

COVINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS ANDALUSIA, ALABAMA 36421 CODE OF

STUDENT CONDUCT 2022-2023

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

This document is to inform you of the statutory requirements of Ala. Code 16-28-12 (1975) and the procedures to be followed. This legislation has important implications for parents mainly to provide a safe, secure school environment for your children. You are encouraged to read this document carefully. Please sign the acknowledgement statement to document your receipt of this information and return it to school.

ATTENDANCE

Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program

The Alabama Compulsory School Attendance Law (Sec. 16-28-3) requires children between the ages of 6-17 to enroll and attend school. Additionally, Section 16-28-12 of the Code of Alabama requires that any parent/guardian be responsible for the child's regular attendance and proper conduct. Parents/guardians must provide to the child's teacher an explanation of each absence within two days after the child returns to school. If the parent/guardian fails to provide information, the absence will be recorded as truant.

Documentation of Absences

Elementary school students may be excused up to a total of eighteen (18) days per school year; middle and high school students may be excused up to a total of nine (9) days per semester. *These absences are not COVID related.* If a student (middle/high school) is absent over nine (9) days in a semester, he/she will not receive a passing grade/credit for that semester unless all absences after the ninth is legally excused. The principal will meet with the parent/guardian and student to review presented evidence in determining whether or not the student will receive credit for the course/class. Absences beyond five (5) consecutive days must be substantiated by a physician's statement. In known extenuating circumstances, the principal may excuse the absences. In case of no physician documentation, the absence may be appealed to the Principal and the grievance policy of the Board of Education will be in effect. Absences beyond the prescribed days for elementary and middle/high school students must be accompanied by additional documentation as follows:

- Death in immediate family---approved by principal
- Legal quarantine---quarantine notice
- All other absences are to be submitted to the principal in written form for consideration. The principal may request appropriate additional documentation as necessary.

ABSENCES

1. Excused. An absence may be excused by the principal for the following reasons:
 - a. Student is too ill to attend school
 - b. Inclement weather which would be dangerous to the life or health of the student if attending school
 - c. Legal quarantine
 - d. Death in the immediate family
 - e. Emergency condition as determined by the superintendent or principal
- f. All make-up work must be completed within five (5) days of returning to school
- g. For attendance at non-school related special events, the principal might excuse students (such absences must be based on written parental request and approved in advance)

2. Unexcused. An absence not approved by the provisions of Item #1 is considered unexcused (i.e. work, truancy, suspension or parental neglect). **Students may not make up work if the absence is unexcused.**

3. Excessive absences may result in any one (1) or all of the following:

- Referral to Saturday School
- Referral to the Attendance Officer
- Referral to after school detention
- Filing of a petition of fact with Juvenile Services
- Notification of Human Resources of suspected neglect
- Filing of a complaint with Juvenile Services
- Requirement to attend Early Warning Court

The following procedures shall be followed to address attendance:

FIRST-FOURTH TRUANCY: (unexcused absence)

Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal or designee that the student was truant and date of truancy. Parent/guardian shall also be provided a copy of Alabama's compulsory school attendance laws and advised of the penalties that can

be applied and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.

FIFTH – SIXTH TRUANCY: (unexcused absence)

The parent/guardian or person having control of the child shall (1) attend a conference with the principal or his designee and/or (2) participate in the early warning program provided by the juvenile court (3) May be referred to after school detention and/or Saturday School. Attendance at one of these conferences shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists. Failure to appear at the school conference and/or to appear at the early warning program shall result in the filing of a petition against the parent under Ala. Code 1975, §16/28/12© failure to cooperate, or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.

SEVENTH TRUANCY: (unexcused absence)

No earlier than seventh unexcused absence, but within ten (10) school days (court) (i) File complaint/petition against the child and/or parent/guardian, if appropriate.

CHILD UNDER PROBATION: The principal should be notified by the juvenile probation officer of all children in the school system under probation supervision by the juvenile court as consistent with state statue, Ala Code 1975. Where a child under probation is truant, the principal should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

ANY LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY MAY ADOPT A POLICY MORE RIGOROUS THAN THE STATE POLICY.

UNEXCUSED TARDIES:

Students who accumulate four (4) unexcused tardies may also be required to attend Saturday School, TRR, or after school detention. This action will require the approval of the school principal.

TARDINESS (per semester)

A student is considered tardy when he/she is not in the assigned seat when the tardy bell rings. Unexcused tardies result in the loss of perfect attendance for exemption privileges in that class. Excused tardies shall not count against perfect attendance but will apply for consideration of exemption from semester exams.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR UNEXCUSED TARDIES

1. First, Second and Third Tardies: Class I Offense
2. Fourth Tardy: Class II Offense or Saturday School

CHECK-INS

The approved procedure for entering school after the tardy bell signaling the beginning of school is as follows:

1. The student reports to the principal's office for an admission slip to enter the classroom.
2. A student must bring a written statement from his/her parent/guardian indicating the reason for the student's tardiness to receive an excused tardy. Tardies are excused only for the same reasons as absences.
3. A student who is absent four (4) periods or more will be recorded as absent that day and cannot participate in any school activity scheduled for that day without prior approval or extenuating circumstances.
4. A student who is enrolled in the co-op program at the high school level and attends school a full period or more shall be permitted to report to work that day **after reporting to the coordinator.**

CHECK-OUTS

The approved procedure for leaving school after the tardy bell signaling the beginning of the school day is as follows:

1. A student may be allowed to check out at the high school level with advanced written consent, a telephone call or personal contact made by the parent or guardian.
2. Under no circumstances may a student leave campus without the approval of the principal/designee.

Additional attendance requirements for high school and middle school students:

A student with 9 or more absences for a semester (questionable or unexcused) will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities including, but not limited to, sport activities, prom, band concerts, field trips, beauty pageants, and SGA elections. Principals have the discretion to allow for extenuating circumstances.

MARRIED STUDENTS

Married students are subject to all Board of Education policies relating to students.

HEALTH RELATED CONDITIONS, INCLUDING PREGNANCY

When a student's attendance places his/her health or safety in jeopardy, the principal shall request a written statement from a licensed physician including recommendations concerning the advisability of school attendance. Additional statements from the physician verifying satisfactory physical condition shall be provided.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The policies and procedures of the Covington County Board of Education form the Code of Student Conduct and are based on the following responsibilities:

SEARCH OF PROPERTY AND INDIVIDUAL

All school property and other items at school may be searched by school officials with reasonable cause of suspected disruptive or dangerous items. A search of the person shall be conducted when the safety and welfare of others is involved. Officials of law enforcement agencies are allowed to make periodic unannounced visits after notifying the superintendent and building principal for the purpose of detecting the presence of illegal drugs.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Students are expected to be clean and appropriately dressed for school. Dress and appearance must not present health or safety problems or cause disruption to the teaching/learning process. The local school principal will be the final authority for determining appropriate dress within the framework of the policy.

STANDARD I

Dress and Appearance---Grades K-4:

A. Half-shirts, halter or tube tops, fish net or muscle shirts, and biker shorts may not be worn to school.

B. Midriffs should be covered.

C. Obscene T-shirts or hats with language pertaining to tobacco or alcohol, sexual innuendoes, or foul language will not be allowed. Any apparel which renders one's appearance as suggestive or indecent may not be worn. Clothing should be in good taste for the age, maturity, and size of the student.

D. Shoes must be worn for protection. Flip-Flops & 5-toe shoes are not allowed at P. E. Shoes which mark or damage floors will not be permitted.

E. Wearing jewelry or other accessories which are deemed inappropriate or pose a health hazard or distraction (including nose rings, body rings, nail piercing, tongue piercing, and wallet chains).

F. While medium length apparel may be appropriate for most students in this age range, some students are larger and more mature causing clothing designed for younger students to be inappropriate and uncomfortable. Body suits; and tight fitting jeans or pants should not be worn to school.

STANDARD II

Dress and appearance---Grades 5-12:

Teachers may deny a student admission to class due to improper dress. In this case, the student's absence will be unexcused. Students who violate the dress code will be documented, warned and asked to secure proper attire on the first offense. Disciplinary actions may be taken for the following:

A. Wearing a head covering of any type in the school building during school hours.

B. Having suggestive, offensive, or vulgar writing and/or pictures on clothing (including tobacco or alcoholic beverage signs, ads, offensive words, etc.). In addition, students will not be permitted to wear any articles of clothing that promote any groups that do not reflect a positive image in today's society. Clothing that dishonors the flag or military uniforms, has racial implications or is gang related (including trench coats) is not permitted at school. School principals will have the discretion to determine negative images.

C. Exposing midriffs including exposed stomachs backs and shoulders must be covered. Inappropriate dress will include sleeveless shirts or dresses, sundresses, spandex or bicycle pants, mini dresses or skirts, unbuckled overalls, low ride pants, baggy pants, half-shirts, tank tops, halter tops, tube tops and sleeping apparel. Pants designed to be worn with a belt must have a belt worn at the waist.

D. Wearing clothing with cutouts, tears, holes, slits, open-sided tops, tops that are cut extremely low, or shirts that are longer than shorts under the shirt.

E. Wearing see-through clothing, such as mesh jerseys, without a full shirt under the jersey.

F. Wearing clothing that is tight fitting and revealing is prohibited. It is recommended that shorts/skorts not be worn to school. If shorts, skorts, dresses, or skirts are worn, the length should be three (3) inches above the top of the knee. If clothing such as leggings or jeggings is worn, pants, top, dress or skirt must be worn over the leggings/jeggings and length should be three (3) inches above the top of the knee.

G. Wearing inappropriate shoes. Comfortable shoes should be worn due to health and safety rules. Flip-Flops & 5-toe shoes are not allowed at P.E.

H. Wearing jewelry or other accessories which are deemed inappropriate or pose a health hazard or distraction (including nose rings, body rings, nail piercing, tongue piercing, and wallet chains).

I. Athletic bags will be permitted in designated areas only.

FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Alabama Act 94-819: Liability of Parent/Guardian

The parent/guardian of a minor under the age of eighteen (18) shall be liable for the actual damage sustained but not exceeding the sum of \$1000 plus court costs to any person, firm, association, or corporation of the State of Alabama for all damages or destruction of any property by the intentional, willful, or malicious act of the minor.

BEFORE OR AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION

The principal or designee has the authority to assign students to a designated area at the end of the regular school day for a reasonable and specified period of time. **The parent/guardian is responsible for providing transportation in these cases.** The elementary or middle school student will be assigned to detention following

notification of the parent/guardian. High school students will be notified the day prior to detention assignment and will be responsible for parent/guardian notification. Detention time on a daily basis shall be limited to one (1) hour per day for elementary, middle, and high school students.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

Saturday School may be used for disciplinary reasons for Class I and Class II offenses as a penalty for tardiness or to make up excessive absences.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Crisis Management Program, defined as removal of students from the regular class program to a class setting within the school or locale where the student will have no contact with the regular program, will be used as a support alternative for behavioral and academic reasons. Students shall be assigned as specified in the Code of Student Conduct or for academic reasons by the school principal/designee. Students may be assigned from one (1) hour to five (5) days unless time is extended for noncompliance with rules of conduct. Students who do not follow the rules of the Crisis Management Program may be immediately referred to the Administrative Hearing Committee. Parent/guardian will be notified of this transfer.

PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING COMMITTEE

The superintendent/designee shall appoint an Administrative Hearing Committee to review the recommendation from the principal for any disciplinary action that is deemed necessary. The committee will review all information, question the student, and fully discuss the matter in an informal setting with the principal, student, and parent/guardian. Alternative actions other than those recommended by the principal may be recommended by the committee if the evidence so warrants. The superintendent, upon receiving the recommendation of the Administrative Hearing Committee, shall notify the parent/guardian of the action to be taken. The superintendent has the authority to approve or change the recommendation made by the committee. If expulsion is recommended, the Board of Education shall meet within twenty-five (25) days of the administrative hearing to consider this recommendation.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL (Short-Term)

Alternative School is a structured disciplinary program for students removed from the regular classroom to an alternative location. Students are referred by the principal and are assigned to the short-term program by the superintendent or an Administrative Hearing Committee with the concurrence of the superintendent/designee. All Alternative School assignments are reported to the Department of Youth Services. Attendance is mandatory from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. Students failing to attend will be reported to the juvenile authorities by the school principal. Students must abide by all rules given by the Alternative School Teacher upon admittance. The parent/guardian is responsible for transporting the student to and from the Alternative School. The student assigned to Alternative School will lose privileges including exam exemptions, extracurricular activities, and participation in work experience programs. Students unable to complete assignment prior to the last day of the school year will be required to attend until the assignment is completed. A report card will not be issued until such assignment is completed and all grades earned. Students in the program at the end of the grading period shall complete tests/exams at the Alternative School. Students will not be dismissed after testing in order to fulfill requirements of assignment.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL (Long-Term)

Alternative Education Program assignments are to be considered based upon the following:

1. Disciplinary Reasons---recommended by the principal with the concurrence of the Administrative Hearing Committee and the Superintendent/designee.
2. Health and Safety Reasons---student/parent/guardian written request to the Principal.
3. Curriculum or Attendance Reasons, Parent/Guardian Request, Court-related Reasons, Principal's Recommendation with the concurrence of the Administrative Hearing Committee and recommendation made by the Superintendent/designee.
4. A student may not be assigned to the long-term program more than one (1) time during a school year unless assigned by an Administrative Hearing Committee with the approval of the Superintendent/designee. Second assignments to the long-term program may be for the remainder of the school year or until the student has demonstrated appropriate work and behavior or on the recommendation (due to a special situation) of the principal and with approval of the Superintendent/designee. On occasions of special need, the Superintendent/designee may reassign a student as a temporary measure pending development of an alternate placement.
5. All students who have been adjudicated upon completion of the court ordered process must report to Alternative School before reentering their respective schools.

SCHOOL BUS SUSPENSION

The principal or transportation supervisor has the authority to deny a student the privilege of riding a school bus. The denial based on misconduct of the student will be for a reasonable and specified period of time. The parent/guardian will be notified of the suspension and will be responsible for the transportation of the student to school during the suspension. Random use of video cameras is permitted on school buses.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment may be administered by the principal/designee or teacher in the presence of a professional employee of the Board of Education. A written report will be prepared for each incident and copies of each report must be on file in the administrative office of the school. Corporal punishment for a student documented as having a disability, in which the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, will follow the same procedures as a non-disabled student.

