Bonaire Primary School
Student Handbook
2022-2023

Mrs. Ashley Watkins
Principal

Dr. Christie Bergh
Assistant Principal of Instruction

Dr. Jennifer Wynn
Assistant Principal of Discipline

Mrs. Amanda Parker
504 Coordinator
Counselor

Dr. Walter Stephens
School District Title IX Coordinator

Dr. Mark Scott, Superintendent
Houston County Board of Education
Post Office Box 1850
1100 Main Street
Perry, Georgia 31069
(478) 988-6200
www.hcbe.net

Bonaire Primary School

Our mission is that ALL STUDENTS will master foundational skills in a safe, warm, nurturing environment that creates resilient, life-long learners prepared for the future.

Our vision is that our school will be a source of pride in our community and students.

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

High Achievement for All

2022-2023
Elementary School Handbook

Dr. Mark Scott
Superintendent

Houston County School District
1100 Main Street
Perry, Georgia 31069
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HOUSTON COUNTY DISTRICT

MISSION STATEMENT

HOUSTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
High Achievement for All

Our mission is to produce high achievement For all through continuous growth. Our Vision is to be the standard for world-class education.

Dr. Mark Scott
Superintendent of Schools

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HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT CALENDAR 2022-2023

August 1	Monday	First Day of School
September 5	Monday	**HOLIDAY** - Labor Day
September 6	Tuesday	Distance Learning/Site Collaboration
October 7	Friday	**HOLIDAY**- Student/Staff Workday
October 10-14	Monday-Friday	**HOLIDAY**-Fall Break
November 11	Friday	**HOLIDAY** - Veterans Day
November 21-25	Monday-Friday	**HOLIDAY** - Thanksgiving
December 16	Friday	Last day before Holidays - ½ day for students
December 19- January 2		**HOLIDAY** - Christmas Holiday
January 3	Tuesday	**HOLIDAY** - Students/Staff Work Day
January 4	Wednesday	First Day of Second Semester
January 16	Monday	**HOLIDAY** - Martin Luther King, Jr
February 20	Monday	**HOLIDAY** - President's Day
February 21	Tuesday	**HOLIDAY** - Students/Staff Work Day
March 31	Friday	Student Holiday/Site Collaboration
April 3-7	Monday-Friday	**SPRING BREAK**
May 24	Wednesday	Last Day of School - ½ day for students

ELEMENTARY REPORT CARD DATES 2022-2023

Nine Weeks Period	End Date	Date Report Issued
Progress Report, Day 22	August 30	September 1
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 43	September 29	October 17
Progress report, Day 65	November 8	November 10
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 86	December 16	January 9
Progress report, Day 110	February 6	February 8
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 133	March 10	March 17
Progress Report, Day 158	April 24	April 26
Report Card (9 weeks), Day 180	May 24	May 24

ACCIDENTS, ILLNESS, AND HEALTH SERVICES

If a child is injured at school, office personnel will render first aid. Parents will then be contacted in those cases which the school deems are serious enough to warrant communication. If the school is unable to reach the parent, the emergency telephone contact person(s) will be called in an effort to find someone to come for the child. In the event a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, EMS may be called for transport to the local hospital. When a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be notified just as in the case of an accident. Parents will also be contacted in cases of children soiling their clothes at school through accidents such as vomiting, urinating, or defecation. **Parental assistance is urgently needed in providing pertinent medical information upon the enrollment of the child in school. Please assist the school by notifying the office of any change in student data (medical or otherwise) that will ensure your child's success for a safe and healthy school year.**

When to Keep A Student Home

Preventive and emergency school-based health services are provided to public school children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth. The Health Related Services department uses "Best Practice" standards that strive to eliminate barriers, increase attendance, and identify health related concerns that influence learning.

Please refer to the following guidelines when a sick/recovering child returns to school:

1. **A child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning.**
2. **A child must be diarrhea or nausea/vomiting free for 24 hours without medication (anti-diarrheal or anti-nausea/anti-emetic) before returning.**
3. A child with strep throat must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.
4. A child with possible conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be seen by a doctor and may only return to school with a doctor's note.
5. A child with chicken pox may only return to school when all lesions have crusted over. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
6. All open, draining, or contagious skin areas (i.e. Staph, ringworm, Molluscum Contagiosum) must be able to be contained by a bandage/covering. Please provide a note from the doctor releasing the student to return to school and to excuse the absence(s).
7. A child with scabies will be allowed to return to school the following day after the first treatment.
8. A child must not require narcotics to control pain during school hours post procedure or injury.

KEEP A CHILD HOME, if she/he:

1. **Has had a fever* of 100 degrees or higher in the past 24 hours.**
2. Is nauseous and/or vomiting and/or has diarrhea.
3. Has been exposed to a contagious disease and is exhibiting signs/symptoms of the disease.
4. Has undiagnosed skin rashes or contagious conditions such as scabies or chicken pox. Students will be excluded from school until the rash is gone or when cleared by a physician for any contagious illness.
5. Has live lice on the scalp. A child will be allowed to attend if only nits are seen.

Children who have been at home because of illness should not be brought to school for parties and/or special events.

*A fever refers to a temperature of 100 degrees or more without the use of Tylenol or Advil or other fever reducing medications. The school cannot give aspirin, or products that contain aspirin products. A high occurrence of Reyes Syndrome associated with viral infections and the use of aspirin.

Please send a parent or physician's note to the homeroom teacher **within five days of the absence**; otherwise, the absence is unexcused and subject to the truancy regulations.

Medication Administration

Prescription medicines (no narcotics) will be given to students by school personnel only when prescribed and ordered by a physician and when the following guidelines are followed:

1. All medication must be presented to the school office by a parent in a prescription labeled bottle, which will include the student's name, date, instructions for administering, name of the drug, and name of the issuing physician.
2. A Medication Administration form HRS 29, is required to be filled out by the physician and parent in cases of long-term medication (more than two weeks/10 doses).

Non-prescription medicine or over the counter medicine, such as Tylenol, should be turned into the main office staff to be administrated. Over the counter medicines will be given only for a short- term duration (i.e. two consecutive weeks or for a total of 10 times a year) without a physician's order. Medication must be in the original unopened new container, age appropriate, and accompanied by written parental request with directions for administering. A Short Term Medication form HRS 29C may be requested by the Health Technician.

HERBAL Medications will not be given without an order from the student's physician.

Expired medication will not be given. Please check for expiration date before bringing medications to school.

Students requiring a rescue inhaler, injectable epinephrine, or Glucagon are allowed to have them at all times. A student Self-Assessment Form may be required prior to your student carrying the emergency medication on their person during the school day. It is critical that you discuss your child's medical condition(s) with the principal, teacher, and school nurse. Students must not share these medications with other students. Disciplinary consequences will apply for students misusing these medications. **Parents must pick up all medication at the end of the school year.**

Head Lice

Head lice can infect anyone, not just children. Head lice are spread through head-to-head contact and sharing of brushes, combs, head bands, hats, jackets, etc. It is not our practice to check the entire class for head lice or send letters home to an entire class.

Lice are more common among preschool and elementary school-aged children and their families. Head lice cannot live on pets or animals, only on humans. No diseases are spread by head lice.

If a student is found to have active head lice, the parent will be called to pick him/her up. The school Health Technician will provide educational material to assist the parent in eliminating lice from the student and environment. The student will not be allowed back into school with live lice. The school Health Technician will inspect the student's scalp for active lice upon initial re-entry after first treatment and every 7 days up to 21 days or until clear of lice and nits.

Please help the school prevent lice outbreaks by encouraging students not to share clothing items or other personal items such as combs, brushes, and towels with friends. The school nurse is available for consultation with difficult cases.

Hospital-Homebound Services

Hospital/Homebound refers to those students who are medically prevented from normal school attendance based upon certification of need by the licensed physician or mental health provider who is treating the student for the diagnosis. For more detailed information, please see your child's principal and counselor.

Health Program Plan (GADOE Board Rule 160-4-2-.12)

Pre-K - Grade 5 teachers implement the *Second Step* social-emotional learning curriculum to help children better understand, manage, and express emotions and empathy, develop positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Students are taught techniques that help them gain confidence, set and achieve positive goals, collaborate

well, and navigate the world more effectively. These lessons are provided to all students and do not require specific parent permission since they are skills-based and do not include sensitive topics.

The Houston County School District has adopted the Committee for Children's *Second Step* ***Child Protection Unit*** to fulfill compliance with GADOE Board Rules and GA Code on implementation of annual age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education. It includes training, guidance, and resources for administrators, teachers, counselors, and families. Student lessons are age-appropriate and designed for Early Learning (Pre-K) through Grade 5 classrooms and are delivered by school counselors.

The *Child Protection Unit* features research-based prevention and intervention components, including training and resources for school staff, classroom lessons and activities, and materials for families. Its goal is to develop staff, adult caregiver, and student knowledge and skills for protecting students from unsafe and abusive situations in and outside of school. Specific skills for recognizing and reporting abusive situations, and responding in a supportive way to students who disclose abuse, are also targeted. The *Child Protection Unit* student lessons encourage help seeking behavior and positive student norms by teaching students to recognize, refuse, and report unsafe or abusive situations. Specifically, the lessons aim to help children protect themselves by teaching them skills in three areas:
1. Recognizing unsafe and sexually abusive situations and touches
2. Immediately reporting these situations to adults
3. Assertively refusing these situations whenever possible

Each lesson also includes an activity children can do with a parent or caregiver at home to practice the skills.

In addition to the classroom materials used, a website is available where parents and caregivers can get the facts about child sexual abuse, learn tips for talking with kids, find resources for responding to and reporting abuse, and explore the prevention toolkit. The site features a video series that's been shown to increase parents' confidence to discuss the topic with their children. English version - https://www.earlyopenoften.org/ Spanish version - https://www.abiertoyamenudo.org/

Parents should find a permission form included in the Parent Signature Pages sent home at the beginning of the school year for the *Child Protection Unit* instruction. Parents have the right to choose for their child not to participate in the program by indicating such on the signed form. More information can be found at https://www.secondstep.org/child-protection and parents may request to review the materials to be used by contacting the school counselor.

In addition to the *Child Protection Unit*, 4th grade girls and 4th-5th grade girls and boys are also scheduled for instruction on the aspects of puberty. Girls and boys are separated for these lessons and the topics focus on specific changes that occur within the body as an individual goes through puberty. The intent is to prepare students with the details of how their bodies, skin, hair, and mood can be affected during puberty with the understanding that it is a normal process that everyone goes through. Parents should find a permission form included in the Parent Signature Pages sent home at the beginning of the year. Parents will have an option for their student to participate, or not to participate. Parents may also access materials on their own at https://www.pgschoolprograms.com/Educators .

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Most primary/elementary schools offer after-school programs that provide supervision to primary/elementary school-age students until 6:00 p.m. each school day. The program is open to children enrolled in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Each program strives to establish a safe and enriching environment that allows for individual and social growth. Children engage in activities that encourage creativity, build social relationships, reinforce appropriate behavior, and promote a positive self-image. Activities may include study time, recreation, crafts, music, story times, computer experiences, and other engaging activities. These programs are under the authority of the Houston County School District and not required to be licensed (exempted from licensure) by the Georgia Bright From the Start: Department of Early Care and Learning that licenses other childcare agencies.

An Application Form and a Licensure Exemption Form must be completed before any student can participate in the After School Program. The application fee of $25, or $35 per family, must be included with the form. This fee is ***nonrefundable***. Tuition is $40 per child per week for full-time students and $10.00 per child per day for drop-in/part-time students. For weeks with fewer than four days, tuition fees will be due at the daily rate of $10.00 per day per child. Weeks with less than 5 days **WILL NOT** be combined for payment.

Tuition is to be paid to the school Site Coordinator by Thursday of the preceding week, no later than 6:00 p.m. A $5.00 **per day per student** late fee will be charged for late tuition. Students may be temporarily or permanently dismissed from the program due to behavior concerns, excessive late pick-ups, and/or non-payment of fees. If your child is

enrolled in ASP, please refer to the Houston County After-School Program parent handout for more specific details regarding procedures.

Please note that some schools do not have an After-School Program due to a lack of participation to support the associated costs.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The instructional day is from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Upon arrival at school, all students should immediately report to their assigned places and remain there unless permission is received from a school staff member to leave the room. **If your child will be eating breakfast at school, ensure that he or she is dropped off early enough to eat breakfast before the 8:30 a.m. start time.** Parents picking up a child should wait in the designated areas for their child to be dismissed.

Students will not be admitted to school prior to 7:45 a.m. It is essential that students be picked up from school by 3:50 p.m. each afternoon. A parent who continues to drop students off before 7:45 a.m. or fails to pick them up by 3:50 p.m. will be reported to the appropriate authorities such as the local police and DFACS.

ATTENDANCE

The Houston County School District emphasizes values of regular attendance in enabling pupils to profit from the school program.

Compulsory Attendance

Houston County School authorities, in cooperation with other county agencies, shall enforce the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1, Mandatory Attendance, which requires that every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state having control of any school age child or children between the ages of 6 and 16 enroll and send such child or children to school. Further, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of Houston County prior to their SIXTH birthday shall become subject to all provisions of the law. All students missing more than **5 unexcused days in Georgia are declared as truant by law.**

All Houston County students are affected by and fall under the provisions of our attendance protocol which is stated as follows;

Level I
Three (3) unexcused absences.
School staff will contact parents and document the contact. Contacts may consist of e-mail, phone call, letter, note in the agenda, or other forms of communication.

Level II
Five (5) unexcused absences.
School staff will notify parents of the truancy and request a conference with the parents to sign an Attendance Contract.

Level III
Eight (8) unexcused absences.
School staff notifies Social Services Department; Social Services provides data to court for judicial proceedings to begin.

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia having control or charge of a child or children who violate GA Code Section O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than $25 and not greater than $100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combinations of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absence from school is classified as either excused or unexcused. Reasons established by the Georgia Board of Education as excused absences are set forth in this policy. Students may be temporarily excused from school for the following reasons:

1. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement.
2. A serious illness or death occurs in their immediate family. (Parent, Sibling, or Grandparent of child)
3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies or by a court order.
4. Celebrating religious holidays observed by their faith.

NOTE: An excused absence does not mean the student is given credit for being at school.

Students should present a written excuse within five (5) days after an absence whether excused or unexcused. Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused. Excessive/extended absences due to illness must be justified by a physician's statement.

The following items should be specified and included on each written excuse:

1. The date the excuse is written.
2. The date of the absence.
3. Reason for absence.
4. Signature of parent or guardian.

Students who have absences may make up work or tests missed. Upon returning to school, students should complete makeup work missed within five [5] school days. Parents may pick up homework assignments in the school office. The teacher, however, should be given adequate time to prepare homework assignments and materials.

***At the discretion of the principal, a statement from a physician may be required to validate extended or excessive absences.**

Military Family Deployment - Absences for Special Consideration

The Houston County School District is supportive of our military families, especially during the difficult time of deployment. Per OCGA 20-2-692.1, a student whose parent or legal guardian is serving in the military in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard on extended active duty is allowed up to a maximum of: • 5 days excused absences per school year to visit with a parent/guardian prior to an overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, or during parent's/legal guardian's R&R leave or return from deployment; • 5 days excused absences over two school years for military affairs sponsored event, to include visiting a military parent/legal guardian in a medical facility; or attending a ceremony for the military member, such as promotion, graduation or retirement.

The form for special consideration for absences for military deployment can be obtained from the school's office or on the school system website under the Parents tab and select the Military Family Support page. Please submit this request with documentation 10 days prior to an absence to the school principal. Either of the following may be provided: a copy of the Contingency, Exercise or Deployment Orders (CED) or a memo signed by the Robins Air Force Base School Liaison Officer (SLO).

Students will be responsible for their homework and making up any missed tests or class reports upon return to school. Parents are asked to work with the classroom teacher and their children to ensure that students stay up-to-date on class material. For general information regarding student absences, see Board Policy JBD, Absences and Excuses.

Perfect Attendance

To receive an award for Perfect Attendance, a student may not be absent, tardy, or be dismissed before the end of any school day. It does not matter if the absence is excused or unexcused.

Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Instruction begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., and a student is considered tardy after that time. A student who is tardy must report to the office to check in. A parent is expected to accompany the student and to sign him/her in. If a school bus arrives after 8:30 a.m., students will not be considered tardy and no tardy permit is necessary. Students who are signed out of school before 3:30 p.m. are considered as having an early dismissal. Parents should provide the

school with a reason for the tardy or early dismissal. The school will determine if the tardy or early dismissal is excused or unexcused using the same system guidelines outlined for absences.

Many people do not realize that missed instructional minutes add up quickly. For example, if your child arrives a mere 10 minutes late each day, they miss 50 minutes of instructional time every week. During a 36 week school year, they could miss nearly 30 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION! If they're 20 minutes late, it would be 60 hours, and so on. These instructional minutes are especially important to the achievement of our students and the success of our schools. An excessive number of lost instructional minutes could prevent your child from being promoted to the next grade level. For the benefit of ALL students, we may implement the following procedures with relation to unexcused tardies and unexcused early dismissals:

- 5 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Parent Contact
- 10 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Excessive Tardy/Early Dismissal Notification Letter
- 15 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Attendance Contract Meeting Scheduled with parents and administration
- 20 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Referral to the HCBOE Social Service Department and assignment to Mandatory Make up Time
- 25 Unexcused Tardies/Early Dismissals - Parent Meeting scheduled with the Attendance Panel at the Central Office in Perry, GA

Release of Students

The school may not release a student to any person other than the person who enrolled the student in school. If an individual other than the person who enrolled the student in school is authorized to take the student from school on a regular basis (e.g., a grandparent or other relative, childcare provider, etc.), the person who enrolled the student in school must notify the school of such in writing and this notification should be kept on file at the school. If someone other than the person who enrolled the student in school (or an individual authorized in writing by this person) attempts to take custody of the child or to remove the child from the school, the school will immediately contact the person who enrolled the student in school. If a person who attempts to take custody of the child without consent of the person who enrolled the student in school refuses to leave the campus or causes a problem, the school will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency. Exceptions to these student release procedures may occur in cases involving state or local law enforcement and child protection agencies.

Any change in a child's transportation **must** be communicated using the procedures established by the school. Parents should not send the teacher an email. This is to ensure the message gets to the child's teacher before dismissal.

School Day

The school day for all elementary students begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. Students must be in attendance for a minimum of at least one-half of the instructional day to be counted for a partial day present. Cutoff time for determining attendance is 12:00 p.m. If a student leaves before 12:00 p.m., or arrives after that time, the student is counted absent for the day.

ATTENDANCE ZONE REGULATIONS

The Houston County School District has approved student attendance zones. If the natural parent lives in Houston County, the student must attend the school in which the residence of the natural parent is located regardless of whether the student lives with the parent. If the parents are divorced/separated, the child shall be required to attend the school in the attendance zone in which the **primary custodial parent resides**. **A complete list of enrollment restrictions and enrollment determinations is included in policies JBC and JBCCA.**

If the school personnel determine that a parent or guardian has changed addresses without informing the school or used false information to enroll a child in a school other than the school zone in which the parent/guardian resides, the child shall be withdrawn not later than the last grading period. School administrators may request proof of residence at any time that it may be necessary to verify that a parent resides in the school zone. If it is determined that a student must enroll in another Houston County school, the parent will be directed to report to Central Registration to complete a change of address packet to transfer to the new school. Students must reside within the county in order to be enrolled in a Houston County school. Students are not allowed to attend Houston County schools if they reside in another county. If school personnel determine that a parent or guardian has used false information or violated an

enrollment restriction to enroll a child in a school other than the school in the zone in which the parent or guardian resides, the child shall be withdrawn to attend the school in the attendance zone or other county in which the parent resides. If the child(ren) are residing in another county, the Superintendent or designee may bill the parents the prorated amount of out of county tuition approved by the Board for system employees.

Unsafe School Choice Option

If a student is a victim of a Violent Criminal Offense (as stated in OCGA 160-4-8-16/JBCCA Policy) on campus or at a school sponsored activity, he/she may request a transfer to a school who has not been identified as being on a school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring plan. This request must be made within ten (10) school days of the commission of the Violent Criminal Offense.

BALLOONS/GIFTS AT SCHOOL

Students will not be allowed to accept flowers, balloons, or other gifts sent to the school during the school day. Parents should not bring these items to the school.

BICYCLES

Students who ride bicycles to school should park and lock them in the designated area immediately upon arrival. Students should not secure more than one bike with one lock. The school is at no time responsible for damage or loss of a bicycle. Students who ride bicycles to school should obey state laws for their safety.

BOOK CLUBS

During the school year, teachers may occasionally send home individual book orders from various independent companies. The purchase of books from these sources is optional, and the books are not used as part of the instructional program. The orders are distributed to children during non-instructional time.

BUS CONDUCT

The parents or guardians of students are responsible for the supervision of their child until they board the bus in the morning and after they exit the bus at the end of the day. The school has the authority to discipline a student for any misconduct occurring on the way to or from school. The school bus is an extension of the classroom. Once the student boards the bus, the student is expected to conduct him/herself on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for classroom behavior. Provisions pertaining to bus misbehavior are included in the student Code of Conduct.

The bus driver shall report students who do not conduct themselves properly on a bus to the attention of the principal or his/her designee. The bus driver is responsible for the safety of all who ride the bus. Students are expected to comply with reasonable instructions given by the bus driver. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats either temporarily or permanently and to establish rules for safety and proper behavior on the bus. Bus students are not to leave the school grounds before or after school without permission.

A student who cannot conduct him/herself properly on a bus may have riding privileges suspended or revoked. In such a case, the parent or guardian of the student involved shall be responsible for transporting the student to and from school. In cases of bus vandalism, the student and parent/guardian will be held responsible.

Students are prohibited from any and all acts of physical violence, bullying, sexual harassment, physical assault, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and any other unruly behavior.

A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school officials may be held to create a school bus behavior contract whenever:

1. A student is found to have engaged in bullying/sexual harassment; or
2. A student is found to have engaged in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

Students are prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Students are also prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

All students, grades K-12, shall be instructed annually in emergency evacuation and safe riding practices on school buses. The Director of Transportation shall work with school principals and bus drivers to ensure that this is accomplished.

Minor Offenses

1. Failure to remain seated
2. Refusing to obey driver/monitor
3. Throwing objects on the bus
4. Improper/dangerous conduct boarding or exiting
5. Inappropriate physical contact (minor)
6. Excessive noise
7. Unsafe items
8. Eating/drinking
9. Discarding trash
10. Extending objects outside window
11. Other disruptive behavior

Major Offenses

Although there may be no other bus report, consequences for major offenses begin at the third report level and proceed as reports occur.

1. Disrespect of driver/monitor/administrator
2. Fighting
3. Severe vandalism - restitution required
4. Possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons, etc.
5. Inappropriate physical contact (major)
6. Throwing objects off the bus

The student may be suspended from the bus for the remainder of the year for behaviors such as possession of weapons or drugs or severe disrespect of the driver. When a student is denied bus transportation due to misconduct, his/her absence from school is not excused. The parent/guardian shall be expected to provide transportation during the time the student is suspended from the bus.

Consequences for Infractions of Bus Conduct

Transportation by bus to and from school each day that is provided by the Houston County School District is a privilege. Students who choose to behave in an unruly manner and refuse to follow the rules sacrifice the safety of other students and the driver. Discipline for student misbehavior while riding the bus is progressive and ranges from parent/driver conferences to having the privilege of transportation provided by the school district taken away completely. Ultimately, all discipline procedures are at the discretion of the principal and depend on the severity of the offense.

First Sign of Student Misbehavior: The bus driver will attempt to make contact with the parent to ask for help with the student. The driver will document the specific elements of the incident and document the conversation with the parent.

First Bus Report: A conference may be held with the school official, parent, and driver. A contract will be executed between student, parents, and school.

Second Bus Report: One (1) day off bus.

Third Bus Report: Three (3) days off bus.

Fourth Bus Report: Five (5) days off bus.

Fifth Bus Report: Seven (7) days off bus.

Sixth Bus Report: Ten (10) days off bus.

Seventh Bus Report: Off bus the remainder of the year.

This is a suggested progressive discipline system that comes with principal discretion.

A student may be suspended from the bus for 1-10 days at any time **if the principal determines the incident warrants suspension.**

CENTRAL REGISTRATION

Parents of any student(s) new to Houston County Schools must complete the enrollment process at the Central Registration site located at 410 Bear Country Boulevard, Warner Robins, Georgia 31088. The enrollment process at Central Registration is done by appointment. To schedule an appointment visit the Houston County website at www.hcbe.net.

- Select the Parents tab
- Scroll to Central Registration

Change of Address

Anytime a parent moves (changes address) within Houston County during the school year, the parent must go to Central Registration and show two proofs of address for the new residence (**one must be a mortgage statement or lease agreement).** A service disconnection notice from the previous address may be required.

CHALLENGED MATERIALS

Criticisms of instructional and library materials that are in the Houston County schools shall be submitted in writing to the individual school principal on the form available in the school office. It is suggested that the critic file the complaint which will be submitted to the school Media Committee appointed by the principal. If a parent or guardian objects to a reading assignment made by a classroom teacher, the parent may request in writing that the student be given a comparable alternative assignment without penalty; in so doing, the parent should state the reason for the request.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME and SCHOOL

Routine communication and information are normally sent home with students. Parents are urged to ask students daily about notes and forms from school. Generally, when a parent is requested to sign a note or form, unless otherwise stated, the signature does not indicate agreement with the contents, but only that the parent has seen the communication. If parents have questions about any school matter, they should call the teacher or the administrators of the school.

Interpretation services are provided as practicable for languages other than English at no charge to parents.

School Messenger

The Houston County School District has an automated emergency communication system, School Messenger, which may be used in the event of emergencies such as school closings, evacuations, natural disasters, off-campus events, school lock-downs, or other major incidents. It also provides schools an opportunity to notify parents of school events, items of importance, and upcoming important dates. School Messenger delivers a message to parents by telephone or e-mail. This messenger system enables the delivery of a fast, accurate message and is a valuable addition to our school safety program. **Please ensure that your child's school has accurate telephone numbers and e-mails on file.**

CONFERENCES - PARENT/TEACHER

Parents are welcome to visit their child's school for parent/teacher conferences, and are urged to call the school office and schedule conferences with teachers as needed. Teachers are not available for conferences during the school day unless they have been scheduled. Teachers will notify parents of additional times that they are available for conferences.

All visitors to the school are required to report to the school office upon entering the school building to obtain a pass and sign in. Parents should sign out in the office upon leaving the school.

COUNSELING

The elementary years are a time when students begin to develop their academic self-concept and their feelings of competence and confidence as learners. They are beginning to develop decision-making, communication and life skills, as well as character values. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups and family. Comprehensive developmental school counseling programs provide education, prevention and intervention services, which are integrated into all aspects of children's lives. Early identification and intervention of children's academic and personal/social needs is essential in removing barriers to learning and in promoting academic achievement. The knowledge, attitudes and skills that students acquire in the areas of academic, career and personal/social development during these elementary years serve as the foundation for future success.

Elementary school counselors are professional educators with a mental health perspective who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. Elementary school counselors don't work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. They provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help students achieve school success. Professional school counselors align with the school's mission to support the academic achievement of all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century. This mission is accomplished through the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, developmental and systematic school counseling program. American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards in the academic, career, and personal/social domains are the foundation for this work. The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2002), with its data-driven and results-based focus, serves as a guide for today's school counselor who is uniquely trained to implement this program.

Elementary school years set the tone for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners. Through a comprehensive developmental school counseling program, school counselors work as a team with the school staff, parents and the community to create a caring climate and atmosphere. By providing education, prevention, early identification and intervention, school counselors can help all children achieve academic success. The professional elementary school counselor holds a master's degree and required state certification in school counseling. Maintaining certification includes on-going professional development to stay current with education reform and challenges facing today's students. Professional association membership enhances the school counselor's knowledge and effectiveness.
SOURCE: American School Counselor Association

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Parents or guardians shall be responsible for the willful damage to the school building, furniture, bus, grounds, textbooks, or other property of the school by their child. The principal shall assess the cost of repairing the damage. The student will be held responsible for their actions.

DISCIPLINE

The complete Houston County Schools student Code of Conduct is printed in the back of this handbook. Please take time to read the Code of Conduct and discuss it with your child.

Classroom control is a prerequisite to classroom learning. Students who are well disciplined direct their interests, efforts, and abilities toward greater achievement. Discipline and classroom control require the joint effort on the part of the teacher and students with the assistance of the parents.

A positive approach to discipline and learning is used in all elementary schools. Specific rules for proper behavior are explained and discussed by all teachers on a continuous basis. Students are expected to obey these rules and all directions given by school personnel. Parents are requested to reinforce a positive attitude toward learning and appropriate behavior.

Because all circumstances regarding misbehavior cannot be predicted or anticipated, the principal is granted wide authority in determining punishments or making decisions regarding disciplinary matters based on individual cases.

Possession/Use of Drugs/Alcohol/Weapons

Any elementary student who brings a weapon to school or who is in possession of a weapon at school or any other school function will be disciplined. The extent of the disciplinary action is dependent on the student's grade level, actions, intent to harm, threats made, and prior discipline history. Law enforcement will be notified, and the parent or guardian will be contacted. Students found in possession of a weapon may be immediately suspended and referred to an alternative program.

Elementary students who commit offenses involving drugs or alcohol may also be immediately suspended and referred to an alternative program.

Bullying

Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. Upon a finding by the school's administrators that a student in grades 3-5 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student may be assigned to an alternative school program.

Elementary Alternative Program

The purpose of the Elementary Alternative Program is to accommodate the behavioral and academic needs of students who have committed any of the above discipline violations or committed persistent or severe behavior violations outlined in the student Code of Conduct. The program is very structured and teacher directed. Students are required to adhere to strict rules and guidelines.

The alternative program will maintain a quality educational program for the student with the emphasis on the state curriculum standards for his or her grade level. Social skills lessons will be taught daily in order to help him/her meet goals that will improve the student's understanding of the relationship between action and consequence before returning to the home school. The overall goal is to help the student learn appropriate social skills and become more productive in the regular school setting.

Students are expected to attend the alternative program each day. If a student is absent, the parent must provide a doctor's note or written note upon returning to school. The student must make up any absences regardless of whether excused or unexcused.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students who have excessive or chronic behavior issues at their home school may be assigned to the alternative program. Extended days can be assigned to students who are not following the rules while attending the alternative program.

There must be an agreed upon and confirmed date and time for an alternative program placement intake meeting to take place for the student being sent to the Elementary Alternative Program. The date must be confirmed with the alternative program administration before a meeting is scheduled with the parent or guardian of the referred student. The following people must be present for the meeting: home school administrator, alternative program representative, parent or guardian, and the student.

Bus transportation will be provided for students to be transported to and from the Elementary Alternative Program. The home school administrator must make arrangements with the Transportation Department. If a student has any bus discipline referrals during his or her time in the alternative program, the student's transportation privileges for the alternative program may be temporarily revoked. The parent or guardian will then be responsible for transporting the student to and from the alternative program. Transportation is a privilege and should not be abused.

Houston County's Elementary Alternative Program sites are Lake Joy Primary (K-2) and Lake Joy Elementary (3-5).

In-School Suspension (ISS)

In-school suspension is used as an alternative to suspension home. It is a time for students to complete their classroom work, make-up any missed work, and reflect on their actions that resulted in the ISS assignment. We want our students in their classroom, but we want them to make good, responsible decisions.

DISMISSAL

When it is necessary for a student to leave school before 3:30 p.m., the person who enrolled the student in school, or a person designated by the enrolling parent must first sign him/her out in the office. Office personnel will then call the student from their class. Proper identification may be requested of persons making the checkout request. **Students should be picked up no later than 3:50 p.m.**

DRESS CODE

Good personal appearance, appropriate dress, proper behavior, and cleanliness are vital to each member of the school community. Developing good tastes in attire, good grooming habits, and good behavior are a part of the educational program.

Students of the Houston County School District are expected to dress in a manner that is supportive of a positive learning environment that is free of distractions and disruptions. There is a direct correlation between student dress and student behavior. Students will be expected to observe modes of dress, styles of hair, and personal grooming which support the learning environment. The purpose of this dress code is to assure that consistency and interpretation is implemented county-wide, thus providing equitable treatment for all students.

In making a judgment concerning the appropriateness of a student's dress or grooming, the principal should adhere to the guidelines set forth in the procedures that accompany this policy.

Dress Code Enforcement

The principal of the school is charged with the enforcement of the student dress code. The principal is given wide latitude of discretion in the determination of proper or improper dress and behavior of students. Students who are found to be in violation of the dress code are subject to disciplinary action. The principal's actions may include:

Counseling the student,
Warning the student,
Calling parents to bring a change of clothes,
After school detention,
Placing the student in in-school suspension for the remainder of the day,
Suspending the student short-term, or
Recommending long-term suspension (for flagrant or repeated violations).

Dress Code Specifics

General Rules

- Outer clothing which resembles loungewear, pajamas, or underwear is prohibited.
- Fads and styles in dress, which differ extremely from conventionally accepted standards are prohibited.
- Any clothing that is viewed as distracting because of extremes in style, fit, color, pattern, fabric, etc., shall not be permitted. Undergarments may not be exposed at any time.

Specific Rules

Students in Primary-3rd grade may wear tank tops. Shorts appropriate for younger children are permitted.

- Blouses/shirts should be constructed so that the top of the shoulder is covered and is fitted under the arms (no halter tops, tank tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, or bare-shouldered tops of any type will be allowed).
- Blouses/shirts which expose any portion of the waist, hips, or midriff are not allowed. Blouses/shirts which are not appropriate for school include those which are low-cut, see-through, backless, or tube tops.
- Holes in clothing that are excessive in size or amount, are a distraction to the learning environment, or allow skin to show are prohibited.

- In accordance with board policy governing student conduct with regard to bullying, weapons, gangs, and drugs: clothing shall be free of inflammatory, suggestive, racial, or other inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork. This includes offensive words and designs, violence (blood, death, weapons), sex, playboy symbols, hate groups, tobacco products, drugs, and alcohol.
- No clothing or other article may be worn or displayed which may indicate membership in a gang at school or any school function.
- Pants, skirts, shorts, and dresses must be mid-thigh length or longer. Sagging pants are not allowed and pants must be worn at the waist.
- Excessively long shirts must be tucked in.
- When leggings are worn, a dress, shirt, or skirt must be worn over the leggings. The dress, shirt, or skirt must be mid-thigh length or longer.

Accessories

- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times. Cleated shoes are prohibited inside the building. House/bedroom slippers are not acceptable.
- Students may not wear ornaments (jewelry) which pierce the skin such as the nose, lips, tongue, eyelid, etc.
- Students may not wear hats, caps, bandanas, sunglasses, combs, picks, etc., inside the building.

Hair & Grooming

- Hair must be well groomed. Only natural hair coloring will be permitted. Extreme hairstyles and fads that would interfere with the learning process, cause a disruption of the educational environment, or be a health or safety hazard are prohibited.
- Facial hair should be neat, clean, closely trimmed and not be a distraction to the learning environment.

Coats

- Due to variances in physical design of schools, principal's discretion will apply to wearing of outer garments, coats, and jackets.

NOTE: The principal's discretion applies to all of the above.

ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) PROGRAM

The English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program goals are to help students obtain English language proficiency and to meet age and grade appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation. The program aids students to succeed in all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) both socially and academically. The ESOL program is federally mandated and was established to ensure equal access to the school system's instructional program for those students who have limited English proficiency.

Grade Placement for English Learners (ELs)

For elementary and middle schools, placement will be made based on completed formal years of schooling and age appropriateness. Age appropriateness for elementary students is defined as not more than one year below the same-aged native English-speaking peers.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Parents of any student(s) new to Houston County Schools must complete the enrollment process at the Central Registration site located at 410 Bear Country Blvd, Warner Robins, Georgia 31088. Parents need to make an appointment in order for the registration process to flow smoothly.

When a student initially enrolls in the Houston County School District, parents are responsible for providing the following documents:

Birth Certificate	At enrollment
Immunization Record (Georgia Form 3231)	At enrollment
Ear, Eye, Dental Screening (Georgia Form 3300)	At enrollment
Guardianship Papers (if student does not live with natural parents)	At enrollment

Records from Previous School (attendance, transcript, behavior) (Central Registration will make a direct request to the previous school, but the responsibility rests with the parent)	30 days
Proof of Residence (A completed mortgage/closing statement or lease agreement AND utility start services at new address: electric/gas/water Stop services at prior address: (from in state or in county only)	At enrollment
Social Security Number or Waiver or an Application for a Social Security Number	At enrollment
Medical Information which will impact instruction	At enrollment

Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school must be immunized according to the rules and regulations established by the Georgia Department of Public Health. A **Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231)** must be on file. A Georgia physician or health clinic must complete the certificate. Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school. **A child enrolling in a Georgia school for the first time AT ANY GRADE LEVEL must be age-appropriately immunized with all required vaccines.** In addition, those students entering a Georgia public school for the first time must provide a **Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examination (Form 3300)** at enrollment.

NOTE: If immunizations are not appropriate for your child, you may complete the Affidavit of Religious Objection to Immunization form at the school or a Georgia Form 3231 with each medical exemption verified by your child's physician.

Effective July 1, 2014, children born on or after January 1, 2002, who are attending a Georgia public school in grades 8th through 12th must be immunized per Georgia law.

Admission to Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade

A child is eligible for pre-kindergarten if he/she is four years of age on September 1 of the current school year. A child is eligible for enrollment in kindergarten if he/she is five years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year. A child is eligible for enrollment in first grade if he/she is six years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year.

A child who was a legal resident of one or more other states or countries for a period of two years immediately prior to moving to this state and who was legally enrolled in a public kindergarten or first grade, or a kindergarten or first grade accredited by a state or regional association, shall be eligible for enrollment in the general education programs if such child will attain the age of five for kindergarten or six for first grade by December 31 of the fiscal year and is otherwise qualified.

Transfer Students K ~ 5

Students transferring into the Houston County Schools who have become residents of Houston County must furnish evidence of their attendance and a transcript of their school records from the school from which they are transferring. Grade or class placement shall be the responsibility of the principal and shall be based on general achievement demonstrated by previous school transcripts. In general, students transferring into the school district will be placed in the same grade level as in the school from which they transferred. Testing will be required to determine placement of students from home schools and from schools not accredited by a regional accrediting agency or the *Georgia Accrediting Commission*. Contact the principal for additional placement testing information.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

It is the policy of the Houston County School District that the school district shall comply with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act of Georgia. For the purposes of this policy, a "parent" is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. An "eligible student" is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

The Superintendent shall implement procedures whereby every principal is directed to develop a means to notify on an annual basis, parents and eligible students, including parents or eligible students who are disabled or who have a primary or home language other than English of their rights under the FERPA and the Act, either through a student handbook distributed to each student in the school or by any means that are reasonably likely to inform them of their

rights. Generally, a parent or eligible student will be permitted to obtain a copy of the student's education records upon reasonable notice and payment of reasonable copying costs.

Confidentiality of student records shall be preserved while access is provided to parents, eligible students and school officials with legitimate educational interests, as described in the annual parent notice.

With the exception of directory information as defined below, personally identifiable information will not be released by the school district from an educational record without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student, except to the extent authorized by the FERPA and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. 99.31.

The Houston County School District designates certain information from student education records as "directory information." Unless a parent/guardian or eligible student makes a request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated as directory information for the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request. A parent/guardian or eligible student may opt out of disclosure of directory information by notifying the school principal in writing within 10 days of the school year's beginning or enrollment.

Directory Information is as follows:

1. Student's name,
2. Student's month and day of birth;
3. School at which a student is enrolled;
4. Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
5. Weight and height of athletic team members used in information for the public;
6. Dates of attendance at schools within the Houston County School District;
7. Awards or honors received during the time the student is enrolled in the Houston County School District;
8. Photographs used to publicize awards, honors, extracurricular activities, sports or school promotions;
9. Grade.

Student records will be forwarded without further notice to parents/guardians or eligible students to any school within or outside the Houston County School District upon request of the school where a student is enrolling.

Local units of administration shall not withhold any student record because of nonpayment of fees. However, schools may withhold report cards, diplomas, or certificates of progress until fees are paid.

FIELD TRIPS

The Houston County School District permits field trips only with the approval of the Superintendent or designee. A field trip is defined as a planned educational experience which meets one or more curricular objectives and is directly related to classroom instruction and in which expected educational benefits cannot be met through any other resource.

It shall be permissible for classes under the supervision of the classroom teacher to make trips of an educational nature to points of interest in accordance with the above guidelines. In all cases, adequate adult supervision must be provided. Written parent permission is required for all students who participate in activities away from the school. The principal must receive written / electronic approval of the trip from the Superintendent or designee prior to permission forms or information relating to a trip being communicated to parents. Students participating in school-sponsored field trips should be transported to and from the field trip location with the school group on the bus used by the school. No students should be transported to or from field trips by parents or guardians.

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The elementary gifted education program is a state program designed to meet the educational needs of students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual ability, talent, and/or creativity. Teaching and learning focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation in one or more of the following content areas: mathematics, science, Reading and social studies.

Gifted eligibility criteria are set by the state of Georgia. Students obtain eligibility through three of the four established criteria in the areas of achievement, mental ability, creativity, and motivation. The referral and placement process is coordinated by the school's Gifted Eligibility Team and county testing diagnosticians for consideration for formal evaluation. Parent permission will be obtained before any formal evaluation is begun, and parents will be notified in writing regarding their child's eligibility for the gifted education program.

Definitions

Gifted Student - In Georgia, a gifted education student is defined as one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields and needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her ability(ies).

Differentiated Curriculum- Gifted students need the opportunity to work through the curriculum at a faster pace and need less time on basics and revision. The curriculum is differentiated in complexity and acceleration, which offers a variety of options for students who differ in abilities, knowledge and skills. In a differentiated classroom, teachers differentiate **content, process, product, environment** and **assessments** according to a student's **readiness, interest** and **learning profile.**

A differentiated curriculum for gifted learners includes, but not limited to the following expectations:

- **Content**-curriculum standards the student is expected to master incorporating related complex and challenging support materials that:
    - Requires intellectual struggle
    - Utilizes primary documents
    - Integrates research skills and methods
    - Incorporates relevant and real-life experiences
    - Integrates interdisciplinary connections
- **Process**- instructional strategies designed to ensure that students acquire a deep understanding of the curriculum standards by:
    - Emphasizing higher-order thinking, problem-solving, and communications skills
    - Fostering self-initiated and self-directed learning
    - Promoting creative application of ideas
    - Modeling and encouraging academic discussion
- **Products**- vehicles through which students demonstrate and extend what they have learned through demonstrating a developmentally appropriate capacity for:
    - Self-directed learning
    - Meaningful collaboration
    - Effective problem solving of challenging and complex issues
    - Effective communication
    - Social and emotional understanding of "self" relative to community, culture, and physical environment
- **Environment-** physical setting and work conditions modified to:
    - Change the actual work space for students
    - Allow flexible time
    - Provide opportunities for independent study and in-depth research
    - Provide opportunities for mentorship
- **Assessment**- formative and summative on and off-grade-level monitoring to document student mastery of curriculum standards and learning levels such as:
    - Pre/post assessments
    - Self-assessment through use of rubrics
    - Creation of goal-based checklist
    - Conferencing, commentary, and qualitative feedback (Cobb, 2012)
- **Readiness**- a student's entry point relative to a particular understanding or skill
- **Learning Profile**- how an individual student learns

Referral

Students currently enrolled in the Houston County schools may be referred for testing at any time during the school year. All referrals will be reviewed by the schools' eligibility team for consideration for formal evaluation. Parent permission will be obtained before any formal evaluation is begun, and parents will be notified in writing regarding their child's eligibility for the gifted program. Teachers and parents may make referrals by completing a basic Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors (TABS) form for review by the school eligibility team.

Eligibility

1. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either
    a. score at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria approved by the state of Georgia in Achievement, or
    b. qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

2. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet the criterion score on a norm-related test. Information is collected in each of the four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

3. Any test score used to establish eligibility must be current within two-calendar years.

4. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility may not be used in any other data category.

Multiple-Criteria Assessment Process

A student must meet the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

Mental Ability- Students score at or above the 96th percentile on a composite or full-scale score or appropriate component score on an approved nationally age normed mental ability test.

Achievement- Students score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of the MAP Assessment.

Creativity- Students score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a norm-referenced test of creative thinking.

Motivation- Students shall receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale.

Continued Participation

As per the Georgia Department of Education, students must perform at or above a certain level to continue to receive gifted education services. The continuation policy includes a probationary period in which a student who fails to maintain satisfactory performance in gifted education classes shall continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status.

The continuation policy provides for a final review prior to discontinuing gifted education services for students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in gifted education classes during the probationary period and criteria for resuming gifted education services for such students.

Reciprocity

Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria for gifted education services in one Local Educational Agency (LEA) is considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any LEA within the state of Georgia. The receiving school or district should carefully review the student's gifted education records. If gifted education records are not available, the transferring district should be contacted to obtain the student's gifted education records before placing the student into the gifted education program. The receiving school or district should honor the continuation policy of the transferring school.

There is no mandated reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of military personnel. Therefore, a student who is eligible for services in one state is not automatically eligible in the state of Georgia. The receiving school should complete an eligibility evaluation on out-of-state transfer students. To aid in the process of determining Georgia gifted eligibility, the following documents should be presented to the student's new school: a current eligibility report, recent standardized test scores and work samples. Recommendations from teachers are also helpful.

The Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation relating to the education of children of military families that impact the gifted education reciprocity of students whose households include an active member of the United States uniformed services, veteran of the United States uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged or a member of the United States uniformed services that died on active duty. The goal of the legislation is to maximize a student's educational continuity despite the frequent movement across states and school districts. Nothing in this code section precludes/prevents the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.

Curriculum

Houston County implements the Advanced Content delivery model based on Georgia's Programming Standards for Meeting the Needs of Gifted & High-Ability Learners and state guidelines. Classes in gifted and talented education are courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students. Houston County employs rigorous and relevant curricula K-12 to accommodate the range of academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners. State-adopted standards are articulated and applied in differentiated curricula that match the identified academic needs, abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles of K-12 gifted learners in both the regular classroom and gifted education delivery systems. The curriculum enriches, extends, and enhances learning in gifted learners' areas of strength.

For further information, contact the Gifted Lead Teacher, counselor, or instructional administrator at your child's school.

GRADING

Purpose and Guidelines

The purpose of the report to parents is for the teacher to communicate the student's progress. Grading should be a professional assessment of a child's progress based on standards. Teachers may assess student performance based on written assignments, observations, presentations, projects, and conversations.

Documentation of progress may be maintained through formative assessments, checklists, rubrics, conference notes, anecdotal records, etc. It is also important for students to be aware of their progress and to receive immediate feedback when they are assessed.

A second purpose of the report to parents and grading is to utilize assessment procedures as an instructional tool. If the assessment procedure reveals weaknesses, instructional strategies or interventions should be implemented to encourage mastery of skills and concepts.

Pre-Kindergarten

Houston County School District's Pre-K classrooms use a formative assessment called Work Sampling System Online to measure children's progress across 69 indicators in seven domains of learning. Teachers assess children throughout the year and use the data to individualize instruction and to share Narrative Summary Reports with parents during conferences in December and May.

Kindergarten, First, and Second Grades

The kindergarten Record of Progress is based on the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (GKIDS) and the state mandated curriculum. The first and second grade Record of Progress is based on student progress toward meeting select state standards. Reports are sent out at nine-week intervals, and parents are asked to come to a conference after the first report card grading period. Conferences may be scheduled with the child's teacher at any time throughout the year.

For grades K-2, the following ratings are used to show the student's level of progress toward meeting the grade level standards and expectations.

ELA and Math Academic Performance Levels
NA - Not Assessed At This Time
1 - Grade Level Standard Not Yet Demonstrated
2 - Progressing Toward Grade Level Standard
3 - Consistently Meets Grade Level Standard

Learning and Social Skills/Art, Music, and P.E./Science and Social Studies
1 - Area of Concern
2 - Developing
3 - Consistently Demonstrated

Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grades

Grades are reflective of student progress toward meeting the requirements of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Reports are sent out at nine-week intervals. Conferences may be scheduled with the child's teacher at any time throughout the year. Below is a list of subjects that should be graded on the report card:

- Reading
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Factors Affecting Achievement

Grading System for Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grades

A 100 - 90 **B** 89 - 80 **C** 79 - 70 **F** - Failure (Below 70)

The areas of art, music, physical education, and conduct will be graded by **S**, **N**, and **U**. "Satisfactory" or **S** will represent that the student is progressing at a satisfactory rate according to his/her developmental level. "Needs Improvement" or **N** represents that the student's progress is in the satisfactory range; however, specific deficiencies which could lead to further difficulties have been noted. "Unsatisfactory" or **U** will represent that the student has accomplished less than 70% of the expectations of the area graded.

Additional Reporting Information for Grades K-5

Writing progress is reported on specific types of writing taught during the assessment period. This assessment is rated based on writing the student can produce independently. These ratings are determined by grade-level rubrics that describe specific writing expectations.

Grade-level expectations for independent reading indicate the target for each grade level. A student's reading level is reported with a letter A-Z, indicating progress along a reading continuum.

A transfer student entering from an accredited school during a grading period will be given credit for work done at his/her former school. Grades will be averaged with those assigned at the receiving school.

Lowering grades for disciplinary reasons is prohibited in the Houston County School District.

Report Cards/ Progress Reports / Deficiency Notices

Parents should sign and return report cards the following instructional day. A parent's signature indicates that the parent has received and reviewed the report card.

Elementary school Records of Progress (K-2) and Report Cards (3-5) are sent home every nine weeks (about 45 days) with Progress Reports issued mid-way if there are major concerns with a student's performance. Progress reports

(deficiency slips) may also be sent home to parents at other times throughout the year if the teacher needs to communicate that a student's progress is unsatisfactory. Parents should discuss these deficiency reports with the student, schedule a conference if desired, and promptly sign and return the deficiency report to the teacher. The parent will be notified if his/her child is in danger of receiving an unsatisfactory grade in art, music, or physical education.

HOMEWORK

It is the philosophy of the Houston County School District that homework is an extension of the school curriculum. It is designed to be a constructive tool in the teaching and learning process; and, as such, can be an effective aid to student learning. Students will have a degree of homework on a regular basis for the following reasons:

1. To help students develop independent study skills
2. To reinforce learning which has taken place at school
3. To bring the home and school closer together
4. To relate school learning to out-of-school interests

Parents are encouraged to:

1. Show a positive interest in homework as well as in all other schoolwork
2. Provide children with a suitable place and quiet time for homework
3. Cooperate with the teacher to make homework more effective
4. Serve as consultants for problems and avoid doing the homework for the child
5. Allow for a time-out if the session becomes too emotional or tense

Students are encouraged to read a minimum of 20 minutes daily independently or with a family member.

HONOR ROLL/HONORABLE MENTION

Students in grades 3-5 may achieve Honor Roll or Honorable Mention status each grading period by meeting the following criteria:

Honor Roll: To qualify for Honor Roll, students must:

1. Earn "A's" in all academic subjects.
2. Earn Satisfactory (S) in Art, Music and Physical Education.

Honorable Mention: To qualify for Honorable Mention, students must:

1. Earn "A's" with no more than one B in all academic subjects.
2. Earn Satisfactory (S) in Art, Music and Physical Education.

INSURANCE

At the beginning of the school year an independent insurance company offers student accident insurance coverage to students. Two plans are available: School-day coverage or twenty-four (24) hour coverage. Insurance forms will be available in the school office or distribution center for parents who request them. Checks should be made payable to the insurance company. **You are encouraged to carefully look at this affordable insurance as it definitely covers any accidents occurring at school.** The Houston County School District's insurance does not cover your child if they have an accident at school.

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The Houston County School District recognizes the importance of making advanced technology and increased access to learning opportunities available to students and staff. The Houston County School District believes that a "technology rich" classroom significantly enhances both the teaching and learning process. As resources permit, informational technology services shall be made available in schools.

Houston County School District personnel shall take all available precautions to restrict access to controversial materials, while recognizing that it is impossible to control all material which might inadvertently be discovered by users on a global network.

Internet

Only the HCBE Network provided by the district should be used to access the internet while on campus. Personal internet connective devices such as but not limited to cell phones / cell network adapters should not be used to access outside internet sources at any time. Personal tablets and/or laptops are not permitted on campus because all students will be assigned district issued electronic devices.

Use of Electronic Devices

Students are permitted to possess cell phones and other electronic devices while on school property and during school functions. These devices may be utilized as part of the instructional process as directed staff members. Recreational use of these devices will be in accordance with procedures established by the building principal. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Houston County schools will not be responsible for lost or stolen personal communication or personal electronic devices.

Students may not use tape recorders, video cameras, cell phones, or other electronic devices to record classroom instruction/activities. Exceptions to this rule may be granted, for valid reason(s), at the discretion of the teacher with written approval by the building principal. Care must be taken to protect the privacy rights of students.

Purpose

The purpose of informational technology is to facilitate communications in support of research and education by providing access to multiple resources. Use by any student or staff member must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the Houston County School District. The State of Georgia has passed laws which govern the use of computers and related technology. The Georgia Computer Systems Protection Act specifically forbids computer misuse and abuse. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) enacted by Congress in 2000 also provides guidance and regulations concerning students' computer use and access to content over the Internet.

Authorized User

An authorized user for the purpose of this policy will be defined as any employee, student, or guest of the Houston County School District who has been issued and assigned a log-in account. By using the computing resources of the Houston County School District, the user agrees to abide by the guidelines and rules governing this.

Terms and Conditions

An individual's use of the computing resources of the Houston County School District is not an absolute personal right; rather, it is a privilege, conditional on the individual's compliance with state and federal laws, the Houston County School District's policies and regulations, school regulations, and satisfactory behavior involving technology. Inappropriate use, including any violation of these conditions and policies, may result in cancellation of the privilege. The Houston County School District has the authority to determine appropriate use and may discipline, deny, revoke, or suspend any user's access at any time based upon the determination of inappropriate use.

It is the intent of Houston County School District to adhere to the provisions of copyright laws as they relate to informational technology. Transmission of any material in violation of United States Law or state regulations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by patent.

Users are not allowed to purchase, download or load software without written permission from the HCBOE Technology Services Center or Director of Information Technology.

Use for commercial activities, product advertisement, or political lobbying is prohibited.

The use of all school and central office networks shall be for the exchange of information in order to promote and support educational excellence in the school district.

Encounter of Controversial Material

The Houston County School District has a right and will make every effort to control the content of data accessed through the Internet by the use of firewalls and filtering software and teacher monitoring.

Users may encounter material which is controversial. It is the user's responsibility not to initiate access to controversial material purposely. If such material is accessed accidentally, the student/teacher shall notify an adult teacher/supervisor immediately.

Vandalism and Harassment

1. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, modify, or destroy data of a system or another user.
2. Harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user or the interference in another user's work.
3. Vandalism and harassment will result in cancellation of user privileges.

GUIDELINES

Network Guidelines

1. Users will not post, publish, send or intentionally receive offensive messages or pictures from any source, including but not limited to any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, sexist or illegal material. Access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 shall be restricted.
2. Users will not transmit or download information or software in violation of copyright laws. Only resources for which the author has given expressed consent for on-line distribution can be used. All users should consider the source of any information they obtain as well as the validity of that information.
3. Posting messages and attributing them to another user is prohibited.
4. Downloading of non-instructional materials from the Internet is unacceptable.
5. Disclaimer:

   The Houston County School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for services through the Internet. It denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet services. The school district shall not be responsible for any damages a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruption. Use of information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk.

E-Mail Guidelines

1. All users are expected to abide by accepted rules of e-mail user etiquette. These rules include but are not limited to the following: be polite, never send or encourage others to send abusive messages, and use appropriate language. E-mails are not guaranteed to be private.
2. Mass distribution e-mails must be approved by a school administrator.
3. Opening and forwarding any e-mail attachments from unknown sources and/or that may contain viruses is prohibited.
4. No Internet e-mail is allowed except for that provided by the Houston County School District.

Social Networking

For the purpose of this policy, social networking shall be defined as any web-based program where students and faculty may engage in conversational exchange of information. These facilities shall include, but are not limited to, messaging, blogs, and wikis.

Social networking shall only be permitted to be accessed from within the Houston County Educational Network with the supervision/monitoring by a teacher or school administrator.

Authorized users may access the network via their personal user ID and not that of someone else. Users should not share their personal user IDs with any other person.

School Responsibilities

Schools shall ensure that all faculty, staff and students are aware of the rights and responsibilities of acceptable informational technology use contained in the Houston County School District policies.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students will observe the standard of courtesy and behavior consistent with the practices and policies of the Houston County School District when sending or publishing messages or transmitting data or other information on the Internet.
2. Students will access the network using their personal ID and not that of someone else. Students will not share their user IDs, passwords, user log-on accounts with others and must make all efforts to safeguard any information from unauthorized users.
3. Students may not attempt to access information for which they are not authorized.
4. Students will use informational technology for instructional purposes only as it relates to classroom and co-curricular assignments and activities. Students will not use the system for any purpose if it is in violation of the law.
5. Students must receive permission from a teacher or designated personnel prior to accessing the Internet or any other specific file or application.
6. Any student who identifies a security problem must notify an adult teacher, supervisor or administrator immediately.
7. Students may not have access to an employee's workstation under an employee ID and may be subject to disciplinary action if such attempt is made.
8. Students are violating network security if they enter the system under a user ID other than one that is assigned to them and may be subject to disciplinary action.
9. Students disconnecting network components are guilty of harming network integrity and/or security, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
10. Students are violating network security if they alter programs or data on any network file server or any system's hard disk, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
11. Students are violating network security and software copyright laws if they knowingly use illegal copies of software on any school computer, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
12. Students purposely infecting any HCSD computer with a malicious code will be subject to disciplinary action.

Penalties for Improper Internet Use

Any violations of the Internet procedures should be immediately reported to a supervising staff member. Any user violating these rules or any other state or federal laws or classroom or school district policies is subject to lose network and/or computer use privileges. Furthermore, school disciplinary action, including in-school suspension and/or suspension or expulsion may be imposed.

If the actions of a user cause or contribute to the loss of service, applications, and/or data, school disciplinary action commensurate with the magnitude of the infraction shall be administered. In the event that such action causes the need for technical assistance to restore the service, application or data, restitution may be charged.

Any unauthorized access or breach of state or federal law is subject to criminal prosecution.

Parent and student Internet Agreements are sent home to all parents. They must be signed and returned to school.

LIBRARY BOOKS

Students are responsible for library books checked out just as they are responsible for textbooks issued; therefore, they should be careful not to damage or misplace library books. Parents will be contacted for lost or damaged books for payment. Failure to pay for lost or damaged books could result in the withholding of report cards at the end of the school year until fees are paid. Schools may also opt to or restrict students from purchasing items from the school store, field day, etc. until fees are paid.

LOST AND FOUND

Each school will have a designated lost and found area. Any article marked with a student's name is immediately returned to the student. **All hats, coats, jackets, lunch boxes, books, etc., should be plainly marked with the student's name.** At the end of the grading period, all articles not claimed in the lost and found will be donated to a local charity.

If your child loses an item at school, encourage him/her to check the lost and found. Parents are also encouraged to check the lost and found for missing articles.

LUNCH/BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Over the past two years, it has been our pleasure to serve meals at no cost to all students, regardless of income. However, the federal funding required to continue feeding all students at no cost for the upcoming school year has not been granted at this time.

Houston County School District offers fun, healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs $1.75. Lunch costs $2.50 for elementary and primary and $2.75 for middle and high. Reduced price is $.30 for breakfast and $.40 for lunch. Parents are encouraged to pay for student meals by the week or month as meal charging is not encouraged. A monthly payment schedule may be found by visiting https://www.hcbe.net/snppayments. Money can be collected in the lunchroom by the lunchroom staff. All checks should be made payable to Houston County School Nutrition or HCSNP. Please write your child's assigned lunch number on the check or write it on the envelope if cash is sent. You can also pay online at www.myschoolbucks.com.

Free and reduced meals will still be available to those who qualify and to those that attend CEP Schools, which can be found at https://www.hcbe.net/snpcommunityeligibility. More information on school meals including pricing, free and reduced meal applications, and Q&A's can be found by visiting https://www.hcbe.net/schoolnutrition.

For the school year 2022-2023, Houston County School District is requesting all families to complete a Free and Reduced Meal Application. Our system receives a variety of funding, which is linked to the completion of this form. The fastest to complete the form is to visit https://www.nlappscloud.com.

Meals for Houston Virtual Students

Meals will be provided for Houston Virtual Students. More information on this process is provided in the Houston Virtual Handbook.

MONEY

It is recommended that students only bring enough money to school for daily purchases such as breakfast and lunch monies, school pictures, book fair, etc. The school will not be responsible for missing money.

PARTIES AT SCHOOL

There are only two (2) approved parties during the school year. They are as follows: Holiday party in December and the End-of-School Year party. Valentine's Day is celebrated at "break time" on February 14th. Birthday parties will not be celebrated at school nor will party invitations be distributed during instructional time, nor will staff assist in distributing invitations to private parties. Also, lists of students will not be provided due to BOE policy JHD, Student Social Events.

PERSONAL ITEMS AT SCHOOL

School personnel are not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal items belonging to students; therefore, students should not bring toys, electronic games, or other personal items to school. At the end of the grading period, all articles not claimed in lost and found will be donated to a local charity. It will be helpful to write your child's name on personal items.

Security and Damages

Responsibility to keep the device secure rests with the individual owner. **The Houston County School District, its staff, and its employees are not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus.** If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal artifacts that are impacted in similar situations. It is recommended that covers (decals) and other custom touches are used to physically identify your device from others. Additionally, protective cases for technology are encouraged

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH

In compliance with GA DOE Rule 160-4-2-.12, all Houston County elementary schools provide at least 90 clock hours of instruction in health and physical education at each grade level (K-5). Classes are taught by certified teachers who

implement a comprehensive program. If a student is unable to participate in physical education, a signed note from the parent must be provided that indicates the reason and date(s) for the excuse. A physician's note is required for conditions requiring the student's non-participation for more than one week. Teachers will work to make accommodations and modifications as necessary to include all children. Although no elementary child may be permanently exempt from physical education, alternative or adaptive activities may be provided when appropriate.

PROGRAMS FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

The Houston County School District provides special education programs for students eligible for services. Information regarding special education services may be obtained from the school and/or the Office of Student Services at the Central Office located in Perry.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotions are made on the basis of the ability of the pupil to do the work at the next level of instruction. Promotion and retention decisions will be made by school principals and teachers. Parents, teachers, the student involved and other concerned persons must be included in the discussions leading to a decision. If any decision to retain or to plan for a longer-than-average time in a particular series of grades occurs, the school will notify the parents prior to the school year's final report card. Any desire to change grade placement for the betterment of the child must be discussed with parents.

In order to help assure appropriate achievement of students as they progress through their school experience, the Houston County School District establishes the following basic promotion and retention criteria for use in the school district.

Promotion of students annually is desirable; however, it is recognized that under certain circumstances retention must be considered for some students. Retention of elementary school students shall conform to the following:

1. Every effort shall be made to identify potential students for retention as early as possible during the school year and to work with the student's parents to improve academic performance.
2. The results of state mandated assessments may be considered in addition to grades, and other local requirements for promotion. Assessment results shall also be used to determine a student's need for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction. The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the state mandated assessments, but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local school district.
3. When a child is retained, appropriate interventions will be utilized to accommodate his/her individual needs within resources available.
4. *Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) shall establish promotion standards for students with disabilities.
5. Local Pre-K providers are not authorized to allow students to repeat Pre-K without the approval of Bright from the Start: Georgia DECAL.

Promotion of students in grades 3 and 5 shall follow requirements set forth in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2.11:

7. Grade 3 - No third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not achieve the minimum performance level for promotion on the Reading state mandated assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.
8. Grade 5 - No fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not achieve the minimum performance level for promotion on the Reading and mathematics state mandated assessments and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends.
9. For 3rd and 5th grade students who do not meet expectations in English/Language Arts and in mathematics on the Georgia Milestones Assessment: An opportunity will be provided for intense intervention prior to the state mandated assessment retest. If the student still does not meet expectations on the retest, the student will be retained. The parent may appeal the retention to the school principal. A committee made up of the principal, the teacher, and the parent will make the best decision regarding the promotion/retention of the student. The entire committee must reach a consensus regarding the decision. The committee's decision is final.

Retention of Students in Grades 3, 5, and 8

1. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the individual student scores, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student regarding the following:

    a. The student's below-grade-level performance on the state mandated assessments;
    b. The student has one opportunity to retest in the specified testing area;
    c. The specific retest(s) to be given the student and testing date(s);
    d. The opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the state mandated assessment; and
    e. The possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next school year.

2. When a student does not perform at the minimum performance level on the second opportunity to take the state mandated assessment, the principal or designee shall retain the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11.

3. For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.

All other provisions of Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11 shall apply.

For retention of students in grades 3 and 5 who do not meet state mandated assessment performance levels for promotion, parents must submit appeals to the school principal.

The school principal has final authority over promotion and retention decisions in the school, and decisions will be made based on district policies and procedures.

Students will only be retained for academic deficiencies. School administrators and teachers are not allowed to retain students based on parent requests to retain a child for social or other non-academic reasons. If a student has met local and state academic requirements for promotion, the student will be promoted.

SAFETY PLANS AND DRILLS

Safety plans have been developed for all schools and are routinely assessed to ensure that best practices are in place to protect our children. Teachers and students are taught what to do in the event of fire, severe weather, and school lockdowns. We practice so that our students, faculty, and staff have the knowledge to protect themselves and so they know what to do if a situation arises. Our communication system is capable of calling every parent in a matter of minutes to help keep you fully informed.

Throughout the school year, our teachers will be sharing and practicing our safety plans with the students. It will be handled in a low key way, but in a way that ensures that everyone understands what to do in an emergency situation.

In the event of an emergency, the students and staff in our district are our first priority. These procedures and practices are designed for their protection.

Fire/Tornado/Emergency/Bus Evacuation Drills

Students, teachers, and other School District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. The following safety drills are practiced:

- **Fire Drills** - These are held nine (9) times a year. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or marshals quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

- **Tornado/Severe Weather** - Tornado/severe weather drills are held two times each year. Schools practice the procedures in order to ensure students know where to go and what to do.

    A tornado watch: conditions are favorable for a tornado or severe weather.
    A tornado warning: tornado has been sighted.

If a tornado warning is issued, bus dismissal may be delayed. If students are en route to or from school and a tornado warning is issued, buses are required to stop at the nearest school and students/drivers take shelter there until the warning has passed.

- **Bomb Threat** - Procedures are based on recommendations from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA).

- **Lockdowns** - Code Yellow/Code Red drills- These drills will take place two times each year. When schools have been placed on an actual lockdown, you will be notified through our School Messenger phone system after all information is available or the school is no longer in lockdown.

- **Bus Evacuation** - Safe bus evacuation is practiced two times a year during physical education classes with all students.

SCHOOL PICTURES

During the school year individual school pictures will be made of all students and will be made available to parents and students for purchase. No student is expected to purchase any pictures nor will a student be penalized in any way for not purchasing pictures.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Houston County School District will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form by any person.

It is the policy of the Houston County School District to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any person to harass a student, an employee, or any other person through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to harass other students through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

1. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of employment or an individual's education;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for promotion or academic decisions affecting that individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic or work environment.

Any person who has knowledge of or suspects that sexual harassment is occurring within the district shall immediately make a report to a school administrator or the District Title IX Coordinator.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the respondent, will be respected consistent with the district's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment shall be immediately reported to the District Title IX Coordinator or a school administrator, be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated by the principal, the District Title IX Coordinator or the Superintendent or his/her designee. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action, including discharge.

For additional information, also see "Title IX Non-Discrimination" in the student handbook.

STUDENT CLUBS

Many schools have created opportunities for students to join clubs. Their purpose is to focus on areas of common interests for enhancement and enrichment. Students that belong to clubs will many times feel a sense of school spirit and ownership. Membership is voluntary. The clubs meet before or after school, and no instructional time is lost. All club activities shall be scheduled outside of the instructional day. Examples of clubs may be *chorus, jump-rope team, recycling,* etc.

Student Extracurricular Activities Notification

Each school principal shall implement procedures to annually notify all parents or guardians of all school-sponsored extracurricular activities, organizations, and clubs in which students may participate and of the right of the parent or guardian to prohibit their child's participation. Notification to parents and guardians shall be provided annually via the student handbook and shall include the name of the extracurricular activity, student organization or club; information regarding the purpose; and activities or national affiliation of the extracurricular activity, organization or club. Any membership or financial requirements for a student to join or become a member of the activity, organization, or club shall be included in the information provided.

No student shall be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity, organization, or club if the student's parent or legal guardian has indicated in writing that the parent will not allow the student to participate and has provided a copy of such written notice to the school principal.

For school clubs formed after publication of the student handbook, parents or guardians must approve their student's participation by submitting written permission to the school principal.

School extracurricular activities, organizations or clubs for purposes of this policy are those that are supervised or sponsored by a School District employee designated by the principal and that meet in school facilities.

STUDENT OR PARENT GRIEVANCE

All parties are encouraged to solve issues at the lowest level prior to filing a formal grievance. The process below is a formalized and much more serious step to helping resolve conflicts.

Level I
The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the principal within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. Any witness or other evidence should be provided at this time. The administrator will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

Level II
A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the principal may appeal to the Deputy Superintendent by filing a written request to meet with the Superintendent's Designee. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Richard Rogers, Deputy Superintendent
Houston County Board of Education
1100 Main Street
Perry, GA 31069

This request must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the principal.

The Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

Level III
A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent/the Superintendent Designee may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Superintendent. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next regularly scheduled BOE meeting, not less than seven (7) days thereafter.

STUDENT SERVICES/ SECTION 504 - NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS

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

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

Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
1100 Main Street
Perry, Georgia 31069
(478) 988-6200 ext. 3376
Fax: (478)-988-6399 zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net

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

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school district's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school district will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school district regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school district's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school district's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school district's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

STUDENT SERVICES/ SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

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

d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
e. The requested reasons for review.
f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

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

3. Mediation: The school district may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school district must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school district will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.
4. Hearing Procedures:
    a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
    b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school district, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
    c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
    d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses, and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
    e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R. §104.34). One or more representatives of the school district, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
    f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
    g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
    h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
    i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
    j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
    k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
    l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school district unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
    m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and approved by the impartial review official or just cause is shown shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.
5. Decision: The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.
6. Review: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

STUDENT SERVICES/ SECTION 504 PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Although the below steps are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level, the parent/student has the right to by-pass these steps at any time and request an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you at your own expense. The impartial Hearing Officer will be selected by the district. Hearing requests must be made to the System 504 Coordinator identified in Step II below.

Step I

The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. Any witness or other evidence should be provided at this time. The administrator will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

Step II

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the District Section 504 Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the District Section 504 Coordinator. This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the school principal. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Houston County Board of Education
1100 Main Street
Perry, GA 31069
Phone: (478)988-6200
Fax: (478)-988-6399 zabrina.cannady@hcbe.net

Upon receipt of the written statement, the Section 504 Coordinator will schedule a meeting to attempt resolution of the concerns. The District Section 504 Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

Step III

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the District Section 504 Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Mark Scott, Office of the Superintendent
Houston County Board of Education
1100 Main Street
Perry, GA 31069
(478)988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the District Section 504 Coordinator. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next regular scheduled BOE meeting, not less than seven (7) days thereafter.

STUDENT SERVICES/ SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Houston County School District operates in strict adherence to policies and procedures set forth in IDEA and the State Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Special Education. The state rules, as well as parental rights may be referred to online at the following address:

http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Special-Education-Rules.aspx

What is Child Find?

The purpose of Child Find is to identify, locate, and evaluate children and youth, birth to age 21, who are suspected of, or have a disability or developmental delay. Houston County Schools serve children ages 3 through 21 with identified special education needs.

How can children be referred?
A referral may be made by anyone who has a concern about a child's development. All referrals are considered confidential. The parent retains the right to refuse services. Children may be referred by any of the following:

- Parents/legal guardians/foster parents
- Other family members
- Physicians/health care providers
- Preschool programs
- School district personnel
- Community agencies
- Private school personnel
- Others who are concerned about a child's development

When should a child be referred to Child Find?
A child should be referred when:

- A health or medical disorder interferes with development or learning.
- A child seems to have difficulty seeing or hearing.
- A child appears to have social, emotional or behavioral difficulties that affect his/her ability to learn.
- A child has a diagnosed progressive or degenerative condition that will eventually impair or impede the child's ability to learn.
- A child seems to have difficulty understanding directions like others that are his/her age.
- A child's speech is not understandable to family or friends.
- A child has difficulty with reading, math, or other school subjects.

Where can I find out more about Child Find?
For a preschool aged child, with a chronological age of 3 through 5, who has or may have a developmental disability, please contact Student Services at 478-988-6200 ext. 1023

Parents of students, kindergarten through 12th grade, who suspect their child may have a disability, should contact the teacher, principal or the chairperson of the school's Student Support Team.

What is Special Education and who is eligible for services?
Special Education is instruction designed to meet the unique learning strengths and needs of individual students with disabilities from birth through age 21. A child must be evaluated and identified as having a disability to be eligible for Special Education and/or related services. Programs are provided for students in all disability areas recognized by the State of Georgia. Disability categories are: Autism spectrum disorder, Deaf/blind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Significant Developmental Delay, Specific Learning Disability, Speech/language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment. Once identified as eligible for special education services, a student will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) put into place.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)
The IEP is a legal document written for students determined to need special education services. This document addresses the unique abilities and needs and how the student will access the general education curriculum. This includes the special education and related services needed to participate in the educational environment. The IEP is developed by the IEP team. The IEP team is a group of individuals that are responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a child with a disability. The IEP team includes the following participants: the parents or guardian of the child, the LEA, not less than one regular education teacher, and related services providers when appropriate.

A *Quick Guide to the IEP* can be found at the following address:

http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Sample-Special-Education-Forms.aspx

From this page, you will need to select the "Quick Guide to IEP" to access the document.

If you would like a further explanation of any of this information, you may contact Mrs. Kristi Lee Arrington, Director of Student Services, at the Houston County School District at (478) 988-6216 or by email at jenny.millward@hcbe.net.

You may ask for assistance from the Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Supports and Services, Suite 1870, Twin Towers East, Atlanta, Georgia 30334-5010, (404) 656-3963 or 1-800-311-3627 or www.gadoe.org. Regional assistance can be found by contacting the Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) by phone (1-800-282-7552), or through their website at www.glrs.org.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

Student Support Teams are problem solving teams and are required to be in every public school in Georgia. Student Support Teams function within Tier 3 of Georgia's Pyramid of Interventions, which is the framework for Response to Intervention. Georgia currently utilizes a three tier model. Students in grades K through 12 who have learning, speech, and/or behavioral problems may receive support at Tier 3 with research-based interventions to address skill deficits. Monitoring student progress enables the team to determine if the interventions are increasing the expected skills. Parents should be invited to participate in SST/Tier 3 meetings. Student Support Teams are a function of general education.

TESTING PROGRAM

A statewide testing program is established in Georgia to facilitate instructional planning, to provide feedback to students and parents, and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs. **The Houston County School District's Assessment and Accountability Department provides support to schools for the implementation of state mandated assessments. Since assessments are an integral part of learning, and play a key role in informing instruction, the Assessment and Accountability department works directly with the Teaching and Learning Department as well as other district level departments. This department supports schools and Central Office personnel with training, data analysis, assessment use and assessment strategies.**

Information about assessments and the calendar for 2022-23 school year can be found on the Houston County website at: https://www.hcbe.net/assessmentaccountability.

TEXTBOOKS/LEARNING DEVICES

Houston County School District provides all textbooks and learning devices to students. Students will be responsible for the textbooks and learning devices assigned to them. The following guidelines and expectations apply to students' use of textbooks and learning devices:

1. Students must pay for textbooks and learning devices that are lost or damaged beyond normal wear or repair.
2. All books and learning devices will be barcoded. Barcodes should not be removed from books and learning devices. Books will not be accepted with the barcode removed or damaged.
3. Students will be charged the purchase price for books if the barcode is missing or damaged.
4. Students will pay the replacement cost for any lost/damaged books, learning devices, chargers, and protective cases.
5. Charges for damaged books are assessed by the principal according to the book's condition when issued and the extent of the damages.
6. A student's failure to pay for lost or damaged books, media materials, and learning devices will result in the withholding of report cards.
7. Students should not place stickers, drawings, or other markings on books, learning devices, and protective coverings. Students will be assessed fees for altering books, learning devices, and protective coverings in this manner.
8. Replacement textbooks and learning devices will not be issued until payment has been made for lost or damaged materials. A textbook and learning device price list will be made available to parents of students who lose or damage materials.

TITLE I/TITLE II PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Although the below steps are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level, the parent/student has the right to bypass these steps at any time and request an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you at your own expense. The impartial Hearing Officer will be selected by the district. Hearing requests must be made to the Director of Federal Programs identified in Step II below.

Step I
The complaint shall be presented orally or in writing to the school principal within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. Any witness or other evidence should be provided at this time. The administrator will conduct an investigation and render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

Step II
A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the Director of Federal Programs by submitting a written statement of complaint to the Director of Federal Programs. This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the school principal. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Dana Morris, Director of Federal Programs
Houston County Board of Education
1100 Main Street
Perry, GA 31069
Phone: (478)988-6200
Fax: (478)988-6220 danah.morris@hcbe.net

Upon receipt of the written statement, the Director of Federal Programs will schedule a meeting to attempt resolution of the concerns. The Director of Federal Programs will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting.

Step III
A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of Federal Programs may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Dr. Mark Scott, Office of the Superintendent
Houston County Board of Education
1100 Main Street
Perry, GA 31069 (478)988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Director of Federal Programs. The Board of Education will act on the complaint at the next regularly scheduled BOE meeting, not less than seven (7) days thereafter.

TITLE IX - NON-DISCRIMINATION

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972); or disability in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Students and parents are hereby notified that the Houston County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities. For questions or concerns about Title IX, a student or parent should contact the school's Title IX Coordinator or contact the district's Title IX Coordinator at: Dr. Walter Stephens, Executive Director of School Operations, 1110 Main Street, Perry Georgia, 31069 or by phone at 478-988-6200, or email address, TitleIX@hcbe.net. Complaint forms are available in the principal's office at each school.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Houston County School District desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the District prohibits unlawful discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Any student, parent, or other person, who believes sexual harassment has occurred, should complete the "Title IX Sexual Harassment Formal Complaint Form" and submit it to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is the Executive Director of School Operations in the district office. The Coordinator may be contacted at 1100 Main Street, Perry, Georgia, 31069 or by phone at 478-988-6200, or email

address, TitleIX@hcbe.net. Complaint forms are available in the principal's office at each school. In all Title IX investigations, the District will use a preponderance of the evidence standard.

Sexual Harassment is defined pursuant to Federal Law, 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a) as follows:

a) An employee of the District conditioning and provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo sexual harassment);

b) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity;

c) "Sexual assault" as defined in Federal Law 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v) and parallel provisions of the Georgia Official Code Annotated, "dating violence" as defined in Federal Law, 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), and parallel provisions of the Georgia Official Code Annotated, "domestic violence" as defined in Federal Law 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in Federal Law 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30) and parallel provision of the Georgia Official Code Annotated.

VISITORS

A visitor is defined as any person who is not a student at such school, not an employee of the school or school district, a school board member, an approved volunteer following established guidelines of the school, or a person who has been invited to or otherwise authorized to be at the school by a principal, teacher, counselor, or other authorized employee of the school.

All visitors are required to report to the school office upon entering and leaving the school building to obtain a pass. Visitors are limited to the office area of the school only, unless otherwise directed by the school principal or designee.

Any person who shall not have any legitimate cause or need to be present upon the premises or within the school safety zone of any school and who willfully fails to remove himself or herself from such premises after the principal or designee of such school requests him or her to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

Any person who is not a member of the school staff or student body who loiters on or about any school building without written permission or who causes disturbances may be prosecuted according to law.

All visitors are reminded of the following Georgia law:

> **Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at a public school who has been advised that minor children are present who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a student while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so, such persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed $500.**

Each principal or designee of each school shall have the authority to exercise such control over the buildings and grounds upon which a school is located so as to prohibit any person who does not have a legitimate need or cause to be present thereon from loitering on such premises.

VOLUNTEERS

School volunteers may be used to relieve teachers of routine and clerical matters so they may increase their effectiveness in instruction. In some cases, the volunteers will supplement the teacher's work through the volunteer's special resources as determined by the teacher.

Volunteers in the school shall be under the supervision of the principal in whose building they are assigned, in accordance with approved procedures. The school principal or designee will provide an orientation to each volunteer prior to volunteer service at the school. They must sign in and out at the designated area in the office. Volunteers are

mandated reporters and are required to report any concerns about a child's wellbeing to the appropriate school personnel or authorities.

Security Clearance

All volunteers, including parents, **must receive a security clearance.** A security clearance form may be picked up in the school office. The form must be completed and approved before volunteering will be permissible. The approval process may take several weeks. This also includes chaperones for field trips. Requests for emergency clearances will not be accepted, therefore, it is recommended that you submit a clearance form as soon as possible if you feel there may be an opportunity that you will volunteer at some time throughout the school year.

WEATHER

In the event of school cancellation, parents may be notified by telephone through School Messenger, our automated notification system. This system has the capability to call all parents within a matter of minutes, delivering a fast and accurate message. The message will also be posted to our school district's Website, www.hcbe.net and HCBOE Facebook page. A Public Service Announcement request will also be sent to the local media, to include 13WMAZ TV, FOX24 TV, WMGT41 TV, WRWR TV-38, and all local radio stations. Students will not be released to leave the school building during a tornado warning.

If a tornado warning is issued, bus dismissal may be delayed. If students are en route to or from school and a tornado warning is issued, buses are required to stop at the nearest school and the students and driver take shelter there until the warning has passed.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Parents should notify the school if for any reason it becomes necessary for their child to be withdrawn from school. The withdrawal forms are taken care of ahead of time in the school office if at all possible. Fees owed for lost or damaged books, library fines, lunch fees, etc. must be paid before the withdrawal process is complete. Parents should take a copy of the withdrawal form with them to the new school.

Student Code of Conduct

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal is the designated leader of the school and, in concert with the staff, is responsible for the orderly operation of the school. In cases of disruptive, disorderly or dangerous conduct not covered in the Code of Conduct, the principal may undertake corrective measures, which he or she believes to be in the best interest of the student and the school provided any such action does not violate school board policy or procedures.

AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER

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

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

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

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process as appropriate considering the student's discipline history and conduct.

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

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

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator, Counselor, or Teacher:
- Loss of Privileges
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Detention
- In-school Suspension
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Home Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia

law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The School will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

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

Disciplinary hearings shall be held no later than ten school days after the beginning of the student's suspension unless the school district and parents or guardians mutually agree to an extension.

Any teacher who is called as a witness by any person shall be given notice no later than three days prior to the hearing.

In the event a student or his/her parent/guardian does not wish to contest the charge(s) of violation(s) of the discipline rules of the school's Code of Conduct for which a tribunal has been requested, the student and parent may voluntarily accept the consequences recommended by the school by signing a Tribunal Waiver Agreement form. Such waiver shall specify an agreement to waive the opportunity to participate in a tribunal hearing, present evidence, cross examine witnesses, and be represented by an attorney. The decision to waive the tribunal shall be final and cannot be appealed by the school or family. The waiver must be signed by a parent/guardian and a school administrator.

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

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

BEHAVIOR WHICH WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

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

- **Possession, purchase, transfer, sale, use in any amount, distribution, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturates, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or alcoholic beverage or other intoxicant, to include prescription, over the counter drugs, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) oil, cannabidiol (CBD) oil, and substances represented as drugs or alcohol** may be subject to suspension up to two full semesters.
- **Possession of a firearm, dangerous instrument, hazardous object, or weapon** shall require expulsion for a period of not less than one calendar year; provided, however, that a hearing officer, tribunal panel, administrator, superintendent, or local board of education shall have the authority to modify such expulsion requirement on a case by case basis. **For definitions, refer to Policy JCDAE.**
- **Verbal assault, written assault, including threats of violence or bodily harm and/or sexual assault or harassment, of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** Immediate suspension and automatic referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed a verbal or physical assault upon a teacher or other school personnel; possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an assault upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.
- **Physical assault or battery, including sexual battery, of other students, or persons attending school-related functions:** possible referral to a disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed battery upon another student or a person attending a school-related function.

- **Fighting:** any student engaged in fighting (mutual combat or assault/battery) may be subject to discipline up to and including long-term suspension at the discretion of the student's building administrator. Penalties recommended for fighting shall not be reduced or limited by, but shall be in addition to, any penalties imposed by any court of competent jurisdiction.
- **Terroristic Threats and Acts:** any student who commits a terroristic threat or act shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion.
- **Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel:** Immediate suspension and automatic referral to the disciplinary tribunal if a student is alleged to have committed an act of physical violence against a teacher or other school personnel. Possible punishments include short term suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion. Appropriate law enforcement personnel will be notified as necessary.
- **Physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school personnel, which caused physical harm:** A student found by a disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal to have committed an act of physical violence, which caused harm against a teacher, school bus driver, school official, or school employee shall be expelled from the public school district. The expulsion shall be for the remainder of the student's eligibility to attend public school pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150. Appropriate law enforcement personnel will be notified as necessary.
- **Disrespectful conduct, including use of vulgar or profane language, toward teachers, administrators, other school personnel, other students, or persons attending school-related functions.**
- **Any behavior based on a student's race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, up to and including sexual harassment as used in connection with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.**
- **Possession or use of tobacco in any form or any product, paraphernalia, or substance that is represented as tobacco or any smoking/vaping oil to include all forms of electronic cigarettes, vapor pens and any instrument used to inhale vapor.**
- **Unauthorized use of school computers or computer network for anything other than instructional purposes.** This includes, but is not limited to computer misuse, using computer to view or send inappropriate material, hacking, and violation of school computer use policy.
- **Damaging or defacing personal property, including the property of another student or any person legitimately at the school, or school property (vandalism or graffiti) during school hours or off-school hours.**
- **Theft:** taking of personal property of another person or the school.
- **Burglary of school property.**
- **Extortion or attempted extortion.**
- **Possession and/or use of fireworks or any explosive.**
- **Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses or making a bomb threat shall at a minimum result in suspension for one full semester.**
- **Disruption of school.**
- **Insubordination, disorderly conduct, disobeying school rules, regulations, or directives.**
- **Disobeying directives given by teachers, administrators, or other school staff or refusal to talk with an administrator.**
- **Classroom and school disturbances.**
- **Violation of school dress code.**
- **Use of profane, vulgar, or obscene words or indecent exposure.**
- **Use of cell phone or electronic communication device during the school day except as approved by a staff member.**
- **Inappropriate public displays of affection.**
- **Gambling or possession of gambling devices.**
- **Moving and non-moving motor vehicle violations upon school property and at school events.**
- **Giving false information to school officials.**
- **Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student or other students.**
- **Cheating on school assignments.**
- **Unexcused absence, chronic tardiness, skipping class, leaving campus without permission, failure to comply with compulsory attendance law.**
- **Bullying:** Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such

consequences shall include, at a minimum, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. However, Georgia law mandates that upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school.

- **Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts.**
- **Willful and persistent violation of the student Code of Conduct.**
- **Criminal law violations/Off-campus misconduct:** A student whose conduct off campus could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process may be subject to disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, short-term suspension and referral to a disciplinary tribunal.
- **Gang Related Activity:** Any group of three or more students with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, and/or attire which engage in activity that violates O.C.G.A. § 16-15-3 and/or is conduct subversive to the good order and discipline of the school and/or a violation of the student code of conduct.
- **Physical contact of a sexual nature on school property.**
- **Any Other Conduct:** A student shall not engage in any other conduct not listed above subversive to the good order and discipline of his/her school **and/or school district.**

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Aggravated Battery: Intentionally making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another or intentionally making physical contact with any object, which causes physical harm to another.

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

Battery: Intentionally making physical contact with another person in an insulting, offensive, or provoking manner.

Behavior Contract: A written agreement between a student and the school to address chronic misbehavior or return from an alternative school placement. Any student on a behavior contract who continues to violate school rules shall be subject to discipline consequences ranging from in school suspension to an alternative school placement at the discretion of the building principal.

Bullying: In accordance with Georgia law, Bullying is defined as actions which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is: (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or (3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass or intimidate, that: (a) Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1 (b) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; (c) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or (d) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. Bullying also involves acts which occur through the use of electronic communication, "whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose."

Burglary of school property: breaking and entering into school district property.

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

Detention: A requirement that the student report to a specified school location and to a designated teacher or school official to make up work missed. Detention may require the student's attendance before school or after

school. Students are given one days' warning so that arrangements for transportation can be made by the parents or guardians.

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

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

Drug: A legal substance used as medicine with or without a prescription or an illegal substance scheduled in the Georgia Controlled Substance Act. All legal substances shall only be possessed or dispensed according to Board Policy. Use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician and taken in accordance with the guidelines in the student handbook and the Health Services Manual shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

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

Extortion: Obtaining another person's consent to any act, money, personal property, or goods from another student by violence, threats, or misuse of authority.

Fighting: Fighting is defined as *"a physical struggle or a physical struggle and confrontation wherein blows of the fist, arms, legs or feet are intended to hit or do in fact hit any other student or any other person while a student is going to or from school, during the school day, at any school related activity and/or on school property."*

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

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

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

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

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

Terroristic Threats and Acts: Any student who commits a terroristic threat or act shall be subject to discipline, including expulsion. A student commits the offense of a terroristic threat when he threatens:

- To commit any crime of violence, or
- To burn or damage property for the purpose of terrorizing another, or
- By causing the evacuation of a school building, place of assembly for school-related events or school bus transportation, or
- Causing serious school inconvenience in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience, or
- A student shall not knowingly furnish or disseminate through a computer or computer network any picture, photograph, or drawing or similar visual representation or verbal description of any information designed to encourage, solicit, or otherwise promote terroristic acts as herein defined.

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

Weapons: For the purpose of this policy, the term weapon includes any object, which is or may be used to inflict bodily injury or to place another in fear for personal safety or well-being. (Refer to Policy JCDAE).

Any Other Conduct: A student shall not engage in any other conduct not listed above subversive to the good order and discipline of his/her school.

BUS MISBEHAVIOR

The following specific provisions shall govern student conduct and safety on all school buses:

(1) All provisions of the Student Code of Conduct apply to behavior on the school bus, including but not limited to, acts of physical violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, bullying as defined by subsection (a) of the Code Section 20-2-751.4, and board policy, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior;

(2) A meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district officials must be held to form a school bus behavior contract whenever:

- A student is found to have engaged in bullying; or
- A student is found to have engaged in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus.

The school bus behavior contract shall provide for age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Provisions may include, but are not limited to, assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus.

These provisions regarding use of a bus behavior contract are not to be construed to limit the instances when other code of conduct violations may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

(3) Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communication equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus; and

(4) Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESSES

The Board of Education provides a variety of resources that are available at every school within the district to help address student behavioral problems. The school discipline process will include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve such problems.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This Code of Conduct is based on the expectation that parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about, and actions in response to, student behavior that detracts from the learning environment. School administrators recognize that two-way communications through personal contacts are extremely valuable; therefore, they provide information to parents as well as on-going opportunities for school personnel to hear parents' concerns and comments.

Parents and students should contact the principal of the school if specific questions arise related to the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct specifies within its standards of behavior various violations of the Code which may result in a school staff member's request that a parent or guardian come to the school for a conference. Parents are encouraged

to visit the schools upon request and are expected to be actively involved in the behavior support processes designed to promote positive choices and behavior.

Georgia law mandates that any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by mail the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite the parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan and/or contract.

Georgia law also states that before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return to school from a suspension or expulsion, the school shall request by telephone call and by mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan and/or contract.

The law allows a local school district to petition the juvenile court to require a parent to attend a school conference. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend the conference requested by the principal pursuant to the laws cited above, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed $500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court under this law.

This Conduct Code shall be strictly construed subject only to exceptions required by a State or Federal law applicable hereto, and exceptions made by a disciplinary tribunal on a case-by-case basis.

STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES NOTIFICATION

Each school principal shall implement procedures to annually notify all parents or guardians of all school-sponsored extracurricular activities, organizations and clubs in which students may participate and of the right of the parent or guardian to prohibit their child's participation. Notification to parents and guardians shall be provided annually via the student handbook and shall include the name of the extracurricular activity, student organization or club; and information regarding the purpose, activities or national affiliation of the extracurricular activity, organization or club. Any membership or financial requirements for a student to join or become a member of the activity, organization or club shall be included in the information provided.

No student shall be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity, organization or club if the student's parent or legal guardian has indicated in writing that the parent will not allow the student to participate and has provided a copy of such written notice to the school principal.

For school clubs formed after publication of the student handbook, parents or guardians must approve their student's participation via e-mail, fax or written permission to the school principal.

School extracurricular activities, organizations, or clubs for purposes of this policy are those that are supervised or sponsored by a school district employee designated by the principal, and that meet in school facilities.

HOUSTON COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS

DR. MARK SCOTT
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

BOARD MEMBERS
HELEN HUGHES, VICE CHAIRMAN
DR. RICK UNRUH
BRYAN UPSHAW
FRED WILSON, CHAIRMAN
LORI JOHNSON
HOKE MORROW
DAVE CROCKETT

RIGHT TO KNOW PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Dear Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s),

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, the Houston County School District would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student's teacher—
  - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's and/or paraprofessional's qualifications, please contact your child's school or you may contact Dana Morris, Director of Federal Programs, at the Houston County School District at (478) 988-6200 ext. 3449 or email at dana.h.morris@hcbe.net.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in your child's education.

Sincerely,
Dana Morris
Director of Federal Programs

P.O. BOX 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069
(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259
WWW.HCBE.NET

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FITNESSGRAM ASSESSMENT FOR P.E.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a part of the Georgia Student Health and Physical Education (GA SHAPE) initiative, all Houston County Public Schools (Grades 1-12) will participate in the required annual fitness assessment, the FITNESSGRAM. The FITNESSGRAM is a comprehensive fitness assessment for youth designed to assess cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

The FITNESSGRAM is considered a quality fitness assessment for the following reasons:

1. FITNESSGRAM assessments use criterion-referenced standards. This means that a student can compare his/her scores with **standards that have been identified for good health**. This type of system prevents students from being compared to other students participating in the assessment.
2. FITNESSGRAM assesses the **current fitness level** of students and promotes individual goal setting to allow students to take ownership of their health.
3. FITNESSGRAM does **not** assess skill or athletic ability.

All students in grades 1-12 that are **enrolled in a P.E. class,** regardless of age, gender, or ability, will participate in the FITNESSGRAM assessment. Students are encouraged to be self-aware of their health related fitness and to take responsibility by setting personal fitness goals. When students focus on continually improving their fitness level, a positive lifelong impact can be achieved.

Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed on fitness assessment days (comfortable pants or shorts, socks, and tennis shoes). Please **encourage** your child to participate with his/her best effort and to the **best** of his/her ability in each of the assessment components. Students in grades 1-3 will participate in Height and Weight measures and will begin learning the language and techniques of the other components. Students in grades 4-12 should be prepared to participate in the following components: 1. PACER or One-Mile Run, 2) Curl-Ups, 3) Push-Ups, 4) Back-Saver Sit and Reach, and 5) Height/Weight measures. *An additional assessment item, the **Trunk Lift**, may be offered to students seeking the Governor's Fitness Award. Students must score in the Healthy Fitness Zones on a total of 5 items for this award.*

A confidential FITNESSGRAM report that will include your child's scores as well as Healthy Fitness Zone information will be **provided via email** for each student at the end of the year or at the end of his/her first P.E. course during that year. The Healthy Fitness Zones represent the levels of fitness identified by research for good health. The information on this private report will not be displayed or made public. (Parents may request a hard copy of their child's report from the P.E. teacher). For more information regarding the fitness assessment, please refer to the district's Health/PE webpage at https://houstoncountys.schoolinsites.com/healthandpe. If you have any other questions, please contact your school's physical education teacher.

Sincerely,
Blanche Lamb
Coordinator, Special Programs
blanche.lamb@hcbe.net
478-988-6200 ext. 3437