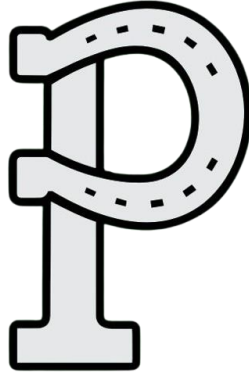


Portage Area

Junior-Senior High School



Student Code of Conduct

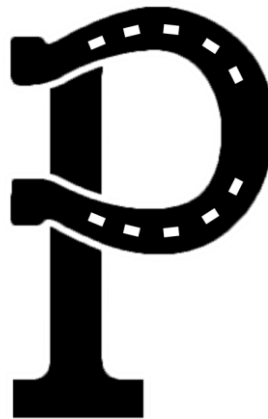
2024-2025

Superintendent: Pete Noel
Principal: Jeremy Burkett
Assistant Principal: Krystal Smith
School Counselor: Mary Ann George
School Nurse: Leah Montgomery
Social Worker: Ashley Shaffer
Athletic Director: Craig Castel

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PREFACE

To our Families

The key to success is to prepare students to be competent human beings in our society. School personnel and families must work together to ensure that students develop the right skills to succeed in a global economy. Parents/Guardians and teachers must not separate education from real life. The focus on teaching students must be to help students make decisions, become competent and demonstrate mastery in all subject areas.

Parents must have high expectations for their children. The primary focus should be to work with your children and encourage them to do their very best. Families need to help their children do better when they make mistakes and praise them when they do better.

It is also important to note that Pennsylvania has general rules and regulations regarding student conduct. All students have a right to an education without disruption by other students. Parents/Guardians are responsible for actions of their children. Positive parenting and support is essential for success and discipline in our school.

To our Students

On behalf of the administration and faculty, we welcome you to Portage Area JR/SR High School for the coming year. We are looking forward to assisting you in fulfilling your instructional goals. It is our goal to prepare you for the twenty-first century. Portage Area traditionally has students who set high goals and excel academically, socially, and in our extracurricular activities. You can benefit from all phases of our program by being actively involved in your classes and the programs we offer. If you encounter any difficulties, be sure to contact your teachers, guidance counselor, or administration to seek immediate help. We are here to make your years here at Portage Area successful and challenging. It is our goal to help you become a productive member of our society while realizing your goals.

ADMINISTRATION/DIRECTORY

Pete Noel – Superintendent of Schools
Troy Eppley – Director of Special Services
Jeremy Burkett - Junior-Senior High School Principal
Jeff Vasilko - Business Manager
Ryan Clouse - Director of Technology

Jr.-Sr. High School Student Personnel Services

Assistant Principal – Krystal Smith
School Counselor – Mary Ann George
School Nurse – Leah Montgomery
Social Worker – Ashley Shaffer
School Therapist – Steve Larson
Athletic Director – Craig Castel
Athletic Trainer – Jeremy Hill
Office Secretaries – Jessica Gutshall and Brittany Randall
Guidance & Athletic Secretary/Activity Accounts – Becky Chobany
Cafeteria Manager – Mary Boland
Maintenance Supervisor – Erik Thrower

Fax Numbers

District Phone Number:	736-9636
Jr.-Sr. High School Office Fax:	736-9597
Jr.-Sr. High School Guidance Fax:	736-9842
Jr.-Sr. High School Nurse Fax:	736-7369
Jr.-Sr. High School Athletic Fax:	736-8152

Office Extensions

Superintendent's Office	1500
Jr.-Sr. High School Office	1300
Jr.-Sr. High School Guidance Office/Athletics	1310
School Nurse	1370
Cafeteria	1382
Library	1350

BELL SCHEDULE

Period 1	7:45 – 8:28am
Period 2	8:31 – 9:11am
Period 3	9:14 – 9:54am
Period 4	9:57 – 10:37am
Period 5	10:40 – 11:20am
Period 6A	11:23 – 11:53am
Period 6B 7-8	11:56am – 12:26pm
Period 6B 9-12	11:56am – 12:36pm
Period 6C 7-8	12:29 – 1:09pm
Period 6C 9-12	12:39 – 1:09pm
Period 7	1:12pm – 1:52pm
Period 8	1:55pm – 2:35pm

2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

(*) denotes no school for students

(**) denotes schools and offices closed

Teacher In-service/Clerical*	August 19-21, 2024
First Day for Student.....	August 22, 2024
Labor Day**	September 2, 2024
End of Nine Weeks (1st Quarter)	October 25, 2024
Half Day for Students.....	October 25, 2024
Veteran’s Day**	November 11, 2024
Holiday Early Dismissal	November 27, 2024
Thanksgiving Recess**	November 28 & 29, 2024
Teacher In-Service	December 2, 2024
PT Conferences*	December 3 & 4, 2024
Holiday Recess**	Dec. 23, 2024 – Jan. 1, 2025
End of Nine Weeks (2nd Quarter)	January 14, 2025
Half Day for Students.....	January 17, 2025
Martin Luther King Day**	January 20, 2025
Teacher In-service*	March 14, 2025
End of Nine Weeks (3rd Quarter).....	March 20, 2025
Half Day for Students.....	March 21, 2025
Holiday Early Dismissal	April 17, 2025
Easter Recess**	April 18 – April 21, 2025
PROM**	May 9, 2025
Memorial Day	May 26, 2025
Student Last Day/Graduation	May 28, 2025

****Subject to Change****

BUILDING PHONE DIRECTORY

Bartoletti, K.	3125	Spanish
Bearer, W.	3106, 3100, 3102, 3103	Technology Education
Burda, S.	3124	Learning Support
Burkett, Je.	1300	Principal
Burkett, Jo.	3115	Social Studies/Driver's Ed.
Chobany, B.	1310	Guidance/Athletics Secretary
Castel, Craig	1321	Athletic Director / Technology
Crum, Sierra	3215	Science
Fisher, K.	3126	English Language Arts
Gdula, S.	3107	Family & Consumer Science
George, MA	1311	School Counselor
Gribbin, K.	3217	Business Ed.
Gutshall, J	1302	HS Secretary
Gressick, L	3101	Learning Support
Herman, V.	1350	Library/Gifted Ed.
Holyfield, A.	1342	Music / Band & Chorus
Hunt, N.	3120	Learning Support / Social Studies
Johnson, T.	3117	Social Studies
Jubina, B.	3222	Social Studies
Kargo, T.	3114	Learning Support
Kenny, M.	3205, 3206	Science
Link, D.	3103, 3100, 3102, 3106	Technology Education
Lutz, T.	3109	Math
Montgomery, L	1370	Nurse
Miller, A.	3121	English
Miller, P.	3203	Science
Myers, A	3213	Math
Panick, N.	3116	Math
Price, G.	3220, 3201	English / Science
Randall, B	1301	HS Secretary
Sheehan, W.	1630	School Police Officer
Shuss, M.	3218	English
Slanoc, M.	1322, 3224	Health & Physical Education
Smith, K.	1304	Assistant Principal
Szpala, J.	3111	Learning Support
Walls, M.	3216	English Language Arts
Williams, T.	3104	Art
Zatek, Jade	3211	Math

GRADUATION/PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Students must be able to demonstrate achievement through performance-based education. Planned courses will provide opportunities for all students to develop adult life roles, the skills of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving, information literacy and significant knowledge in one or more areas of concentrated study.

In order to attain a Portage Area School District diploma, every student must have achieved a successful Graduation Pathway as required by the PA Department of Education, obtain a minimum **24** units of credits, and fulfill district attendance requirements.

Required credits, obtained in Grades 9-12, are as follows:

- English – 4 credits
- Social Studies – 4 credits (Vo Tech students – 3 credits)
- 7 Total Credits in Math & Science Grades 9-12
 - Math minimum of 3 credits
 - Science minimum of 3 credits
- Health & Physical Education – 1 credit
- Vo-Tech – 3 credits per year (Admiral Peary)
- Electives

In addition, graduating seniors must be a student on PASD's enrollment records in order to participate in graduation ceremonies.

7th and 8th GRADE PROMOTION

Students failing ELA or Math or both Science and Social Studies will be required repeat the grade or make up the credit on line during the summer. Students must also fulfill district attendance requirements.

GRADES AND GRADING SYSTEM

Portage Area Jr.-Sr. High School has adopted four nine week grading periods to report grades to parents/guardians.

Nine (9) week grades are determined primarily from class work and test results. Points in a given class may vary due to the content and nature of the subject. No report card grade can be lower than **50%** or greater than **100%**. In most cases, a minimum of 200 points should be available in grade determinations.

A grade should reflect not only achievement and scholarship preparedness but also should consider personal qualities such as cooperation, dependability, leadership, attitudes, honesty, neatness and courtesy. A combination of several items (listed above) may have an effect on the student's grade. No letter grade may be reduced by more than one level in relation to these personal qualities. (Example "B" to "C").

The Portage Area Board of School Directors has approved the following academic percentages:

90-100%	Superior work (equivalent to "A")
80-89%	Above average work (equivalent to "B")
70-79%	Average work (equivalent to "C")
60-69%	Below average work (equivalent to "D")
Below 60%	Failing (equivalent to "F")

Percentages are also used in computing class rank.

ABSENT FROM CLASS & MAKE-UP WORK

It is the responsibility of the student to promptly make up any homework or classroom assignments he or she has missed. Any time a student is absent from school or class, he/she will be given one day for each day absent to complete the necessary make-up work that was assigned during the absence.

If a student is informed of a scheduled assignment/project/assessment deadline prior to an absence, he/she is expected to provide or complete the assignment/project/assessment on the day of their return.

Students attending school-approved functions during school hours are considered "present" and should make prior arrangements with their teachers to complete assigned work or missed assessments.

A student in attendance for any length of time during the school day is responsible for meeting their academic obligations. He/she must make arrangements with their teacher(s) to provide or complete their assignment/project/assessment.

*If a student's absence is confirmed to be unlawful or unexcused, then he/she can only receive **60%** of the maximum score on an assignment/project/assessment.

At the teacher's discretion, he/she may work with the student to extend deadlines due to extended absences.

HONOR ROLLS

Designations *High Honor Roll* and *Honor Roll* are determined by the following percentage values:

High Honor Roll - a student having a combined minimum average of 95%, with no subject grade lower than 80% for each nine week grading period.

Honor Roll - a student having a combined minimum average of 90%, with no subject grade lower than 70% for each nine week grading period.

High Honor and Honor Roll certificates are issued following the grading period to those who have achieved this status.

COMPUTING CLASS RANK

Percentages are used to compile class rank and G.P.A. (Grade point average). Courses that are graded with a "Pass" or an "Fail" are given credit but not used for class rank or G.P.A.

Student's "Citizenship" grade is not included in overall G.P.A. and does not appear on an official transcript.

Class rank will only be published on Senior (12) report cards.

WEIGHTED GRADING SCALE

For the purpose of recognizing the additional effort and achievement associated with completion of courses demanding more than the usual quantity or intensity of study, a weighting system shall be applied to student grade point averages, for purposes of computing class rank. This system went into effect for all high school students beginning with the 2003-2004 school year. The grading scale will be based on three levels of courses:

Level I - The actual percentage

Level II - The percentage times 1.03

Level III - The percentage times 1.06

The following is a list of **Level II** and **Level III** courses:

Level II

Accelerated Geometry
Anatomy and Physiology II
Academic Chemistry
PASD On-line Courses

Level III

Accelerated Algebra II
Accounting
Biology II
Calculus
College Algebra
College English
Chemistry II
Physics
Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry
Psychology
Sociology
Spanish 3 and 4
PASD On-line Courses Honors/Advanced Placement Courses

** All courses that are offered for college credit will be Level III courses.

** As new courses are added; they will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine the level of placement.

** All new courses must be added prior to the beginning of any school year.

** **Weighted classes may present higher than 100% on a student's transcript.**

PLAGIARISM

In Jr. Sr. High School and beyond, students will be writing and using ideas from a variety of authors. Writing involves using quotations, data, and ideas from outside sources. Giving credit where it is due is essential. To use this information without acknowledging that it is someone else's work is known as plagiarism. Purposely, or even unknowingly, failing to properly document your sources is plagiarism. Plagiarism is cheating. In addition, the use of AI generators has become a concern. The use of AI generators is a violation of our academic integrity policy and will be considered plagiarism.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/CHEATING

Academic Integrity is of the upmost importance. Cheating of any type (including the use of AI) will not be tolerated. The following consequences will be enforced if academic integrity comes into question. Academic integrity is defined as the expectation of all students to act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

- Homework/Assignments: 0% and 1 demerit
- Assessments (Quizzes, Exams Projects): 0% and 3 demerits
- Probation or removal from National Honor Society and/or Class Officer

PROM ATTENDANCE

- One member of the couple must be a member of the current PA JR/SR HS Junior or Senior class.
- Attendees must be in at least 9th grade.
- No attendees can be older than 20, unless currently enrolled as a PA JR/SR HS student
- Attendees must sign the PA JR/SR HS Prom agreement.
- Attendees must serve all assigned detentions and pay all debts prior to the prom.
- Students in Alternative Placement due to disciplinary reasons are not permitted to attend the prom.
- Students who have dropped out of high school prior to graduating are not permitted to attend the prom.

- A Student who resides in the Portage Area School District, attends a cyber school, and does not have a school prom, may attend and bring one approved guest following the above guidelines. If the cyber school has a prom, the student attending the charter school must be brought as a guest by a student attending Portage Area.

FIELD TRIP/EXTRA CURRICULAR ATTENDANCE (Athlete or Spectator)

In order to be eligible to attend field trips or participate, as an athlete, participant or spectator, in extracurricular activities during or after the school day, students, at the time of the event, must be in compliance with:

- Academic obligations
- Attendance policy
- Disciplinary & detention obligations
- Payment of financial debts

TELEPHONE USAGE

In order to keep the school phone lines open for important communications, it is imperative to regulate student use of the telephone. If communication is necessary between home and a student at school, the school prefers that parents call the school and leave a message. The office will take the messages for students but will not call them until after class unless it is an emergency. Free use of the telephone by students is restricted to emergency use.

All students must have staff permission before using school phones. Teachers will sign the student's agenda giving permission to use the phone in the PAJSHS office ONLY. No student will use the phone without authorization. Student will identify the reason for using the phone.

Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to contact a parent/caregiver during the school day. If you need to speak with a parent/caregiver the school's office phone is to be used. Students will receive 2 demerits when a parent is contacted from a personal mobile phone. An exception will be made if the school is in a crisis situation.

If ill, the student should see the school nurse and the nurse will contact parents/caregivers. Students contacting parents/caregivers regarding illness without seeing our school nurse will be subject to the discipline policy.

MOBILE PHONE/DEVICE USAGE

Cell phones are permitted at Portage Area Jr.-Sr. High School but are subject to the following rules and regulations:

- Mobile phones/devices may be used before entering the school building 7:30am and after 2:35pm.
- Mobile phones/devices are not to be **seen or heard (including vibrating)** from **7:30am to 2:35pm**, according to **school time**.
- The use of wireless ear phones or ear buds & other electronic devices during the school day is strictly prohibited. Students may use approved wired headphones with their school device only with permission from the teacher.
- Smart watches cannot be used to communicate with a cell phone or as a cellphone and can be requested to be removed by the classroom teacher.
- Mobile phone/device photos, videos, text messages, games, apps and use of the internet are prohibited.
- Violation of the Mobile Phones/Devices Usage policy is a Level II offense as per the discipline code. For the first offense, the student will receive 2 demerits. The student will be required to turn off the phone/device; the phone/device will be removed from his/her possession and will be given to a school administrator who will hold the phone/device until the end of the school day. If the student will not give up the phone/device he/she will also face a Level II-Number 16 offense which is the "Direct refusal to obey a reasonable request by an adult who is employed by the Portage Area School District." At this time, an administrator will be called to the area.
- Second and subsequent offenses - The demerit consequence is the same as for a first offense. The phone/device will be removed from the student's possession and will be given to a school administrator. The phone/device will then be held until a Parent/Guardian comes to the school to get the phone/device. Third and subsequent violations result in 3 hours of detention.
- A teacher may require students to place their mobile phones/Smart watches/other electronic devices in a secure area of the classroom during instruction, assignments, and exams. This is consistent with the PA Department of Education's requirement for state assessments.
- PASD is not responsible or liable for cell phones that are lost, stolen, or damaged during the school day, on school property, or at school sponsored events.

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDING

Students must have authorization from an administrator or faculty member to videotape, audio record, or take still pictures in the Portage Area School District during the school day. The student is to use such devices only for legitimate school business. Unauthorized use of these materials is a three-demerit offense and may result in involvement of law enforcement officials.

STUDENT EXPRESSION

The board requires that students who wish to distribute and/or post materials on school property must submit materials to the administration for prior review and approval. The distribution and/or posting of materials may take place only at the places and during the times approved by the administration in order that such distribution or posting not interfere with the orderly operation of the school. Students are responsible for clearing any litter, which results from their activity. Disciplinary action will be taken, when students distribute and/or post materials in violation of this policy.

PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION/ PHYSICAL CONTACT

A healthy moral climate is in the best interest of the school and community. During school hours and school-sponsored activities and trips, physical contact such as kissing, hugging, holding hands, pushing, etc...will not be condoned. Public display of affection is a Level II offense as per discipline policy.

DISCIPLINE POLICY GRADES 7-12

Student Responsibilities

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and following school rules and regulations. Most of all, students share with the administration and faculty, a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of his fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others, who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

All students receive a student agenda the first day of school. Students are expected to carry the agenda at all times. It contains pass pages, and students will not be permitted to leave class without their agenda. Students are not to borrow, loan, or exchange agendas. If an agenda is lost, a replacement must be purchased from the office for \$5.00. All agendas must be intact when turned in at the end of the school year.

It is the responsibility of the students to abide by the following:

- a. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accordance with them. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered, or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- b. Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community, their peers and the protection of school property.
- c. Dress and groom so as to meet fair standards of safety and health and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational processes. (See Student Dress Guidelines page 28.)
- d. Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
- e. Comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
- f. Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- g. Attend school daily and be on time at all classes and other school functions.
- h. Make up work when absent from school.
- i. Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by Commonwealth and local school authorities.
- j. Headphones and any audio devices must be removed before entering the building and should not be used during school hours unless used under the supervision of a faculty member.
- k. Report accurately in student media.
- l. Not use obscene language in student media or on school premises.
- m. Open containers are not permitted to be brought onto the school campus. Items meant for lunch must be sealed and reserved for the cafeteria. Coffees, water bottles, or open beverages will be discarded upon arrival to school. Beverages purchased from the cafeteria must be consumed during lunch period or remain sealed until the end of the school day. Students are permitted to carry ONLY water bottles purchased from PASD café and office.

DISCIPLINARY OBLIGATIONS

A student who does not fulfill the consequences for disciplinary infractions may be suspended and/or denied participation in school and extracurricular activities until the obligation is satisfied. End-of-the-year obligations not fulfilled may impact student status and participation in the next school year. All infractions will carry from year to year.

ATHLETIC EVENTS AND AUDITORIUM COURTESY

The spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship demands that every courtesy be extended by our students to anyone participating in an athletic event or auditorium event. It is hoped that our students will always refrain from engaging in any type of activity that would cause a disturbance and thus bring discredit to our school and student body. Those who do not adhere to these guidelines will be asked to leave the auditorium or athletic event, disciplined according to the Discipline Policy and may not attend any programs or pep rallies during the remainder of the year.

DEMERITS STEPS/CONSEQUENCES

Demerits	Consequences
1	None
2	None
3	1 detention – 1 hour
4	1 detention – 1hour
5	1 detention – 1 hour
6	1 detention – 1 hour
7	1 detention – 1 hour
8	1 detention – 1 hour
9	1 detention – 1 hour
10*	School Activities Denied Parent Meeting
20* or more	Possible Suspension Parent Meeting

*At **10 demerits**, attendance and/or participation in all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are denied.

-If a student owes **three (3) or more detentions**, attendance and/or participation in all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are denied

-Any Level 3 disciplinary incident will result in one of the following:

- 3 demerits
- 1 detention (1 hour) or
- 2 detentions (2 hours) or
- O.S.S. – Out of School Suspension (1 to 10 days) or
- I.S.S. – In School Suspensions (1 to 3 Days)

-Demerits do affect Citizenship grade: 1 demerit = minus 5%

-Disciplinary paperwork is sent home for parent/caregiver notification and review of each and every incident. Parent /Caregiver signature simply indicates notification.

DEMERIT CODE

Level I Offenses (One (1) demerit)

1. Violation of classroom, locker, agenda and/or school rules or procedures
2. Tardiness to class
3. Showing disrespect towards others or their property
4. Running, shoving, or pushing in any school area
5. Unauthorized eating/drinking outside the cafeteria/no open containers
6. Violation of the school dress code
7. Academic Integrity/Cheating (homework/assignments)
8. Violation of Attendance Policy (unexcused tardies) See table on **page 27** for disciplinary consequences
9. Violation of School Parking Regulations

Level II Offenses (Two (2) demerits)

10. Throwing objects
11. Improper behavior during lunch, assemblies or any outside-the-classroom activities including any after school event
12. Offensive communication (Verbal, Non-Verbal, Written or Created)
13. Lying/providing misleading information
14. Failure to accept any reasonable discipline from a district employee (teacher, administrator, support staff)
15. Conduct unworthy of a PASD student in school or at any school-related function
16. Direct refusal to obey a reasonable request made by any adult who is employed by the PASD
17. Public display of affection
18. Violation of Mobile Device Usage (Phone, Earphones, Earbuds, Watchers, Music players, Etc.)
2nd violation = parent/guardian must pick up device
3rd & subsequent violations = 2 demerits and parent/guardian must pick up device
19. Safety Violation

Level III Offenses (Three (3) demerits)

These offenses result in one of the following: 1 or 2 hours of detention, one or more days of O.S.S or I.S.S, and/or law enforcement involvement. O.S.S. and I.S.S. will result in the immediate removal of the student from the general school population and any school activities for the duration of the suspension.

20. Fighting/Assault
21. Stealing
22. Damage or destruction of any property (school owned or personal)
23. Making terroristic threats or misuse of 911 emergency system or improper use of fire alarms
24. Profane, vulgar or obscene language or gestures
25. Possessing or sharing and/or distributing pornography on school property
26. Forgery of grades, parent/staff notes, hall passes, or signatures
27. Skipping or cutting any class period, including homeroom, lunch
28. Showing disrespect to any school personnel, students or guests
29. Violation of the Weapons Policy (see Weapons Policy)
30. Possessing or using tobacco or look alike substances/items including vape products
31. Truancy
32. Unauthorized student walkout from building or classroom
33. Violation of the Drug or Alcohol Policy
34. Plagiarism
35. Academic Integrity/ Cheating (local assessments, state assessments, projects, unethical behavior related to coursework)
36. Violation of the Athletic Policy or PIAA Sportsmanship Guidelines (Athlete or Spectator)
37. Violation of the Technology/Acceptable Use Policy
38. Unauthorized photography, video, or created audio recording
39. Distribution and/or posting of written materials without prior administrative approval
40. Bullying/Harassment
41. Safety violation, which results in injury

DEMERIT REMOVAL

Regarding Detentions and Student Incentives

1 demerit is removed for every 10 calendar days while student remains free of disciplinary infractions. This does not apply to the nine (9) week citizenship grade.

DETENTION

1. Detention will be scheduled after regular school on Mondays through Thursdays. Administration has the option to use Fridays and Saturdays if necessary.
2. Students will be informed by the HS Office when they earn a detention.
3. After school detention will be from 2:40pm – 3:40pm
4. Detention will be supervised by a member of the Portage Area staff.
5. The following rules will apply to detention:
 - a. Students must be present by assigned time: 2:40pm
 - b. All school rules and dress code policies will be in effect.
 - c. Pertinent schoolwork and/or reading material must be completed during detention.
 - d. Detention teacher will allow one break for restroom/water fountain use per session.
 - e. Complete silence will be observed during detention.
 - f. If a student fails to comply with the rules, they will be asked to leave and will not receive credit for time

SUSPENSIONS

Students are temporarily removed from all classes and school activities. Suspension includes all extracurricular activities for the entire day of suspension (11:59PM). During out-of-school suspensions (O.S.S.) students are not permitted on school property. Students must turn in class work the day the student returns to the classroom. Students serving In-School Suspension (I.S.S.) are expected to complete assigned work on time.

ALTERNATIVE/TRANSITION PLACEMENT

Students placed in an alternative/transition setting for disciplinary reasons, in lieu of expulsion, are not permitted to attend school- sponsored events. Once alternative placement has been established, those students are not permitted on school property unless authorized by the administration. In addition, students placed in an alternative setting their senior year will receive a diploma from the Portage Area School District but will not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony.

THE EFFECTS OF DEMERITS ON CITIZENSHIP

The Jr.-Sr. High School Discipline Committee concurred that the demerits received by a student should have an effect on the citizenship grade for each of the four marking periods. Students will begin each marking period with a 100% in Citizenship. It was concluded that there would be a reduction of five percent (5%) from the citizenship grade for each demerit received during the marking period. Citizenship grade does not figure in to G.P.A.

CONDUCT OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

All rules and regulations of the discipline policy are in force during any and all school activities that take place in the gym, auditorium, cafeteria (including lunch periods), stadium, and all playing fields and would include any public conveyance which transports students to and from school or any school-sponsored event. Gross misconduct involving any of these could result but would not be limited to the loss of privileges to attend future events or ride a public conveyance on which the incident occurred.

STUDENT DRIVERS/PARKING REGULATIONS

Jr.-Sr. High school students have the privilege of driving to school in their own vehicles. This privilege is contingent upon the students registering their vehicles, securing a parking permit, and a parking space. Application forms and parking permits are available in the office. Students applying for parking permits must possess a valid driver's license.

Students who are given the privilege of parking in school parking lot must meet all the following rules:

- Properly display parking permit by hanging it from the rearview mirror
- ***Park only in assigned space***
- *Lock all vehicles upon arrival at school and may not visit them again until dismissal or other times authorized by the administration.*
- *Obey all posted and written safety/traffic regulations*

Failure to comply with the school parking regulations will result in the following penalties:

1. First time student offender will receive a written warning and parent/guardian will be notified.
2. Second time student offender will receive one demerit and parent/guardian will be notified.
3. Third time offender will have parking privileges revoked for the remainder of the school year and the parent/guardian will be notified.

NON-RANDOM DRUG SCREENING POLICY

Purpose:

This policy complements Portage Area School District's drug/alcohol policy that prohibits the possession, use, misuse, and/or the distribution of drugs (controlled or mood-altering substances), including anabolic steroids, "look-a-likes", designer drugs, drug paraphernalia, health endangering substances, medication not registered with the school nurse, or alcohol on school district property, school buses, or during activities under school district jurisdiction. For the purpose of the current policy, the term "on school grounds" shall extend to any property owned or operated by the school as well as any locations visited while on school-related activities.

This policy will be used for screening students thought to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol and other mind-altering substances.

Procedure:

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other mind-altering substance, the staff member should escort that student to the school nurse and document in writing the observation that the teacher made of the student. The Principal or Assistant Principal should be summoned to the nurse's office immediately.

Attempts will be made to notify the parents of the situation. The nurse will conduct a preliminary physical examination to ascertain if said student is under the influence. If, in the opinion of the nurse and/or administrator, there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence, the student will be required to submit to an oral swab-type drug/alcohol test at the expense of the school district.

If the student tests positive for illicit drugs/alcohol, the student will be disciplined as stated in the Portage Area School District Drug and Alcohol Policy. If the test is negative, the student may still be subject to discipline for conduct that violates other provisions of the student disciplinary code stated in the policy. If the student refuses to consent to the test, the student shall be treated as if he/she had tested positive for illicit drugs/alcohol.

If the parent chooses to challenge and/or validate the district's oral swab test, then the parent may do so at their expense. The school district will consider such independent test only if:

1. The student is tested within four (4) hours of parent notification, and

2. The results of test are released to the school district
3. The test may be done by a certified chemical lab expert in drug testing and/or a hospital lab where drug testing is routinely performed.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER ILLEGAL OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The possession of alcohol, tobacco, and other illegal substances are prohibited and will be disciplined as per district policy.

For the safety and well-being of students and staff, students are not permitted to possess look-alike substances or items.

These may include:

- Electronic Cigarettes/ Vaping products
- Artificial Snuff or Tobacco
- Prescription or Over the counter medications
- Drug paraphernalia – pipes, papers, needles, etc.
- Look-alike items that are intended to portray illegal substances

*** NOTE: The possession or use of any type of alcohol, illegal drug or unauthorized use of a prescription drug may result in an expulsion from the Portage Area School District for a period of one (1) school year from the time of formal action by the board of directors. Likewise, the possession or use of any tobacco product in/on a school building, public conveyance, or district facility or property is illegal and subject to disciplinary action. Also, this is in violation of Section 6306.1, Subsection A of Title 18 (PA Statute) and is subject to a fine by the district magistrate.**

This also includes the use and possession to and from school and at any activity or function sponsored by the Portage Area School District. (Amended July 1997)

SEARCH PROCEDURES

The Portage Area School District continues to strive to make its schools the safest educational environment in which your son or daughter can learn. It is our intention to keep parents abreast of all policies and procedures. As a part of the overall educational process, the following procedures have been adopted relating to sniff searches of lockers, backpacks, book bags and cars, which are located on school district property.

Lockers

Lockers are the sole and exclusive property of the Portage Area School District. Their use by students is a privilege granted by the district. No student should ever construe this privilege as a place for their private belongings that will be kept private from the school district. Any possession of objects or materials that are prohibited by law, school district policy, or may constitute a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the occupants of the school building or the building itself is a direct violation of the locker policy and will be removed by school personnel or legal authorities with all consequences for such possession enforced.

Lockers will be opened, inspected, and searched on whatever occasions or whatever frequency as determined by school personnel or legal authorities. The random use of the drug canine or other detection devices, through the cooperative efforts of law enforcement, will occur at random intervals without prior notice given to students, parents, or teaching personnel.

In most cases, students will be advised prior to a search and may be present at that time. When an occasion arises that involves an illegal and/or dangerous substance or object and there is reasonable cause for a locker search the student may not be notified.

Book Bags/Back Packs/Shoe bags/Large Purses

Students who choose to carry book bags, backpacks, large purses, etc... must understand that, carrying these items to and through school is a privilege given to a student, and the School District has the right to search and seize any or all items that are deemed suspicious or may prove to be a threat to the welfare of students or other individuals. These items should be kept in a locker or locker room are not to be carried throughout the school during school hours.

Parking Lot

The student parking lot is an extension of the Portage Area School District. Students who are granted the privilege of parking in the parking lot must understand that, on occasion, their vehicles may be subject to a search by administration or canine.

Completing and signing the Portage Area Permission to Drive Form, will grant to the School District the right to randomly conduct searches in identified vehicles parked on campus.

Students and parents must understand that these identified vehicles will be subject to search by school administrators and legal authorities, to include but not limited to law enforcement.

PORTAGE AREA WEAPONS POLICY

The Portage Area School District, in accordance with Act 26 of 1995 of the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1317.2, adopted this weapons policy and is now in effect. It is an attempt to provide for a safer educational environment.

Weapons Possession Prohibited

Possession of a weapon and/or any destructive device is strictly prohibited on any school property, which would include all buildings, facilities, grounds, school busses, and other conveyances providing transportation to and from school-related functions or activities, school parking area, and any facility used for school functions or activities.

1. A **weapon** will include, but is not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily harm.
2. A **destructive device** will include, but is not limited to, any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine, or device similar to any of the devices described in this definition.

Authoritative Responsibility

The Portage Area School District shall expel, for a period of not less than one year, any student who is determined to have brought and/or is in possession of a weapon or destructive device on any school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on any public conveyance providing transportation to school or any school-sponsored activity.

Expulsion will be conducted in accordance with all applicable regulations.

The superintendent or other designated administrator may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In the case of an exceptional student the superintendent or other designated administrator shall take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (Public Law 91-230, 20 U.S. Code 1400 seq.)

Exclusions

The provisions of this policy will not include the following:

1. A weapon/ look-alike weapon being used as part of a program approved by a district administrator.
 - a. i.e. track starter pistol, prop for a drama production

Look-alike Weapons

Although objects that resemble weapons would not be construed as harmful, dangerous, and capable of inflicting injury, any look-alike weapon will be illegal to have in a student's possession as it may cause a severe disruption to the educational process. Involvement by the legal authorities and all ensuing consequences will be merited by a violation of this policy. (Amended July, 1997)

Procedures

The school district shall report all incidents involving weapons possession or destructive devices prohibited in this policy as follows:

1. The designated district administrator shall report the discovery of any weapon or destructive device prohibited in this section to local law enforcement officials.
2. The superintendent shall report to the Department of Education all incidents relating to expulsion for possession of a weapon on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or any public conveyance providing transportation to school or any-sponsored activity. The report shall include all information as required under Section 1302-A.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Belief Statement

The Portage Area Board of School Directors believes that daily attendance is an integral part of an effective educational environment. Daily attendance and active participation in each class is a critical part of the learning process. A significant role of today's schools is to help students learn to understand and appreciate the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. Evidence points to the fact that regular school attendance has a positive carry-over to the world of work. Our policies and procedures established at Portage Area School District are designed to help students learn responsibility and increase their potential for success.

Attendance is primarily the responsibility of students and parents. The school best serves the home by establishing clear attendance expectations and providing a timely reporting of student's attendance patterns.

Compulsory Attendance

Every parent, guardian, or other person responsible for any child or children of compulsory school age is required to send such child or children to school. The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Pennsylvania State Board of Education (PSBOE); Public School Code 1949, Section 13-1327

Lawful Absences Verified by Written Excuses

Parental and medical excuses must be submitted by parent /guardian within three (3) school days of return.

The following conditions constitute reasonable cause for lawful absence from classes/school:

- Illness / Quarantined
- Recovery from accident
- Required court attendance
- Death in the family/funeral
- Approved religious holidays
- Approved educational travel
(Not to exceed 5 school days per academic year. Note: Educational travel DOES count toward the ten-day parental excuse limit and may lead to medical evidence requirement)
- Other "urgent reasons" to be considered only if it directly affects the student and is agreed to by the school administration: such as verified medical or dental appointment or family emergency

Absences, from school for reasons other than those listed above, are considered **unlawful/unexcused** absences and subject to legal action prescribed by the PA compulsory attendance laws and other actions prescribed by the School District's Attendance Policy.

Unlawful Absence

Unlawful Absence: One in which the student is less than eighteen (18) years of age fails to provide school officials with the proper documentation/excuse regarding his or her absences.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused Absence: One in which the student is eighteen (18) years of age or older and fails to provide school officials with the proper documentation/excuse regarding his or her absence.

Half-Day Absences

Students arriving after 8:30am or leaving prior to 2:00pm will be recorded as half (1/2) day absent.

Arrival / Departure	Attendance Recorded*
Arrival after 7:45am through 8:30am	Marked as Tardy
Arrival after 8:30am	½ Absent
Departure prior to 2:00pm	½ Absent

*Any late arrival or dismissal unrelated to school activities will impact perfect attendance.
Exception: Attendance at a funeral.

Medical Evidence Excuse

Written documentation provided by a licensed medical professional detailing the date the student was under the medical professional's care and unable to attend school. Note(s) must be provided within 3 days of return to school.

Tuancy

Act 29 extensively revises penalties for truancy. The act raises to \$300 the fine placed on parents for truancy and requires parents to pay court costs or be sentenced to complete a parent education program. Under PA's Act 138 the parent must appear at the hearing by the district justice if the child is under age 15. If 15 years of age or older a citation may be filed against both the student and parent/caregiver. In addition, Act 138 may remove a truant juvenile's driving privileges and imposed increased fines upon the parent/caregiver. A parent/caregiver may be jailed for no more than 3 days if the student's truant behavior continues.

PA State Law (Section 1333.1, Act 138) requires every parent, guardian or person in parental relation having control or charge of any child of compulsory school age, who fail to comply with the provisions of compulsory attendance, shall be sentenced to the following penalties:

- b. Parent/Guardian(s) and/or student fined up to \$300 plus court costs. \$500 2nd offense, \$750 3rd offense.
- c. Parent/Guardian(s) and/or student must perform community service.
- d. Parent/Guardians(s) must take a parenting education class.
- e. Student driver's license revoked/student prohibited from applying for a learner's permit.
- f. Family referred to CYS for continued violations of PA School Attendance laws.

After ten total absences excused by parent/guardian including parental requests for educational travel, medical evidence provided by a licensed medical professional will be required for all future absences. Failure to provide medical evidence within three days of absences will result in the absence being unlawful/unexcused.

A parent may only excuse his/her child from school for a maximum of **10 days**. Absences must meet one of the criteria detailed on page 23.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Excuses to Leave School

A student wishing to be excused from school during the school day should present a written excuse to the office before 7:45 a.m. at the Jr.-Sr. High School. The excuse must include the pupil's name, grade, the date, and the specific reason for the request, along with the phone number and signature of the parent and guardian. Early dismissal requests for reasons other than those listed on pages 31 & 32, will be treated as unlawful/unexcused absences. Parent/guardian shall be required to sign out the student in the main office before he/she leaves the building.

Students and parents should make a reasonable attempt to return the student to school to complete his/her academic obligations.

Educational Travel

District-approved, parent request for educational travel will result in an absence from school on those days and will count towards the 10-day parental excuse limit and the 25-day limit established in the District's Attendance Policy. No more than a total of **five (5)** school days may be used for the purpose of educational travel during any one school year. Forms can be obtained in the in the office or website, completed and approved by the Principal and Superintendent prior to the event.

Excuses / Entering School Following Absence

When a student returns to school after an absence, temporary or otherwise, he/she must bring an excuse stating the specific reason for the absence and a parent, guardian, legal custodian, or medical professional must sign that excuse. All excuses must include student's name, grade, reason for, and date of the absence(s). Students will be given three (3) school days to furnish proof of absence by presenting the excuse to the building attendance secretary. If a student fails to provide an excuse within this time frame, the absence will be considered unexcused/unlawful.

Absence excuses may be emailed to the JR/SR High School attendance secretary using the following email address:

[**HSAttendance@mustangmail.org**](mailto:HSAttendance@mustangmail.org)

Requesting Homework When Absent

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to complete assignments missed during all absences. Parents may call the school to request work for their child if absent more than one day. Be sure to indicate whether books are needed when requesting homework. Work requested will be available for pick up at the end of the school day in the main office. Students may email their teachers to request assignments. Students have one day for each day absent to turn in missed work.

Calling In Absences

While it is not required for a parent to call the school when their child will be absent, it is appreciated so school personnel knows the whereabouts of all students. It is recommended that if a child will be out for several days, the parent/guardians inform the school so the attendance officer does not need to phone the home daily to check.

Portage Area School District 25 Day Policy

Any student who accumulates 25 or more days of absence from school without medical documentation shall be required to repeat the entire school year. An absence supported by an excuse from a licensed medical professional will not count toward the 25-day rule. Appeals to the policy may be made by contacting the building principal and must be supported by medical documentation or extenuating circumstances. Up to five (5) days of educational travel may be requested per academic year, which will count toward the 25-day attendance policy.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents/guardians are to be kept informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance record. This will be done by letter, telephone, on-line gradebook, report card and/or conference. This letter of concern will include penalties for violation of compulsory attendance, as well as the name and phone number of the school's attendance contact, section that indicates that upon a total absence of twenty-five (25) days, the student will be retained in his/her current grade the following school year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338). The parent/guardians should make contact with the school and provide written explanation detailing the reasons for the absences.

Attendance Letters to be Sent Home

1st & 2nd Unlawful Absence – Letter sent to parent/caregiver detailing unlawful absence.

3rd Unlawful Absence - Letter sent to parent/guardian informing them that the next unlawful absence will require a meeting involving parent, student and administration to develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP).

4th Unlawful Absence – Certified letter inviting parent and student to a Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) to develop a Student Attendance Improvement plan (SAIP).

5th Unlawful Absence – Letter stating that the next unlawful absence will result in a magistrate filing for violation of Pennsylvania School Truancy laws. Review of SAIP

6th Unlawful Absence – Student defined as Habitually Truant - District Magistrate filing for violation of Pennsylvania School Truancy laws.

5th Parental Absence - Letter informing parent/caregiver that their child has reached half of the allowed parental excuses for the school year. Once reaching 10 parental absences, medical evidence will be required.

9th Parental Absence - Letter informing parent/caregiver that their child has one parental excuse remaining for the school year. Once reaching 10 parental absences, medical evidence will be required.

10th Parental Absence – Letter requiring parental communication with administration to explain the requirement of medical evidence for each additional absence. All absences beyond 10 will be considered unlawful unless medical evidence is provided by a licensed medical professional. This letter will indicate that upon a total absence of twenty-five (25) days, excluding medical excuses, the student will be retained in his current grade the following school year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338). The parent/guardians should make contact with the school and provide a written explanation detailing the reasons for the absences.

24th Day of Absence** - On the 24th day of total absence, a certified letter will be sent from the school to parents/guardians informing them that if their student misses one additional day of school without a medical excuse, the student will be retained in his current grade the following school year.

25th Day of Absence** - On the 25th day of total absence, a certified letter will be sent from the school to parents/guardians informing them that the student will be retained in his current grade the following school year and that the parents/guardians may request a waiver by petitioning the Board of Education.

****Combination of parentally excused (lawful), educational travel and unlawful/unexcused absences. Does not include medically-excused absences.**

Removal from The School Roll

The following criteria will be used to remove a student from the school roll:

➤ Any student who exceeds the compulsory school age (18 or older) and misses ten (10) consecutive school days without excuse.

Attendance/Participation for School Activities

Students attending or participating in sports, extracurricular, co-curricular, or any school-related activity must attend PAJSHS on the day of the game or activity. Exceptions will be permitted for medical appointments with a written excuse from a licensed medical professional on the day of the activity, any school related function or visit, or with prior approval from school administration.

Student not in attendance (recorded present by the school) on the day of an event, cannot participate in the event and may not attend as a spectator.

Students must report to school before **8:30am** at the Jr/Sr. high school to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities; this includes practice sessions.

Any student who must leave before the end of the school day must have approval from the administration or medical evidence to be eligible for that evening's event.

Tardies

A student who arrives to period 1 or homeroom after the late bell rings will be marked tardy for the day. A tardy student must report to the office to be marked appropriately on the daily bulletin and to obtain a slip for admission to class. Students will be recorded as tardy from 7:45am until **8:30am**, will be marked as ½ day absence if arriving at 8:31am or after.

Habitual tardiness represents a violation of the Pennsylvania School Code and Compulsory Education Laws.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning tardiness to school:

1. The same day of the tardy, the school must be notified detailing the reason for tardiness. The following reasons will be the only acceptable reasons:
 - a. Emergency
 - b. Illness
 - c. Other "urgent reasons" to be considered, only if it directly affects the student and is agreed to by the school administration.
2. Upon a student's 5th tardy, the student will receive 1 demerit and be assigned to detention. Additional tardies will be enforced as listed below.

Tardy Enforcement

Tardies	Demerits	Detentions
5	One (1)	One - 1 Hour
8	One (1)	One - 1 Hour
11	One (1)	One - 1 Hour
14	Two (2)	One - 1 Hour
17	Two (2)	One - 1 Hour
20	Three (3)	Two – 2 Hours

The Portage Area Board of Education reserves the right to amend school policies. Every attempt will be made to publicize policy changes. A copy of the PASD Policy Book is on file in the Administration Office and online at www.portageareasd.org.

STUDENT DRESS PHILOSOPHY

The Portage Area School District feels there are many kinds of appropriate dress, but what is considered appropriate for one occasion is not necessarily considered appropriate for another. Therefore, the purpose of this guideline is to establish certain standards to aid students so that their individuality can be maintained but at the same time keeping in mind that clothing worn in a very sloppy manner or that is in the extreme cannot be tolerated in a situation where learning is the primary objective. In addition to apparel, the student should practice good personal hygiene. Students who are obviously deviating from these guidelines will be counseled by teachers, guidance counselors, or administration.

Aspects of personal appearance require that student attire be neat, and further, that student attire not create a health or safety hazard. For the safety and welfare of students, teachers in specific areas--namely, shops, science laboratories, and physical education classes--may require particular modes of dress. However, for the general school population the following guidelines have been established:

STUDENT DRESS GUIDELINES

1. Students are expected to dress in keeping with good taste and propriety while not distracting others.
2. Extreme styles, including abnormally short dresses and shorts or noticeably tight clothing, are not acceptable.
3. Articles of clothing displaying indecent writing, meanings, pictures, actual or implied slogans/images, tobacco, drugs/alcohol, or weapons are not to be worn.
4. Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.
5. The following items and any additional items that are obscene or that pose a classroom distraction or health hazard are not to be worn:
 - Halter, tank or tube tops
 - Crop/midriff tops, shirts must extend below the waist line
 - Strapless/spaghetti strap clothing – Shoulder straps must be a minimum of 2 inches in width.
 - Open back shirts.
 - Low cut revealing tops.
 - Sleeveless male muscle shirts, or shirts altered to expose the oblique area.
 - Clothing with offensive language, advocating drugs, alcohol or sex or slogans and images with **implied** or inappropriate messages.
 - Exposed undergarments.
 - Shorts above the arms extended.
 - Skirts above the arms extended.
 - Pants with holes or tears above the arms extended.
 - Bandannas, Hats, Wigs for non-medical reasons.
 - Capes & Tails.
 - Pajamas/Slippers.
 - Sunglasses inside the building - unless a medical excuse is provided in advance.
 - Excessive body or facial piercing that may cause a hazard to the student and/or others.
 - Chains around or hanging from waist, pockets or neck.
 - Any type of studded or spiked wrist/ankle bands, spiked rings, wallet chains, boots or other apparel.
 - Coats or jackets during the school day (subject to teacher discretion/classroom environment).
 - Hoods up or worn on head
 - Shoes that may have rollers built into them.

Administration discretion will be the final determination of dress code violations.

Students who come to school or school activities dressed inappropriately will be addressed as follows:

- Informed and documented not to wear the item to school in the future.
- May be removed from all classes and activities until the unacceptable clothing is changed, covered or the student wears a district-provided item.
- Student may receive discipline consequences.

Dress for Success – Use good judgment!

STUDENT SERVICES

Services for School Age Exceptional Students

The Portage Area School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to exceptional students. To qualify as an exceptional student, the child must be school age in need of specially-designed instruction and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in Pennsylvania State Standards; specific learning disability, seriously emotionally disturbed, autism/persuasive development disorder, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, mental retardation, multi-handicap, neurological impairment, other health impairment, physical disability or speech/language impairment.

The district engages in identification procedures to ensure that eligible students receive an appropriate educational program consisting of Special Education and related services to meet student needs. At no cost to the parents, these services are provided in compliance with state and federal law and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

Parents may obtain additional information regarding Special Education services, programs and parental due process rights by contacting the building principal or the Director of Special Education at 736-9636.

GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

Guidance and counseling services are an integral part of the total educational process. The services provided by the counseling staff are designed to help students to make wise decisions, to make personal and social adjustments, and to improve their planning.

The Guidance Department assists students in solving problems pertaining to their education and their social and educational lives. To assist each student, the Guidance Department maintains a file for each student which contains test results, questionnaires, records or grades, teacher rating, citizenship record, and all other information relative to the student.

Various types of tests are administered by the counselors to determine student interests, aptitudes, and achievement. The test results may help the student in choosing a curriculum or subject, or they may direct the student towards a vocational or technical school. These test results aid the student in the choice of vocational and post high school educational institutions.

The information relative to national tests is available through the Guidance Office. These tests are PSAT/NMSQT, ASVAB, SAT, ACH, ACT, and other college entrance examinations and information.

The Guidance Counselor will meet with the students in Grades 7 through 12. The counselor will meet the students in large groups, in class groups, in smaller groups, and most importantly, in individual conferences. The student will be informed about curriculum, courses, credits, school rules and regulations, tests and test information, vo-tech school, career information, career education, educational development, and social behavior.

Any and all information which is related to post high school learning and education is in the Guidance Office. Information about any field of endeavor, any vo-tech school or trade school, any two or four-year college or business school is available or will be made available to the students. Requirements for entrance into post high school studies are discussed on an individual basis.

All information concerning scholarships, contests, special summer or high school college programs, etc. is presented to the students through the Guidance Office. The local requirements that are needed to fulfill graduation, as well as those of the state, will be presented and discussed beginning with Grade 7. The number of credits needed for graduation and the year in which these credits should be taken are discussed with the students in large groups.

All information concerning financial aid is made available to the students who are in school but also to former students. The Guidance Department is here to give service to the students. It is the responsibility of the students to express their needs and to inquire about the information.

STUDENT UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT POLICY

- 1. Unlawful Harassment Policy:** It is the policy of the Portage Area School District to maintain a safe learning and working environment which is free from sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment. All forms of unlawful harassment are hereby prohibited. Any student in the District who engages in conduct, which constitutes unlawful harassment, shall be subjected to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any student in the District who is subjected to unlawful harassment by other students, district employees, non-district employees (vendors, contractors, volunteers, etc.) in the course of his or her attendance at school, shall have the right to file a complaint under Section IV, as described below, as well as the right to have that complaint promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigated.

2. **Definition of Unlawful Harassment:** Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, 43 P.S. Sections 951-963; the Code of Conduct for Educators, 22PA Code Section 12.4. The following behaviors represent, but are not all inclusive of what constitutes unlawful harassment for the purpose of this policy:

1. The term unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to: slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex national origin, or disability.
2. Special attention is called to the prohibition of sexual harassment. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly required of the recipient; or
 - 2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis of school or work-related decisions affecting the recipient; or
 - 3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect or unreasonably interfering with the recipient's school performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning and working environment.
3. Specific examples of sexual harassment include, but not limited to:
 - 1) Sexual flirtations, advances, touching, or propositions;
 - 2) Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
 - 3) Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
 - 4) Sexually degrading words to describe an individual; and/or
 - 5) Jokes, pinups, calendars, objects, graffiti, vulgar statements, abusive language, innuendoes, references to sexual activities, overt sexual conduct, or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's ability to work or learn or which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or working environment.

3. Ethnic Intimidation

1. No student(s) shall with malicious intent toward the race, color, religious or national origin of another individual or group of individuals, commit offenses involving danger, coercion, threats, harassment, intimidation, fear, or harm to such person(s).
2. No students shall, with malicious intent toward the race, color, religious or national origin of another individual or group of individuals, commit offenses.
3. Referral to Civil Authorities for charges under the Ethnic Intimidation Act of 1982 shall be made when deemed necessary by school authorities.

4. Consequences of Violation

Any student in the Portage Area School District who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. In addition, any student found to have violated this policy may be required to participate in educational activities and/or counseling services related to sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment as part of any discipline imposed. Determination of the appropriate disciplinary sanctions or educational requirements shall be based upon the circumstances of the individual case, considering the following factors among others:

- a. Severity of the misconduct
- b. Pervasiveness or persistence of the misconduct
- c. Effect on the victim or victims
- d. Intent of the perpetrator

5. Complaint Procedure

- a. The building principal shall be the person to receive sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints from staff and students in that building and shall be referred to as the "designated" individual. Students shall also be informed that they may lodge sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints with other appropriate individual's in the building or district, including teachers, counselors, nurses, or administrators. Each school year, students shall be notified of the identity of the "designated" individual as well as the other individuals with whom they can lodge a complaint, and shall be informed that these individuals are available to receive sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints, answer questions concerning sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment, and assist the principal in resolving problems within the building.
- b. Complaints involving student-to-student unlawful harassment which are lodged at the classroom or building level may be resolved informally. If an informal resolution is satisfactory to the complainant and/or complainant's parents, no further investigation or action by the District is required. If the problem cannot be informally resolved, it will be referred to the building principal for investigation as described under Section 5.

- c. Sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints filed by students against District employees shall be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially.
- d. Complaints, which are referred to the building principal, shall be investigated immediately under the general supervision of the Portage Area School District Solicitor. The investigation shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - 1) Interview of complainant
 - 2) Interview of accused
 - 3) Interview of any persons with personal knowledge of the allegations of the complainant
- e. Sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints filed by students against non-district employees (vendors, contractors, volunteers, etc.) shall be referred to the building principal for legal disposition. Any students or employees involved in such an investigation shall be required to maintain strict confidentiality. The privacy of the persons involved in the complaint will be kept as confidential as possible, consistent with the District's legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations and to take disciplinary actions where the unlawful harassment has occurred. All sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints shall be promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigated.

6. Disposition of Complaint

- a. In all cases investigated by the building principal, a report of the investigation shall be made in writing to the Superintendent.
- b. If the building principal finds evidence that unlawful harassment may have occurred, the Superintendent, Building Principal and School District Solicitor shall determine what, if any, unlawful harassment has occurred, the suitable remediation and/or discipline. Any disciplinary action shall be subject to limitations of the Student Code of Conduct, School Code, State Board regulations and other applicable law, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. All records of such findings will be subject to the provisions of District policies pertaining to maintenance and dissemination of student information.
- c. If the building principal does not find evidence that unlawful harassment has occurred, the Superintendent shall be notified. Under no circumstances shall any record of a complaint which is found to be without basis be placed in an accused student's record or released to any person other than the Superintendent, without consent of the accused, or unless required by law.
- d. If the investigation is inconclusive, the building principal shall so state in its report. The superintendent and/or building principal may, at their discretion, require non-disciplinary educational activities as a result of an inconclusive investigation. Under no circumstances shall the accused or the complainant be disciplined based upon an inconclusive investigation.
- e. If it is concluded that the accused is not guilty of unlawful harassment, and that the complaint was lodged in bad faith, the Superintendent, may impose suitable discipline on the complainant, subject to the limitations of the Student Code of Conduct and other applicable laws. In addition, if the building principal finds evidence that the accused retaliated against the complainant in any way because of the complaint, then the Superintendent, and/or building principal may impose disciplinary action on the accused with the same limitations described above.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Office Visits

The School Health Office is located on the first floor in the PAJSHS. The school nurse is Mrs. Lisa Dividock. If a student should need to see the nurse for illness, injuries or other medical necessities, a pass from the classroom teacher to the nurses' office or the main office is required. If the nurse is not in the building, the principal, administrative representative or his/her designee will contact the parent/guardian in the event of emergencies for direction on how to proceed for ill visits or other medical needs. If deemed a true emergency by the principal, administrative representative or other designee, the elementary school nurse will be available to assess the child's injuries, illnesses, or medical needs.

Visits to the school nurse in the ES by JSHS students for illness or injuries will be frowned upon. If necessary, the school nurse will be summoned to the JSHS to access the student's condition. On certain occasions student illness/injury may be obvious and a parent/guardian will be telephoned by the JSHS principal's office. Please be mindful that in these situations the nurse may not have assessed your child and he/she was deemed ill or injured by the principal or his/her designee.

Emergency "Yellow" Cards

Yellow emergency cards are to be completed **every** year. Please complete the front and the back of the card, sign, and

return to the homeroom teacher by the second week of school. Each year consider any new and/or updated demographic and medical information that may be of importance to the district. Please note the importance of these cards in today's current events. Anyone not having a card returned will be sent to the principal for disciplinary action. **ONLY** those persons listed on the card will be contacted should a child become ill at school. Persons **not** listed by the parent/guardian **will not** be called. This is for the safety and well-being of the child. So consider this carefully when completing the information. Should addresses or other demographic or medical information change during the school year please notify the nursing office so that updated information can be forwarded to the appropriate personnel. As well, on the back of the card you will find a place to check for the mandated services for your child. Please know that if the box for a private examination is checked, you are responsible for the examinations and must submit the private forms to the nurse's office before the last nine weeks of school.

Health, Hygiene and Grooming

Students are expected to arrive at school without health, hygiene or grooming issues that could be harmful or distracting to themselves or others. For example, students suffering from a cold or flu, any infection such as "pink eye," or an infestation of lice should stay at home. The school will contact parents if a student is noticed to be ill. The school will also contact parents regarding students having poor hygiene as indicated by body odor or a general lack of cleanliness.

Issues of grooming that could be distracting or harmful include but are not limited to: excessive perfume, cologne or make-up, or hair veiling a student's face. Health, hygiene and grooming issues are not considered to be disciplinary matters, however they must be addressed to preserve a safe and healthy educational environment. The school will work with students and parents to resolve any concerns.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

School Time Accidents/Injuries

Coverage reimburses up to the first \$100 of out-of-pocket expenses. After which, any coverage the student is enrolled in (through parent's, CHIP, ACCESS, etc.) will be the primary coverage. Parents/Guardians can submit any expenses not covered by the primary for reimbursement through the Student Accident Policy. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to seek reimbursement for any expenses. Student Accident claim forms can be obtained by contacting the school nurse at (814) 736-9636. Failure to complete and submit the claim form within 90 days may result in non-payment.

In addition, voluntary student accident coverage (for a twenty-four hour basis) on an individual student basis is available for all students. Applications are distributed to each child during the first week of school and should be returned with payment promptly, if you wish to have this coverage.

MEDICATIONS POLICY

The school district will cooperate with parents/guardians and their medical practitioners in giving prescribed medications when these must be taken during school hours.

Ideally, all medications should be given at home. It is also recognized that at the present time many students are able to attend regular school because of the effectiveness of medication in the treatment of chronic physical/mental challenges and illness. However, any student, who is required to take medication during the regular school day must comply with school regulations.

The following policy is in effect for all medications except asthma inhalers and Epi-pens. The board permits students to possess asthma inhalers and Epi-pens and to self-administer the prescribed medication in accordance with state law and board policy (please see the School Nurse for details of the policy).

Prescription Medication

1. Written request is required from the physician and provided to the school officials/health office, when ordering medication that is to be administered to a student. Included in the request must be the name of the student, name of the medication, dosage ordered, time to be administered, diagnosis, and any possible side effects. Any special instructions to school health office should also be included.
2. Parent/Guardian signature requesting medication be administered as prescribed by the physician is required. (Forms are available in the nurse's office.) **This form must be completed and must accompany the medication before any medication will be administered by the school nurse or other authorized personnel.**
3. All medication must be in the original prescription bottle with current date and name of the student on the bottle. Please ask your pharmacist to make up a second bottle with the prescription label attached so it may be used and kept at school. A refrigerator is available if required.
4. All medications must be delivered directly to the school by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian should communicate with the nurse prior to the medication drop off and/or meeting. **NO MEDICATION IS TO BE KEPT**

IN THE STUDENT'S POSSESSION BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER SCHOOL HOURS.

5. The school nurse will communicate with your physician if there are any questions surrounding the medication dose, frequency, side effects or other issues related to the dispensing of medication to the student.

Student Self-Administration of Asthma Inhalers and Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

Before a student may possess or use an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector in the school setting, we request the following:

1. A written request from the parent/guardian that the school complies with the order of the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant.
2. A written statement from the parent/guardian acknowledging that the school is not responsible for ensuring the medication is taken and relieving the district and its employees of responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the prescribed medication.
3. A written statement from the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant that states:
 - a. Name of the drug.
 - b. Prescribed dosage.
 - c. Times medication is to be taken.
 - d. Length of time medication is prescribed.
 - e. Diagnosis or reason medication is needed, unless confidential.
 - f. Potential serious reaction or side-effects of medication.
 - g. Emergency response.
 - h. If child is qualified and able to self-administer the medication.
4. A written acknowledgement from the school nurse that the student has demonstrated that s/he is capable of self-administration of the asthma inhaler and/or epinephrine auto-injector in the school setting. Determination of competency for self-administration shall be based on the student's age, cognitive function, maturity and demonstration of responsible behavior.[1]
5. A written acknowledgement from the student that s/he has received instruction from the student's licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant on proper safety precautions for the handling and disposal of the asthma inhaler and/or epinephrine auto-injector, including acknowledgement that the student will not allow other students to have access to the prescribed medication and that s/he understands appropriate safeguards.

Non-Prescription Medications

The administration of non-prescription medication is discouraged and can usually be avoided by adjusting the time schedule around school hours. If it is absolutely necessary for a child to receive non-prescription medication during school hours, such as over the counter (OTC) cough syrup, lozenges, pain-analgesics (Tylenol/Motrin), it will be administered by the school nurse or other authorized personnel only under the following conditions:

1. Receipt of written request or authorization from the parent/guardian. A form may be obtained from the nurse's office. The form must accompany the (OTC) medication before it will be administered by authorized personnel.
2. Included with the request must be the name of the student, name of the medication, dosage and frequency of administration.
3. All medication must be sent to school in the original unopened container; parent/guardian request will not exceed the package recommendations.
4. Medication sent to school in envelopes or plastic containers, or Baggies will not be accepted, and your child will not receive the medication that day.
5. All medication must be taken to the nurse's office or main office as soon as the student arrives in the building. **NO MEDICATION IS TO BE KEPT IN THE STUDENT'S POSSESSION OR LOCKER!**

Students are **NOT PERMITTED** to carry pills or medication during school hours. Please refer to the district drug and alcohol policy. These regulations are for the safety and protection of all students in the district.

Mandates

Several mandates are required for all JSHS students. These include an annual vision screening, and growth exam (height & weight). Also, a scheduled dental exam in 7th grade and hearing and physical exams in 11th grade are specifically mandated for students. Please be mindful that completion of these mandates is required. If you choose private exams, please have them completed before the last nine week marking period so that community agencies such as Children and Youth do not need to be contacted for incomplete mandated health examinations.

Contact Numbers

Should you have any questions at any time about the health services, please feel free to contact the nurse in her office. She can be reached at 736-9636, ext. 1370. Please know that the nurse is here to serve children and their families in the very best way she can. Don't ever hesitate to contact her if she can be of any help at any time.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

The Portage Area Student Assistance Team is a concerned group of school personnel which includes members of the teaching staff, school guidance counselor, school nurse and members of the administrative staff who have been trained in a systematic process to identify students who are having school problems or difficulties outside the school that may affect school performance. Student Assistance is an identification, intervention, and referral program. It is **not** a counseling, discipline, drug, or treatment program. Any one or a combination of situations may be occurring which may prompt a referral to the SAP Team. A referral to the SAP team may be generated by a fellow student, parent/guardian, or any PASD employee, who recognizes drastic changes in grades, behavior or appearance of a student. Referral forms can be obtained from any member of the SAP Team. It is very important that all students and parents/guardians are aware that a referral does **not** subject the referred student to any disciplinary action **unless** they are found to be a policy violator. Nor is it the purpose of the SAP Team to provide treatment. The basic role of the SAP Team is to help students whose dysfunctional behavior is preventing them from reaching their full academic potential.

It should be noted that it is not the purpose of the SAP Team to diagnose chemical dependency or to determine treatment programs. One goal of the team is to identify patterns of behavior which are associated with high risk or usage situations. When such patterns are discovered, a referral is made to agency professionals for formal assessment, diagnosis, and possible treatment. Research and experience shows that perhaps as much as eighty percent of significant adolescent dysfunctional behavior is closely associated with the abuse of drugs and alcohol. For this reason, a great deal of the training the SAP

Team has undergone has focused on chemical dependency and identifying the behaviors most frequently associated with adolescent chemical use. It is, therefore, the goal of the SAP Team to have appropriate agencies provide assistance to students before their problems become insurmountable.

Of great concern to the SAP Team is the assurance to referred students and to those who refer them that strict rules of confidentiality apply at all times. No student's case is discussed irresponsibly, and only those involved in providing help at any level will have knowledge of the matter.

Jr.-Sr. High School SAP Team Members

Mrs. Blaylock, School Psychologist
Mr. Burkett, Principal
Mrs. George, School Counselor
Mr. Larson, School Therapist
Ms. Montgomery, School Nurse
Mrs. Shaffer, Social Worker
Mrs. Smith, Assistant Principal

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY

Network access is available to the students and teachers in the Portage Area School District to provide vast, diverse, and unique resources and information for utilizing the District's network. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. With access to computer networks all over the world, through the Internet comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Portage Area School District has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information.

Portage Area School District firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on the worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may access material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the District.

The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided here so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network resources. If a Portage Area user violates any of these provisions, his or her account will be terminated and future access could possibly be denied. The signature(s) at the end of this document is (are) legally binding and indicates the third party (parties) who signed has (have) read the terms and conditions carefully and understand(s) their significance.

Terms and Conditions

1. Acceptable Use - The use of your account and/or computer privileges must be in support of the educational objectives of the Portage Area School District. The district uses an internet filtering system to block access to material deemed inappropriate or distracting for students. Students are not allowed to use any devices—including computers, smartphones, music players, digital tablets and personal wireless access points—that can bypass the school's filter to access the internet. Use of other organization's networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyright material, threatening, or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.

2. Privileges - The use of the network and any other type of computer equipment and/or software is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. Administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may close an account at any time as required. The administration, faculty, and staff of the Portage Area School District may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts and/or privileges. The administration of the Portage Area School District reserves the right to inspect any user's computer at any time, with or without the knowledge of the user. Such inspection may include access to the hard drive(s) of the user's computer or server space.

3. Network Etiquette - You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
- b. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- c. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- d. Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers or those of other students or colleagues.
- e. Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- f. Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- g. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be public property of the Portage Area School District.

4. Security - Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you feel you can identify a security problem on the network, you must notify a school administrator or Director of Technology. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not use another individual's account. Attempts to log on to the network as system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges.

Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access.

5. Vandalism - Vandalism will result in the cancellation or suspension of privileges and possible restitution for damages. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, destroy, or alter data, equipment, or services.

6. Exception to Terms and Conditions - Portage Area School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Portage Area School District will not be responsible for any damages you suffer. This includes loss of data resulting for delays, non-deliveries, incorrect deliveries or service interruptions

caused by its own negligence or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. Portage Area School District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

All terms and conditions as stated in this document are applicable to the Portage Area School District. These terms and conditions reflect the entire agreement of the parties and supersede all prior oral or written agreements and understandings of the parties. These terms and conditions shall be governed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Pennsylvania and the United States of America.

School District Website: www.portageareasd.org

THE MUSTANG SPORTSMANSHIP CREED

*We believe all athletes, coaches, and fans should demonstrate **Good Sportsmanship, A Positive Attitude, School Spirit and a Love of Sports** while participating in or watching athletic activities*

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Portage Area School District provides transportation for all students who are not within walking distance of the school. This should be the student's mode of transportation to and from school, unless stipulated in writing by the legal parent or guardian without exception. Therefore, for no reason other than a bus arriving late to school, should a student be tardy because of inadequate transportation.

Students riding a bus home from school, other than their assigned bus, are required to have a written note from a parent/guardian. This note should include the **bus number** as well as the **bus stop** and will be given to the bus driver. An administrator will sign this note giving the student permission to ride this bus. If an emergency arises and you need to make a bus change, please call the school to make arrangements.

GRADEBOOK

The Portage Area School District has an internet-based grading programs called CSIU-SIS and PowerSchool. These programs allow students and parents to view up-to-date grades, assignments and attendance. This can be done from any computer with internet access. Parents and teachers are able to communicate with each other via e-mail.

You will be able to check your grades, assignments, and attendance online at your convenience. If you have any problems or questions, please contact the Guidance Office at 814-736-9636 Extension 1300 to gain access to the on-line gradebook.

CHILD FIND

Child find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the State, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities that, if found, causes a child to need services are: Autism, emotional disturbance, deafness, hearing impairment, specific learning disability, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, speech and language impairment, visual impairment including blindness, traumatic brain injury and in the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay.

Developmental-Delay

Child development refers to the process in which children go through changes in skill development during predictable time periods, called developmental milestones. For instance, one developmental milestone is learning to walk. Most children learn this skill or developmental milestone between the ages of 9 and 15 months. Because children usually acquire developmental milestones or skills during a specific time frame or "window", we can predict when most children will learn different skills. Developmental delay occurs when children have not reached these milestones by the expected time period.

Early-Intervention

The IDEA '04 requires the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners. In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental disabilities listed above may be identified as an "eligible young child."

Eligible young children are afforded the rights of school age children with disabilities, including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services. The Pennsylvania

Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. The Intermediate Unit 8 provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. For more information and a complete list of developmental delays, contact the IU8 Preschool Office at (800)228-7900.

Screening

The Portage Area School District routinely conducts visual acuity screening for all students at each grade level. A hearing acuity screening is conducted in kindergarten, grades 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, and upon referral or when there is a known hearing loss. Speech and language skills are screened for all students in first grade, for all newly enrolled students, as well as on a referral basis. A pre-referral process facilitates screening activities for students who demonstrate at-risk academic and/or behavioral concerns. Classroom teachers continuously assess gross motor, fine motor, academic skills, and social/emotional development. Results from the screening are recorded in the child's official file. Screening information may be used by the Portage Area pre-referral team to plan, implement, and monitor appropriate interventions and to assist the student's progress in the general curriculum.

Contact Information

If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact the building principal or guidance counselor.

POLICIES

BULLYING (249)

Bullying in the school makes students fearful. When students feel unsafe in school, they are not available for learning and can suffer both physical and emotional consequences.

A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly, and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons. Bullying happens when someone with more power unfairly and repeatedly hurts someone with less power.

Bullying- An intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts:

- 1) Directed at another student or students;
- 2) Which occurs in a school setting or school sponsored activity.
- 3) That is severe, persistent, or pervasive; and
- 4) That has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - i) Substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - ii) Creating a threatening environment; or
 - iii) Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and "school setting" shall mean in the school, on the school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

*A school entity is not prohibited from defining bullying in such a way as to encompass acts that occur outside a school setting if those acts are directed at another student or students, are severe, persistent and pervasive or have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, creating a threatening environment or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Incident Types:

Saying Hurtful/Unpleasant Things/Name Calling
Hitting/Kicking/Pushing/ Tripping
Taking or destroying property
Cyberbullying/Inappropriate Use of School Computer
Gossiping/Spreading Rumors
Ostracizing/ Excluding
Discrimination/ Harassment
Insulting Gestures
Teasing/Taunting/ Making Faces
Restraining
Spitting
Threat/ Intimidation

It is expected that students do not bully others. If students are bystanders, they should never encourage the bully or join in the bullying. Observed or suspected bullying should never be ignored and all members of the school community have the responsibility for reporting bullying behavior and/or sharing information. Adult intervention is the primary strategy to resolve bully/victim conflict.

Issues of bullying will be addressed directly in the Portage Area School District at the building level. The Student Discipline Referral form will be used to document bullying and the actions taken to resolve the situation.

****On the Junior-Senior High School Student Discipline Referral document Bullying is as a Level III, #40 incident**

The following actions may be taken when an incident of bullying is reported:

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Compensatory Damages.
5. Transfer to another educational facility, classroom or mode of transportation.

6. Exclusion from school sponsored activities.
7. Demerits/Detention.
8. Demerits/ Suspension.
9. Expulsion.
10. Counseling/Therapy outside of school.
11. Referral to law enforcement officials.

Behavior Support (133-2):

Students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment and shall only be placed in settings other than the regular education class when the nature or severity of the student’s disability is such that education in the regular education class with the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The IEP team for a student with **a disability** shall develop a positive behavior support plan if the student requires specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning. The identification, evaluation, and plan or program shall be conducted and implemented in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

The Board directs that the district’s behavior support programs shall be based on positive rather than negative behavior techniques to ensure that students shall be free from demeaning treatment and unreasonable use of restraints or other aversive techniques. The use of restraints shall be considered a measure of last resort and shall only be used after other less restrictive measures, including de-escalation techniques. Behavior support programs and plans shall be based on a functional assessment of behavior and shall include a variety of research-based techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance students’ opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment.

Confidentiality (207):

The Board recognizes that certain written and oral communications between students and school personnel must be confidential.

The Board directs school personnel to comply with all federal and state laws, regulations and Board policy concerning confidential communications of students.

Public School Enrollment (200):

The Board shall enroll school age students eligible to attend district schools, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.

School age shall be defined as the period from the earliest admission age for the district’s kindergarten program until graduation from high school or the end of the school term in which a student reaches the age of twenty-one (21) years, whichever comes first.

District of residence shall be defined as the school district in which a student’s parents/guardians reside.

To access these policies, go to www.portageareasd.org, then click on the “Special Education” tab and then “Policies”

Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response (819):

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources. The policy may be accessed on our district website.

HOMELESS EDUCATION

The McKinney–Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act guarantees a free and appropriate public education for all homeless children and youth. B.E.C. 42 U.S.C. 11431 outlines procedures for deciding school placement, enrolling students, and determining responsibility.

What is the definition of a “homeless youth” under McKinney-Vento?

“Homeless” is defined as “anyone lacking a fixed, adequate, regular nighttime residence.”

What situations fit this definition?

- Staying in the home of other people due to unavailable housing, financial hardship, or similar circumstances
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (in some instances – examples: leaking roof, no heat, etc.), public places, or campgrounds due to unavailable suitable housing option
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Unaccompanied (not living in direct care of legal parent or guardian) or runaway youth
- Refugee and migrant youth

How does McKinney-Vento help these students?

The law makes sure that these students receive a free and suitable public education by removing barriers to school enrollment and full, basic, daily participation in school activities. This includes:

- Immediate enrollment
- Free and Reduced School Lunch
- Help from school with any necessary enrollment documents
- Help from school setting up transportation service (if the student qualifies)
- Help from school with getting basic uniform clothing
- Help from school with basic school supplies
- Help from school with any basic clothing needs

Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program

The main purpose of the Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program is to make sure homeless youth have access to free and appropriate public education while removing barriers that homeless children face. Its goal is to have the educational process continue as uninterrupted as possible while the children are in homeless situations.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

On July 22, 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act became public law. This was the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problems of homelessness in America. The law was included in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, it is now called the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001. McKinney-Vento is included in the ESSA Guidelines to support children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Examples of Homelessness

- Students staying with friends or family because they lost housing
- Students living in a shelter, including transitional programs
- Students staying in motels because their family cannot get their own home
- Students living on the streets, in a car, van, tent or other nonpermanent structure

Summary of Educational Rights for Homeless Students

- Choice to attend school of origin, school of current residence (Best Interest Determination)
- Immediate enrollment
- Assistance from school district in obtaining required documentation; ie: immunization records
- Prompt access to appropriate education services
- Transportation
- Free breakfast and lunch

How can you refer a student who you suspect may be homeless?

Contact the student's guidance counselor or principal. Include the information you know that leads you to suspect the student may be homeless.

Contact: Ashley Shaffer, Social Worker, 814-736-9636 ext 1620

District policies can be found on our website
Administration > Mission Statement & Legal Notices > District Policy Manual

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