laws, and provides an equal opportunity for all students. The school prohibits discrimination in admission, grading, discipline and any other activity based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, handicap, nationality or citizenship.

All decisions of the School Board and Administration will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed above.

#### **Section Four: Statement of Student Misconduct**

The rules in this policy are designed to notify students (grades K-9) as to the types of behaviors that are unacceptable; nevertheless, every specific variation of the prohibited conduct may not have been included. Consequently, students should expect to be disciplined for misconduct that is obviously inappropriate. A specific rule need not be written for every conceivable variation of behavior that directly affects the orderly mission of the school.

#### **Section Five: References to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated**

References to Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) included in this policy do not require that the elements of the specific criminal code section referenced be proved beyond a reasonable doubt before schools may punish misconduct. Further, these code references do not impose any additional intent requirements upon schools pursuing discipline against students for violation of this policy.

When a school rule is violated that may also be a violation of the law, the schools may notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

#### **Section Six: Discipline Rules and Prohibited Conduct**

##### **RULE 1 - DISRUPTION AND INTERFERENCE WITH SCHOOL**

No student shall cause or attempt to cause (either directly or indirectly) a disruption or interference with school by any means including, but not limited to, any of the following behaviors:

1A. Pull fire alarm;

1B. Occupy or block any area of the campus, prevent or attempt to prevent students from attending a class, school activity or event;

1C. Except under the direct instruction of the principal, block or attempt to block normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a school campus or adjacent grounds;

1D. School disruption. A student may not in any manner, by use of violence, noise, force coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, insult, or other conduct, intentionally or unintentionally cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school;

1E. Class disruption. Student behavior that is repetitive or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach and/or students' ability to learn;

1F. Disorderly conduct. Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety and/or welfare of one or more students, staff members and/or others;

1G. Refuse to identify himself/herself upon request of any teacher, principal, superintendent, school bus driver, or other school personnel;

1H. Urge, encourage, or counsel other students to violate any rules of the Student Conduct Behavior Policy;

1I. Be on campus or enter the premises of a school without proper authorization of the superintendent, principal, or other school personnel;

1J. Dress inappropriately (including drug, alcohol, or tobacco advertisements, graffiti, etc.) (A list of each prohibited item is available at each local school);

1K. Willfully fails to leave the premises after being told to do so;

1L. Other Disruptive Conduct to be explained in detail in discipline documents

### **Mandatory Reporting of Repeated and Substantial Class Interference**

Teachers are required to report any student's violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Policy which 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 the students in his or her class to learn. Teachers shall report any such incidents to the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior. Such report shall not exceed one page and shall describe the behavior. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one day of receiving such report, send to the student's parents or guardians a copy of the report, and information regarding how the principal or the principal's designee may be contacted. Such students may be expelled from the School or may not be permitted to re-enroll during the next school year.

### **Student Removal from Class**

A teacher may remove or refer to the principal or designee a student from class if the student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach students in his or her class or the ability of other students to learn in the class. The Board shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738.

Where a teacher has previously filed a report of a student's repeated or substantial interference with the classroom or where the behavior of a student poses an immediate threat to the safety of student's classmates or the teacher, the teacher shall have the authority to remove the student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738. The school will have a placement review committee that



shall be responsible for determining the appropriate placement of a student when the principal recommends that the student be returned to the classroom and the teacher withholds consent for the student's return. The placement review committee shall consist of three members, including two teachers and one alternate teacher chosen by the faculty and a member of the professional staff chosen by the principal.

## **RULE 2 - DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR MISUSE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY OR EQUIPMENT**

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to school property or alter/misuse school technology or any other equipment, including accessing unauthorized areas on the computer. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal school property. A student shall not access/alter school/teacher records. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen school property or attempt to possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen school property.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 2A. Damage or vandalize school property;
- 2B. Steal school property (valued at less than \$300.00);
- 2C. Engage in larceny/theft of school property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 2D. Possess, use, sell, buy or transmit stolen school property (valued at less than \$300.00);
- 2E. Possess, use, sell, buy or transmit stolen school property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 2F. Alter/misuse technology or any other equipment-hardware or software or school web site/page;
- 2G. Engage in computer trespass (accessing unauthorized areas on the computer/software);
- 2H. Accessing/altering school/teacher records;
- 2I. Undertake breaking and entering and/or burglary;
- 2L. Commit arson (by means of fire or explosive a person knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to do damage);
- 2M. Rob or attempt to rob by using violence, threat, or intimidation;
- 2N. Commit armed robbery (with intent to commit theft, a person takes property of another by use of any offensive weapon or any replica, article, or device having the appearance of such weapon);
- 2O. Compromising test security of an international, national, state or county standardized test;
- 2P. Other Destructive Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

### **RULE 3 - DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR MISUSE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY**

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property or steal or attempt to steal private property. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen private property on school grounds. Further, off school grounds, a student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property belonging to a school employee where such theft or damage is because of that school employee's performance of his/her official duties. A student shall not sell or buy or attempt to sell or buy personal property on school grounds.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 3A. Damage or vandalize private property of another person (valued at less than \$300.00);
- 3B. Damage or vandalize private property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 3C. Steal private property of another person (valued at less than \$300.00);
- 3D. Possess, use, sell, buy, or transmit stolen property (valued at less than \$300.00);
- 3E. Possess, use, sell, buy, or transmit stolen property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 3F. Engage in larceny/theft of private property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 3G. Steal or attempt to steal a motor vehicle;
- 3H. Rob or attempt to rob by using violence, threat, or intimidation;
- 3I. Commit armed robbery (with intent to commit theft, a person takes property of another by use of an offensive weapon or any replica, article, or device having the appearance of such weapon);
- 3J. Commit arson (by means of fire or explosive a person knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to do damage);
- 3K. Other Destructive Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

### **RULE 4 - ABUSE, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, ASSAULT OR BATTERY ON A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE**

Regardless of intent, a student shall not make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, undermining, or provoking nature to or about a school employee or in the presence of a school employee. This includes, but is not limited to, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity, ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur, or harassment and includes the development of a "hit list", "people to kill", "people to shoot", or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people. Further, a student shall not cause or

attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way that could reasonably cause physical injury or make physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature to a school employee.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 4A. Oral threat/verbal assault (oral speech that creates, or is intended to create, a fear of physical harm);
- 4B. Written threat;
- 4C. Rude and/or disrespectful conduct including but not limited to symbolic gestures and insults;
- 4D. Cyberbullying. Any electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property, off school property, with school equipment, or with non-school equipment, that: (1) is directed specifically at 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 school personnel(s)' person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.
- 4E. Use of profanity;
- 4F. Ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, or disability slur;
- 4G. Harassment - Repeated words (verbal or written), conduct, or action that annoys, alarms, or causes distress and serves no legitimate purpose;
- 4H. Any expression (oral, written, or gesture) which has the effect of undermining the authority of the school employee or distracting staff and/or students from the learning environment, including writings of a threatening or provoking nature;
- 4I. Terroristic threats (threatening to commit any crime of violence, release any hazardous substance, or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another, with the purpose of causing the evacuation of a building, with the purpose of causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror, the evacuation of a building, or serious inconvenience).
- 4J. Posturing to inflict physical harm. Any action or gesture directed toward a school employee that places the school employee in reasonable fear of immediate physical harm;
- 4K. Other Threatening Conduct to a school employee to be 4BA. Behavior that could cause physical injury;
- 4L. Behavior that unintentionally caused physical injury to employee;
- 4M. Intentional physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature to employee;
- 4N. Aggravated battery (maliciously causing bodily harm to another by depriving him or her of a member of his or her body, or by rendering a member of his or her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his or her body or a member thereof);
- 4O. Homicide/murder;
- 4P. Kidnapping (seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will);
- 4Q. Voluntary manslaughter;
- 4R. Enter without permission the private property of a school employee and/or deface/damage/vandalize such property;
- 4S. Intentional physical contact that caused physical harm to an employee;
- 4T. Violence against a teacher
- 4U. Other Violent Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

This rule applies off school grounds when the misconduct by the alleged perpetrator is because of the school employee's performance of his/her official duties.

### **Intentional Physical Contact with a Teacher, Bus Driver, or Other School Employee**

Any student who intentionally makes physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature with a teacher, bus driver, school official, or other school employee shall be suspended and brought before a disciplinary hearing.

The minimum penalty for a student found in violation of Rule 4M or 4S shall be suspension from school until the end of the school year. Any hearing finding a student in violation of Rule 4M or 4S may impose a more severe penalty in its discretion. This minimum penalty shall not be applied in conflict with applicable law.

Any student found in violation of Rule 4N, 4O, 4P, 4Q, or 4T shall be expelled from the school for the remainder of their eligibility to attend school. The following exceptions apply: (1) The Board, in its discretion, may allow a student found in violation to return to school after completing certain remedial programs, (2) the Board, in its discretion and upon the recommendation of the disciplinary tribunal, may allow a student in grades 6-8 to return to the school system for grades 9-12, (3) the Board, in its discretion, may allow a student in grades K-5 to return to the school, (4) permanent expulsion will not be imposed where this penalty would infringe any right created under law, and (5) permanent expulsion will not be imposed where the student acts in self defense as provided in O.C.G.A . 16-3-21.

### **RULE 5 - ABUSE, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, ASSAULT OR BATTERY BY A STUDENT ON ANOTHER STUDENT OR TO ANY OTHER PERSON NOT EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL**

Regardless of intent, a student shall not make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, distracting, or provoking nature to or about a person/student or in the presence of a person/student. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity; ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur; or harassment and includes the development of a "hit list", "people to kill", "people to shoot", or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people.

State law defines "bullying" as: 1) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; 2) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily injury or harm; or 3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that: a) causes substantial physical harm or visible harm; b) substantially interferes with a student's education; c) is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating/threatening educational environment; or d) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Upon finding that a student in grades 6 - 9 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall not be permitted to attend the School. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4) Retaliation for reports of bullying will not be tolerated and will be subject to independent disciplinary action. The prohibition against bullying includes off-campus cyberbullying that is (1) 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 students' or school personnel's person or property or has

a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. A student found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school.

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause bodily injury to any student/person. A student shall not engage in any behavior that threatens the safety or well-being of another person or has the likelihood of provoking a fight.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

5A. Oral threat/verbal assault (oral speech that creates, or is intended to create, a fear of physical harm);

5B. Written threat;

5C. Rude and/or disrespectful conduct including but not limited to symbolic gestures and insults;

5D. Bullying; (See note below on bullying and state law above)

5E. Cyberbullying. Any electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property, off school property, with school equipment, or with non-school equipment, that: (1) is directed specifically at student(s); (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 student(s)' person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

5F. Use of profanity;

5G. Ethnic, racial, sexual, religious or disability slur;

5H. Harassment - Repeated words (verbal or written), conduct, or action that annoys, alarms, or causes distress and serves no legitimate purpose;

5I. Posturing to fight;

5J. Terroristic threats (threatening to commit any crime of violence, release any hazardous substance, or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another, with the purpose of causing the evacuation of a building, with the purpose of causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror, the evacuation of a building, or serious inconvenience)

5K. Pushing and shoving;

5L. Fighting;

5M. Battery (when one individual physically attacks or beats up on another individual)

- 5N. Behavior that could cause physical injury;
- 5O. Behavior that caused physical injury to another student;
- 5P. Physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature to another student;
- 5Q. Aggravated battery (maliciously causing bodily harm to another by depriving him or her of a member of his or her body, or by rendering a member of his or her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his or her body or a member thereof);
- 5R. Homicide/murder;
- 5S. Kidnapping (seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will);
- 5T. Hazing (as a condition or precondition of gaining acceptance, membership, office, or other status in any school or school organization, subjecting a student to an activity which endangers or is likely to endanger the physical health or emotional well being of a student, regardless of a student's willingness to participate in such activity);
- 5U. Voluntary manslaughter;
- 5W. Other Violent Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

**RULE 6 - WEAPONS, DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS AND EXPLOSIVE, OR IMPLOSIVE DEVICES**

A student shall not solicit to buy or sell, or buy or sell or possess, handle, transmit, threaten with or discharge/use, any object that can reasonably be considered or converted to and/or used as a weapon such as, but not limited to knives; guns; pellet guns; brass knuckles; fireworks; lighters, tear gas, mace, explosives, pepper spray; bats (other than for athletics); clubs, sticks or other instruments of a bludgeoning type; Chinese stars; razors; projectiles and the like.

The prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, possession of the following:

- 6A. Knife less than 2 inches;
- 6B. Knife 2 inches or more;
- 6C. Handgun;
- 6D. Rifle or shotgun;
- 6E. BB/pellet/airsoft/paintball gun or rifle;
- 6F. Toy or any look-a-like gun;
- 6G. Destructive device (bomb, grenade, mine, rocket, missile, pipe bomb or similar device);

6H. Brass knuckles or metal knucks;

6I. Fire works;

6J. Accelerants (any liquid/aerosol, etc. which may be used to start or perpetuate a fire or other hazardous condition);

6K. Tear gas, mace or pepper spray;

6L. Bats, clubs, sticks or other instruments of a bludgeoning type (other than for athletics);

6M. Razors or razor blades;

6N. Spring stick/expandable baton;

6O. Nun chahka, nun check, nunchaku, shuriken, fighting chain, [any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely];

6P. Throwing star, oriental dart, or any disc having two or more points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled;

6Q. Taser/Stun gun;

6R. Other Weapon or device intended to cause physical harm.

### **Possession of a Firearm, Dangerous Weapon or Hazardous Object on School Property or at School Functions**

Students are prohibited from possessing firearms (including a handgun, rifle, shotgun, or other weapon which will or can be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or electrical charge, dangerous weapons (as defined by O.C.G.A. 16-11-121) or hazardous objects (as defined by O.C.G.A. 20-2-751), while on school property or at school functions. A student shall be excluded from school for one calendar year for possessing on school grounds or at a school function a firearm or a dangerous weapon (as defined by O.C.G.A. 16-11-121), provided that all hearing officers, tribunals, panels, administrators, and the Board shall have the discretion to impose a lesser or more harsh, appropriate consequence on a case-by-case basis for any such offense. Any student possessing a hazardous object (as defined by the O.C.G.A. 20-2-751), while on school property or at school functions, shall receive disciplinary consequences in the discretion of the hearing officer, tribunal, panel, administrator, the superintendent, or the Board, as consistent with the Board's policies and procedures.

This Rule shall not apply to individuals who are permitted to carry weapons by O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1.

### **RULE 7 - DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND VAPING**

A student shall not be involved in any substance, drug, alcohol tobacco or vaping transaction, including, without limitation to buy, possess, sell, use, transmit, solicit; attempt to buy, possess, sell,

use, or transmit; or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, depressant or stimulant drug including without limitation caffeine pills, hallucinogenic drug, anabolic steroid, amphetamine, barbiturate, cannabis, inhalant, alcoholic beverage, vaping product or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell, buy or transmit, or attempt to sell, buy or transmit any substance under the pretense that it is, in fact, a prohibited substance as described in this rule. The misuse or unauthorized possession of a prescription drug or nonprescription drug shall be considered a violation of this rule; however, this rule shall not apply to proper possession and/or use of a drug as authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician.

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy or solicit any drug-related paraphernalia any tobacco related paraphernalia, or any vaping related paraphernalia, which includes, but is not limited to, pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers, electronic smoking devices, or any other items related to drug use, tobacco use, vaping or depicting drugs, drug use, tobacco, vaping, or tobacco use, except where such items are related to approved curriculum.

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy or solicit tobacco or nicotine products.

The prohibited substances, products and behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

7A. Alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind;

7B. Amphetamine/methamphetamine drug [schedule II];

7C. Hallucinogenic drug [schedule I] [ex. peyote, PCP, etc.];

7D. Anabolic steroid [schedule III];

7E. Controlled drug or controlled substance {ex. Ritalin, Adderall, Phenobarbital, Percocet, OxyContin, Xanax, etc.};

7F. Cannabis (including but without limitation to marijuana, hemp, THC, etc.);

7G. LSD [schedule I];

7H. Cocaine [schedule II];

7I. Heroin [schedule I];

7J. Inhalants (any volatile solvents, aerosols, anesthetics, or volatile nitrites) [ex. glue, paint thinner, hair spray, Pam, ether, etc.];

7K. Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs (ex. NoDoz, Vivarin, asthma medicines, energy/diet pills, aspirins, herb pills, etc.);

7L. Look alike substance (under the pretense);

7M. Cannabis (selling - including possession of cannabis that is packaged for distribution or possession of one ounce or more)

7N. Offering, requesting, and/or receiving of a substance;



7O. Furnishing/providing/selling of a substance;

7P. Non-controlled prescription drug (ex. Prozac, Seroquel, Amoxicillin, etc.);

7Q. Pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers, or other objects used for drug use;

7R. Photographs, drawings or depictions of drugs, drug use, or objects used for drug use;

7S. Photographs, drawings or depictions of tobacco, vaping, tobacco use, or objects used for tobacco use or vaping;

7T. Electronic Smoking or Vaping Device;

7U. Tobacco products (ex. cigarettes, electronic tobacco or nicotine cartridges [any type], chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, cigars, liquid nicotine (regardless of biological source), electronic cigarette vapors (with or without nicotine), etc.);

Self-administration of asthma medication and prescription auto-injectable epinephrine is permitted with written parental approval and required documentation to the principal or his or her designee. See administrator for completion of proper forms/procedures.

### **RULE 8 - DISREGARD OF DIRECTIONS OR COMMANDS**

A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable directions or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, administrators, school bus drivers, or other authorized school personnel.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

8A. Failure to follow directions or commands of staff;

8B. Failure to follow written directions, local school rules or regulations;

8C. Failure to serve an administrative consequence (ex. Administrative Detention, Saturday School);

### **RULE 9 - SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/INDECENCY/SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

A student shall not engage in any physical, written or verbal act of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct. A student shall not perform any act of indecent exposure, lewd exposure, gesture or lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the student's own body or the body of another person, or any act of sexual intercourse. A student shall not allow another student/person to commit a lewd or indecent act to the body of oneself. A student shall not use any inappropriate gestures that mimic or imply sexual acts or engage in any acts of "streaking" or "mooning" as those terms are commonly understood. Such acts will not be regarded lightly or considered pranks.

A student shall not possess, view, copy, sell, buy or transmit printed or non-printed pornographic materials including any non-curricular sexually explicit printed or non-printed materials; or a student shall not possess, view, copy, sell, buy or transmit printed or non-printed pornographic materials including but not limited to non-curricular materials depicting the human male or female genitals or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering or any portion of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering.

A student who engages in any of the behaviors covered by this rule may also be subject to a Title IX investigation as set forth in policy S3.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

9A. Sexual harassment. Deliberate and unsolicited physical actions, gestures, or verbal or written comments of a sexual nature that are repeated or a single incident of a sufficiently serious nature to create a hostile environment;

9B. Lewd (sexual) exposure (any act of) (This includes "streaking" and "mooning.");

9C. Obscene and/or indecent gestures or gestures that mimic or imply sexual intercourse;

9D. Lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the student's own body or the body of another person;

9E. Sexual intercourse;

9F. Oral sex or any act of sodomy;

9G. Aggravated sexual battery;

9H. Pornographic materials. Possession or transmission by any means of descriptions, images, recordings, or other materials involving the display of genitals, pubic area, buttocks or breasts;

9I. Sexually Exploitative/Sexually Explicit materials. Possession or transmission by any means of descriptions, images, recordings or other materials involving (a) sexual acts of any type, (b) exposure of the genitals, pubic area, breasts or buttocks of a minor, or (c) other graphic sexual content;

9J. Recording images of intimate areas. Recording, possession, and/or transmission of images of students or employees that are of a sexual nature and that were taken without the consent of the student or employee;

9K. Kissing or any act of intimacy;

9L. Aggravated child molestation;

9M. Aggravated sodomy;

9N. Rape;

9O. Sexual battery (Intentional physical contact with the intimate parts of the body of another person without the consent of that person);

9P. Allowing another student/person to commit a lewd or indecent act to the body of oneself;

9Q. Sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual behavior, advances or requests for favors, unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical sexual conduct; offensive, severe, and/or frequent remarks about a person's sexual, or any harassment of a sexual nature which interferes with a student's right to an education or ability to participate in a school program or activity.

9R. Other Sexual Behavior

### **Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior**

This policy is adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7.

All students, parents, relatives and friends of students are encouraged to make an oral report of an incident when a student has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, other school system employee, or volunteer affiliated with the school. This oral report may be made to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, other employee, or volunteer affiliated with the school shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school leader, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the school leader is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Board Chair or the Board's designee.

The School Leader, upon receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report to the appropriate authorities immediately, but in no later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, other employee, or volunteer not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 or O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school leader shall make an immediate written report to the Chair of the Board, the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division (if applicable) and any other outside authorities.

### **RULE 10 - UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during

required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, except with written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official. A student may not leave school grounds prior to the end of the school day, after his/her initial arrival on campus, without the permission of a duly authorized school official.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 10A. Tardy to class;
- 10B. Tardy to school;
- 10C. AWOL from class (Absent without official leave);
- 10D. AWOL from school;
- 10E. Unexcused absence (Failure to comply with compulsory school attendance law);

#### **RULE 11 - OTHER CONDUCT WHICH IS SUBVERSIVE TO GOOD ORDER**

A student shall not perform any other act which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools. This includes, but is not limited to, violation of local school rules; violation of state and federal law; involvement in criminal gang-related behavior and/or criminal gang conduct as defined and prohibited by O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 and 16-15-4; providing false information to school personnel; unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of laser pointers, and electronic communications devices (including tape recorders, radios, CD Players, MP3 players, video games, and televisions); loitering or trespassing, providing false information to or about school personnel, or community misconduct that would be so serious as to pose a threat to the school community.

A student shall not hold oneself out as a member of a criminal street gang identified by one's mode of dress, means and method of communication including the use of hand signs, or the possession or publication of gang writings/symbols.

Subject to the rules listed below, the Board permits students to possess electronic pagers, cell phones or communication devices on a limited basis and provides local school principals with the authority to set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use of such devices at their individual schools.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 11A. Criminal gang-related activity (as defined by O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 and 16-15-4) including but not limited to: (1) Conduct or participate in a criminal street gang through criminal gang activity as defined in O.C.G.A. 16-15-3; (2) Acquire, maintain, directly or indirectly, through criminal gang activity or proceeds derived there from any interest in or control of any real or personal property of any nature, including money; (3) Engage in, directly or indirectly, or conspire to engage in criminal gang activity while acting as an organizer, supervisor or other position of management with regard to a criminal street gang; (4) Cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce another to participate in a criminal street gang; (5) Communicate, directly or indirectly, with another any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or to any

associate or relative of the other person with the intent to deter such person from assisting a member or associate of a criminal street gang to withdraw from such criminal street gang; (6) Communicate, directly or indirectly, with another any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or to any associate or relative of the other person with the intent to punish or retaliate against such person for having withdrawn from a criminal street gang; (7) While employed by or associated with a criminal street gang, commit any offense enumerated in O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 with knowledge that members of such criminal street gang have committed one or more of such offenses; (8) Commit any offense enumerated in O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 with the intent to maintain or increase his or her status or position in a criminal street gang;

11B. Retaliating against or deterring a witness. No student shall use threats, physical force, intimidation or violence to deter a student from, or retaliate against a student for: (1) providing information to school staff regarding the violation of the policy, the commission of a criminal act or the commission of a delinquent act, or (2) testifying at a school disciplinary hearing.

11C. Provide false information and/or forgery;

11D. Cheating;

11E. Gambling;

11F. Plagiarism;

11G. Foul language (profane or vulgar language not directed at another person) on school property or at a school-sponsored event;

11H. Laser pointers;

11I. Unauthorized use during school hours of electronic devices including but not limited to: tape recorders, radios, Cellphones. CD players, MP3 players, video games, and televisions;

11J. Loitering;

11K. Criminal trespassing;

11L. Community misconduct that would pose a threat to the school community. Any off campus behavior of a student which (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process;

11M. Other felony-Behavior of a student which could result in the student being charged criminally with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult: (list);

11N. Holding oneself out as a member of a criminal street gang by more than one of the following: one's mode of dress, means and method of communication including the use of hand signs, the possession or publication of gang writings/symbols, or admission of membership;

11O. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or school employee toward a student;

## **RULE 12 - REPEATED VIOLATIONS/MISBEHAVIOR/CHRONIC DISCIPLINARY PROBLEM STUDENTS**

Students who chronically disrupt or repeatedly violate other school rules may be charged with

repeated violations of school rules or misbehavior. This rule applies after remediation attempts, including the development and implementation of a student disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

12A. Chronically disrupt or repeatedly violate other school rules;

The student and parent must be notified in advance that once the student has been placed on a Rule 12, all subsequent violations will lead to an escalation in consequences and may lead to an independent Rule 12 charge and a disciplinary hearing.

### **RULE 13 - SCHOOL BUS INFRACTIONS**

No student shall cause or attempt to cause (either directly or indirectly) a disruption or interference with a school bus or other means of transportation by any means including, but not limited to, any of the following behaviors:

13A. Disruption of school transportation. A student shall not in any manner use violence, force, fear, threat or other conduct to disrupt or interfere with a driver's ability to operate the vehicle safely;

13B. Throwing objects at the driver;

13C. Failure to follow directions, rules or regulations;

13D. Use of mirrors, lasers, flash cameras or any other lights or reflective devices during the operation of a school bus without the permission of the driver;

13E. Posturing to fight;

13F. Fighting;

13G. Diverting or distracting the driver's attention;

13H. Throwing objects on the vehicle or out the vehicle window;

13I. Excessive noise;

13J. Use of any electronic device during the operation of a vehicle, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones;

Note: All other school rules still apply while on a school bus or at the bus stop. Discipline may also include suspension of transportation privileges.

### **PARENT CONCERNS PROCEDURE**

We recognize that there will be times when students and teachers may not resolve the issue in the above resolution procedure. If this is the case, we ask that the parent contact first the teacher by: Email and/or call to speak with teacher (may leave message to be returned) and then set up an

appointment to meet with teacher. If a resolution still cannot be reached, then we ask that you contact the following individuals in this order as needed until situation can be resolved for both parties:

1. School Administrator
2. Superintendent
3. School Board Members\*\*

\*\* We ask that board members be contacted only after all previous school/district level contacts have been exhausted.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students are encouraged to dress in a manner that demonstrates pride in themselves and the school. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter recognizes the relationship between personal dress and personal attitude and how each influence the nature of the learning environment. The principal and his/her staff are responsible for determining and enforcing regulations governing proper dress and grooming of students. **The dress code will not be enforced in a way that interferes with the free exercise of religion and that requests for modifications to the dress code should be directed to the principal.**

General Dress Code Policies:

1. Clothes shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments at all times. Undergarments may not be visible (i.e. Boys: underwear/boxers; Girls: bras, undershirts, or underwear).
2. Clothes which resemble loungewear, pajamas or underwear/undergarments as outerwear are not permissible.
3. All clothing must be worn in an appropriate and tasteful manner and as originally intended by the designer (i.e. overalls may not be worn with the straps hanging down instead of on the shoulders).
4. Proper undergarments should be worn to ensure modesty.
5. See-through, sheer, mesh, solid lace, and fishnet fabrics are not permissible as stand-alone apparel. See-through shirts may only be worn over tops that meet dress code rules as stand-alone apparel.
6. Spaghetti strap tops and tank tops are only permissible underneath shirts or jackets meeting dress code requirements.
7. Leggings, jeggings, tights, yoga pants, stretch pants, and spandex pants are not permissible to be worn as stand-alone apparel.
8. Leggings, jeggings, or tights can only be worn under clothing that already meets dress code requirements in length and appropriateness (i.e. leggings, jeggings, and tights should not be worn under shorts or dresses that do not already meet length requirements).
9. Pants and shorts must be fitted at the waist and crotch and of appropriate length.
10. Pants must be properly fitted and/or worn with a belt if needed. Pants that do not stay up without assistance and which must be held at the waistband while walking to keep them on are not permissible.
11. Pants worn below the waist, exposing other clothing/underwear underneath the pants, are not permissible.
12. Loose fitting wind pants or wind suits will be permitted, but all other types of jogging pants are not permissible.

13. Clothing, accessories and jewelry which contain obscene language, symbols, signs, or slogans and/or which are degrading or advocate prejudices on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or political party/affiliation are not permissible.
14. Clothing, accessories, or jewelry which contain language or symbols referencing sex, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, and impose an imminent threat of violence or disruption to the orderly operation of the school are not permissible.
15. Any articles of clothing or jewelry that could likely cause injury are prohibited. Articles as described include chains, bracelets, rings, chokers with spikes, and wallet chains of any length.
16. The face must be visible at all times. Masks and face paintings are not allowed. The principal, staff, students, and parents/guardian may establish reasonable dress and grooming regulations for events, or extra-curricular/special school activities in which students are engaged in alternative dress (i.e. spirit day).
17. Hats, caps, bandanas, headbands, and sweat bands, and hoods attached to hoodies, and all other head coverings are not allowed to be worn in the classroom or in any other part of the building. Hair rollers, combs, or picks in the hair are not permissible in the classroom or in the building.
18. Revealing clothing and tight clothing will not be permitted.
19. Shoes and sandals must be worn at all times.
20. Hairstyles or coloring that may cause a substantial disruption to the learning environment, as determined by the dress code committee or administration, are prohibited.

The following clothing apparel and accessories are prohibited:

Pants: Torn jeans or jeans with holes which expose skin more than 4 inches above the knee, cut-offs, pajama pants, sagging pants, leggings, jeggings, tights, yoga pants, stretch pants, and spandex pants worn as stand-alone apparel, sweat pants, and pants with writing across the seat of the pants

Skirts and Dresses: All skirts and dresses must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. Measurements should be taken from the side of the leg. Skirts with slits are only permissible if the top of the slit ends no less than 4 inches above the knee. No strapless dresses permitted.

Shirts: Tight shirts, sheer shirts, netted shirts, see-through shirts, shirts with large arm holes, halter tops, spaghetti strap tops, strapless tops, and tank tops as stand-alone apparel, off-the shoulder tops, low-cut tops, tops that expose midriffs, backless tops, sideless tops, tops with holes that expose any part of the midriff or back, and tops considered as undergarments

Shorts: Girls: All shorts must meet fingertip rule requirements (must be as long as the longest fingertip when hands are placed to the student's side) must be at least mid-thigh. Boys: All shorts should be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. All Students: Boxer shorts, spandex shorts, running shorts, bicycle shorts, spandex shorts, all other types of athletic shorts, frayed shorts, shorts with holes, and shorts with writing across the seat of the pants

Tattoos, body and facial piercings, and piercings that pose a safety risk or are distracting in nature are not permissible: Body and Face: Large holes with gages, facial piercings, or heavy ear bars. Tattoos and body paintings are not permissible and must be covered at all times.

Shoes: Bedroom shoes, slippers, water shoes, shoes without a strap, heels over 2 inches, and cleated shoes, shoes with spikes or other bottoms that are dangerous or harmful to floor surfaces.

Headgear/Apparel Jewelry and Accessories: Hats, caps, beanies, and other types of head gear and apparel, long belts, chains, studded bracelets, studded belts, or studded neckbands are not



permissible. Hoods attached to hoodies should not be worn in class or the building. Sunglasses are not permissible in the classroom or building. Students are encouraged not to wear jewelry of significant value to school. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry.

General Consequences for Dress Code Violations: Students are expected to adhere to the dress code at all times. Students in violation of the dress code will be required to change clothes or remove the inappropriate item. Student compliance with the dress code may require parents/ guardians or other approved/designated visitors to bring a change of clothes or take the student home to change before returning to school (all attendance/tardy regulations will apply).

A student who violates the dress code will be required to change or remove the inappropriate item each time there is a violation. Teachers will handle the first two dress code violations and make parental contact as needed. After being administered three teacher/administrative warnings, the dress code violation will be submitted as an office referral and classified as a chronic behavior violation. The student will report to an administrator and will be subject to disciplinary action beyond a change of clothes and removing the inappropriate item.

Disciplinary action including but not limited to detention or suspension from school will be taken for all office referrals which are considered chronic behavior violations (refer to student code of conduct handbook).

**The administrators/or their designee will make final determination of what is or is not appropriate to wear to school. In the event any student requires an accommodation to the dress code due to religious beliefs, the student's request should be directed to the Principal who will ensure no student is discriminated against on the basis of their religion or restrained in the exercise of his religious beliefs. This decision is final and is not subject to appeal.**

## **HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ("School") to maintain a learning environment that is free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the School staff to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students or any school employees through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

Pursuant to the federal regulations implementing Title IX published in 2020, any complaint involving "sexual harassment" as defined by those federal regulations that occurs in an education program or activity against a person in the United States shall be addressed pursuant to the School Title IX Grievance Policy set out below and the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure

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:

Ginger Almon - Title IX Coordinator for Student Matters  
School Leader

185 Pecan St., Shellman, GA 39886  
229.345.3033  
galmon@sowegastemcharter.org

Ginger Almon - Title IX Coordinator for Employee Matters  
School Leader  
185 Pecan St., Shellman, GA 39886  
229.345.3033  
galmon@sowegastemcharter.org

## DEFINITION OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- A. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment;
- B. Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of a student's educational opportunities or development; or
- C. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a basis for education decisions affecting the student.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, offensive or unwelcome sexual advances or propositions; unwelcome intentional touching of intimate body areas; dating of a student by an employee; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or degrading verbal comments about an individual or his/her physical attributes; the display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cards or letters; lewd or suggestive comments or gestures, off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of a student.

Sexual harassment may occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to, the following:

- A. The victim as well as the harasser may be male or female. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- B. The harasser may be an employee of the School System, a non-employee, or another student.
- C. Sexual harassment may occur without economic or academic injury to the victim.

## REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

- A. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported as soon as possible so that prompt corrective action may be taken if warranted, and no later than 30 days after the incident.
- B. The report should be made or forwarded to the appropriate Title IX Coordinator/ Investigator at the address and telephone number stated above.
- C. The initial report of the incident may be made in person, by telephone or in writing.
- D. The Title IX investigator will discuss the matter with the student complainant and/or the student's parent/guardian at the earliest practical time in order to secure the details and

circumstances giving rise to the complaint. At the meeting, the procedure for investigating the situation will be explained and the student or parent/guardian will be provided with a complaint form to complete and sign. A sample complaint form, calling for a detailed description of the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint, will be provided by the Compliance Coordinator or designee.

- E. Filing a complaint under this procedure does not prevent the student from also pursuing other remedies available under the law. **Students and/or their parents may also file a complaint regarding misconduct with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission through their website, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).**

## INVESTIGATION

- A. The Title IX Coordinator shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. Such investigation shall include interviews with the accused party or parties, interviews with any witnesses, and an examination of any relevant documents or other evidence. In appropriate circumstances, school officials may request relevant medical records or other documentation from the student.
- B. An investigation should be completed within a reasonable time period, but no more than 60 days from the initial report of the incident to the Title IX Coordinator.
- C. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator or designee shall prepare a written report that sets forth the findings of the investigation and the evidence in support of the findings. A copy of the report will be available to the student making the complaint or the student's parent/guardian, but will not include information on other students protected by federal or state privacy laws. A copy of the report shall be transmitted to the Title IX Decision Maker.

## RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT:

- A. Both parties shall have the right to submit written questions of the other side or a witness during the formal grievance process.
- B. If it is determined that sexual harassment occurred, the Title IX Decision Maker shall recommend appropriate corrective and disciplinary action to prevent a recurrence of the harassment.
- C. Appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, suspension, non-renewal or termination of an employee offender or the suspension or expulsion of a student offender. Appropriate procedures will be followed where required by law.

## APPEAL PROCESS

- A. Either party shall have the right to appeal to the School Leader on a limited basis. An appeal is only allowed if the party assert on appeal that:
  - a. A procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
  - b. New evidence that was not reasonably available to the appealing party at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the

- outcome of the matter; and
  - c. The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.
  - d. The discipline is inappropriate: too harsh, not harsh enough, incomplete, or incorrect.
- B. The party shall be entitled to a written appeal to the School Leader within thirty school days following the Title IX Decision. The appeal shall solely be to allow the parties to present their information in support or in opposition to the decision. The School Leader may, in its discretion, authorize in-person appeal hearings or virtual hearings.
- C. The School Leader must issue written notice of the decision describing the result of the appeal and any stated rationale within 5 school days of the decision.

#### NONDISCLOSURE OF PROCEEDINGS:

- A. Except as otherwise required by law, complaints and investigations under this procedure shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a need to know for purposes of investigating or resolving the complaint. All disclosures are subject to state and federal privacy laws. Any employee or student who releases information in violation of this procedure shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- B. The Title IX Coordinator shall maintain the files and records relating to reports and investigations of sexual harassment.

#### NO RETALIATION:

Retaliating against anyone for filing a complaint or for participating in an investigation of a complaint filed under this procedure is prohibited. Any employee or student who retaliates in violation of this procedure shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Students or employees who knowingly make false charges of harassment may be subject to disciplinary action as well as any civil or criminal legal proceedings.

#### PUBLICATION AND NOTIFICATION:

The School System's policy and procedure on sexual harassment will be explained to all students and employees. A summary of the policy and procedure shall be included in student and faculty handbooks.

As required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-1184, a principal or designee who receives a report of a sexual offense (as defined in Chapter 6 of Title 16 of Georgia law) and has a reasonable cause to believe that the report is valid must immediately report the matter to the appropriate School Leader, the appropriate police authority and the School attorney. These offenses include, but are not limited to, sexual battery, rape, and molestation.

### **AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION**

The purpose of After School Detention is to provide an alternative discipline model for students who exhibit disruptive and/or unruly behavior. It will provide an in school opportunity for the student to continue core curriculum studies and acquire skills and behaviors for school and community success. The length of the assignment will be related to the offense committed and the student's disciplinary history.

After school detention is assigned for behavioral infractions. During parent notification of the assigned after school detention, transportation arrangements will be made for the student to attend after school detention within TWO DAYS of the behavior infraction(s). Refusal to attend after school detention will result in out-of-school suspension in addition to the assigned after school detention. Removal from after school detention for disciplinary reasons will result in out-of-school suspension. Students suspended for any part/fraction of after school detention will not receive credit for attending after school detention that day and will be required to make that day up. Students will be required to complete all remaining after school detention and assignments once they have returned to school.

### **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)**

Suspension is used as a disciplinary action to deter inappropriate student behavior including violation of school rules, policies, and procedures. A student who has been suspended from school for any disciplinary reason shall not be entitled to be present on the school campus **for ANY REASON AT ANYTIME** during the term of the suspension. In addition, a student who is assigned out-of-school suspension for disciplinary reasons shall not be entitled to participate in or attend school sponsored extracurricular activities.

The exclusion from the campus and from attendance at or participation in school sponsored extracurricular activities shall begin when the suspension is imposed by the appropriate school official. Eligibility will be restored on the day that the student returns to the regular classroom. Student is responsible for obtaining all assignments from teachers during the suspension period. All work will be due upon the day the student returns to school, any unfinished or unsubmitted work will result in a zero.

### **SEARCH & SEIZURE**

Pursuant to the Fourth Amendment and its applications to schools, school officials or designees have access to students, student lockers, automobiles, and personal belongings while under school supervision and when there is reasonable suspicion for search and seizure. Discovery of contraband and/or dangerous or illegal materials shall be reported to the proper authorities.

### **SURVEILLANCE CAMERA PROCEDURE**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School recognizes a need to strike a balance between the individual's right to be free from invasion of privacy and the school's duty to promote a safe environment for all students and faculty.

The purpose of video surveillance at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is to:

1. Promote a safe environment by deterring acts of harassment or assault.
2. Deter theft and vandalism and assist in the identification of individuals.

3. Assist law enforcement agencies with regard to the investigation of any crime that may be depicted.
4. Assist in the daily monitoring of student conduct and behavior.

While surveillance cameras are posted in hallways, auditorium, gymnasium, outdoor walkways and some labs, they are not mounted inside any restrooms. Surveillance cameras are, however, mounted outside restroom doors so that if an incident does occur the person leaving the restroom will be easily identified.

Any person purposely touching, blocking, damaging, and/or causing a surveillance camera to malfunction will be charged with vandalism of school property. Surveillance cameras operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week and record continually for several months. Cameras are monitored by designated school officials who may include, but are not limited to, administrators and teachers.

Request to view surveillance evidence will require Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School approval. Surveillance evidence may be used to corroborate or verify an act has taken place, identify a specific person(s) involved in an act/incident, and/or to witness the extent of which an act has been committed.

### **WEAPONS: Policy JCDAE**

It is the policy of the Board of Education that a student shall not possess, use, handle or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon on property or in a building owned or leased by a school district, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation provided by the school district. Weapons may include, but are not limited to:

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

Students who possess any weapon described in paragraph 1 in violation of this policy will be subject to a minimum of a one calendar year expulsion. The Superintendent shall have the authority either before or after the student is referred for a tribunal hearing to reduce the mandated one year

expulsion under circumstances where the one year expulsion appears excessive to the superintendent. The tribunal shall also have the authority to modify such expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate punishment. Finally, in any tribunal decision appealed to the board of education, the board may reduce the mandated punishment but shall consider whether the superintendent and/or tribunal considered a reduction and any rationale in denying such a reduction.

Students who possess other weapons or hazardous objects as described in paragraph 2 will be subject to discipline as specified in the student code of conduct.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student possesses a weapon as defined in paragraph 1, is involved in an assault using a weapon as defined in paragraph 2, or is involved in a second offense with a weapon on campus must report such violations to the principal or assistant principal of the school. If the principal has reasonable cause to believe that such report is valid, he/she must immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent and to the appropriate law enforcement authority and district attorney.

The student's parents or guardian will be notified immediately of his/her child's involvement in any activity involving weapons.

Students will be given a copy of the Code of Conduct, which includes a statement of prohibited conduct with regard to weapons and possible disciplinary actions.

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### **NOTICE**

IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON TO CARRY, POSSESS, OR HAVE UNDER CONTROL ANY WEAPON AT A SCHOOL BUILDING, SCHOOL FUNCTION OR ON SCHOOL PROPERTY OR ON A BUS OR OTHER TRANSPORTATION FURNISHED BY THE SCHOOL. THE TERM "WEAPON" MEANS AND INCLUDES ANY PISTOL, REVOLVER, OR ANY WEAPON DESIGNED OR INTENDED TO PROPEL A MISSILE OF ANY KIND, OR ANY DIRK, BOWIE KNIFE, SWITCHBLADE KNIFE, BALLISTIC KNIFE, OR ANY OTHER KNIFE, ESPECIALLY THOSE KNIVES HAVING A BLADE OF THREE OR MORE INCHES, STRAIGHT-EDGED RAZOR OR RAZOR BLADE, SPRING STICK, METAL KNUCKS, BLACKJACK, OR ANY FLAILING INSTRUMENT CONSISTING OF TWO OR MORE RIGID PARTS, CONNECTED IN SUCH A WAY TO ALLOW THEM TO SWING FREELY, WHICH MAY BE KNOWN AS A NUN CHUCK, OR FIGHTING CHAIN, THROWING STAR OR ORIENTAL DART, OR ANY WEAPON OF LIKE KIND, ANY STUN GUN OR TASER. **\*\*VIOLATION MAY RESULT IN EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL\*\***

**BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENTS**  
**<https://www.swgeorgiastemcharter.com/boardpoliciesforms>**

**TECHNOLOGY**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School recognizes that access to technology in school gives students greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills. To that end, we provide access to technologies for student and staff use.

This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviors that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices on the school campus.

The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School network is intended for educational purposes.

All activity over the network or using district technologies may be monitored and retained.

- Access to online content via the network may be restricted in accordance with our policies and federal regulations, such as the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)] (CIPA).
- Staff and students are expected to follow the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct online as offline.
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School makes a reasonable effort to ensure staff and students’ safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from use of school technologies.
- Users of the district network or other technologies are expected administration immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

**Technologies Covered**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School may provide Internet access, desktop computers, mobile computers or devices, videoconferencing capabilities, online collaboration capabilities, message boards, email, and more.

As new technologies emerge, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will attempt to provide access to them. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all available technologies, not just those specifically listed.

**Personally-Owned Devices Policy**

Students should keep personally-owned devices (including laptops, tablets, smart phones, smart watches, and cell phones) turned off and put away during school hours—unless in the event of an emergency or as instructed by a teacher or staff for educational purposes.



Because of security concerns, when personally-owned mobile devices are used on campus, they should not be used over the school network without permission.

### **Security**

Users are expected to take reasonable safeguards against the transmission of security threats over the school network. This includes not opening or distributing infected files or programs and not opening files or programs of unknown or untrusted origin.

If you believe a computer or mobile device you are using might be infected with a virus, please alert administration. Do not attempt to remove the virus yourself or download any programs to help remove the virus.

### **Netiquette**

Users should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.

Users should also recognize that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content. Users should use trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet.

Users should also remember not to post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see. Once something is online, it's out there—and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways you never intended.

### **Plagiarism**

Users should not plagiarize (or use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, from the Internet. Users should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

### **Personal Safety**

Users should never share personal information, including phone number, address, social security number, birthday, or financial information, over the Internet without adult permission. Users should recognize that communicating over the Internet brings anonymity and associated risks, and should carefully safeguard the personal information of themselves and others. Users should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission.

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety, bring it to the attention of an adult (teacher or staff if you're at school; parent if you're using the device at home) immediately.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored.

## **Examples of Acceptable Use**

I will:

- Use school technologies for school-related activities.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert a teacher or other staff member if I see threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits.
- Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research.
- Recognize that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

## **Examples of Unacceptable Use**

I will not:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful.
- Attempt to find inappropriate images or content.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
- Try to find ways to circumvent the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
- Plagiarize content I find online.
- Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others.

- Agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
- Attempt to hack or access sites, servers, or content that isn't intended for my use.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

**Limitation of Liability**

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware. While Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School employs filtering and other safety and security mechanisms, and attempts to ensure their proper function, it makes no guarantees as to their effectiveness. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for unauthorized transactions conducted over the school network.